The Philosophical Publishing Life of David Hume

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation undertakes a study of David Hume's philosophical publishing life with the intention of delineating his complex and inadequately understood intellectual output and asserting the cultural importance of his work after his first book, *A Treatise of Human Nature.* It uses a broad definition of the word "philosophical publication," taking into account Hume's books as well as his works in periodicals and newspapers and his contributions to convivial gatherings. It follows Hume's critical examination of his publishing style after the commercial and critical failure of the *Treatise*, showing how he developed a nuanced theory of how philosophical publications functioned in a large and open print marketplace. This hinged on striking a balance between popular and academical forms of writing, which were apt for polite and rigorous types of philosophy, respectively. Working without a university position or other traditional forms of patronage, he manipulated publishing conventions in the print marketplace in an attempt to create a medium for conveying a novel and complex system of philosophy in a language and format that appealed to a large readership. This entailed exerting a high degree of control over the printing and marketing of his books. This study treats his collection *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* as the culmination of this process, examining the ways in which Hume, in conjunction with his printers and booksellers, fashioned it as both a commodity and an intellectual work with the hope that it would sell widely and gain philosophical assent. The significance of his philosophical publishing life is assessed, revealing great success on the commercial print market, mixed success at gaining philosophical

assent, and deep significance in the cultural sphere of Scottish Enlightenment literati. This study argues that even though Hume produced a work of philosophy that was widely purchased, his ambitions of effecting philosophical revolution were not achieved, and scope of his influence is more accurately observed in his critique of philosophical writing and his effect on Scottish Enlightenment literary culture. At the conclusion are included a critical bibliography of Hume's philosophical works and a list of questions debated in the Edinburgh Select Society.

Cette thèse examine les publications philosophiques de David Hume, dans l'intention de délinéer ses productions intellectuelles complexes et insuffisamment comprises, tout en affirmant l'importance culturelle de son œuvre après l'apparition de son premier livre « *Traité de la nature humaine* ». Dans cette dissertation, on utilise une définition assez vaste du terme « publications philosophiques». On prend en compte ses livres ainsi que ses périodiques, ses journaux et ses contributions aux réunions conviviales. On examine Hume et son analyse de son propre méthode de publication à la suite de l'échec commercial et critique de la «*Traité*». On démontre comment il a développé une théorie nuancé sur la fonctionnement des publications philosophiques dans un marché vaste et ouvert pour les livres. Selon Hume, ceci dépend de l'équilibre entre les formes populaire et académique de l'écriture, ce qui étaient respectivement appropriés pour la philosophie « polie » et rigoureuse. Travaillant sans aucun poste universitaire ou d'autre forme de parrainage, il a manipulé les conventions du marché d'imprimerie, dans une tentative de créer le moyen de communiquer son

nouvel et complexe système de philosophie sous une forme qui attirerait un plus grand public. Ceci a nécessité du contrôle sur l'imprimerie et la mise en marché des œuvres. Dans cette étude, sa collection « *Essais et traités sur plusieurs sujets* » figure comme la culmination du processus sous mentionné; l'on examine comment cette collection était à la fois un produit et une œuvre intellectuelle pour Hume en conjonction avec ses imprimeurs et vendeurs, dans l'espoir que l'œuvre gagnerait un succès commercial et philosophique avec un grand importance dans le milieu culturel des lettrés de « Lumières Écossaises ». Bien que Hume ait produit une œuvre philosophique populaire, cette étude maintient qu'il n'a pas réussi d'atteindre son but de révolution philosophique et que son influence est plutôt marquée par son critique de l'écriture philosophique et par son effet sur la culture littéraire des « Lumières Écossaises ». La conclusion de la dissertation inclut une bibliographie analytique de son œuvre philosophique et une liste de questions discutées dans la « Société selecte d'Édimbourg ».

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Abbreviations

*ETSS**	*Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*
Mossner	*The Life of David Hume,* by E. C. Mossner (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954)
HL	*The Letters of David Hume,* 2vols., ed. J.Y.T. Greig (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1932).
NHL	*New Letters of David Hume*, eds. Raymond Klibansky and E. C. Mossner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954)
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online
NLS	National Library of Scotland
BL	British Library
UE	University of Edinburgh Library
UG	University of Glasgow Library
Zachs	The private collection of William Zachs

*This study does not use the standard scholarly abbreviations for Hume's works, instead identifying specific publications by their entry number in the *Critical Bibliography of Hume's Philosophical Works* below.

Introduction

In Autumn of 1737, a twenty-six-year-old David Hume traveled to London with hopes of publishing *A Treatise of Human Nature*, only to find the process much more challenging than expected. His frustration had become palpable by 2 December when he wrote to his friend and mentor, Henry Home, later Lord Kames, that he had spent the past three months "alwise within a Week of agreeing with Printers," who were reluctant to publish a three-volume, religiously undogmatic, metaphysical tome by a new author with no reputation or authority. He reacted by "castrating" the work of its "noble parts," removing arguments concerning religion and miracles that could "give too much Offence" to potential readers and hinder its publication.[1] This would stretch on until 26 September, 1738, when he made a "hasty Bargain" with bookseller John Noon containing a clause that limited any further editions until the first sold completely.[2] When Books I and II appeared in January of 1739, they "fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots," and Book III did no better.[3] The *Treatise* received tepid to vehemently negative responses, sold few copies, and – most importantly – did not inspire the

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1   Hume to Kames, 2 December 1737, NHL, Letter 1. Henry Home was raised to the Scottish bench on 6 February 1752, becoming Lord Kames. He will be referred to in footnotes as "Lord Kames" or simply "Kames" in order to avoid confusion and differentiate him from John Home.
2   Hume to Hutcheson, 16 March 1740, HL, Letter 16. "Hume's contact with John Noon for *A Treatise of Human Nature*," NLS MS 23159, fol. 5.
3   Hume, "My Own Life," in *The Life of David Hume, Esq.* (1777), ¶7. Entry 051. David Hume's works will be cited according to their entry number in "A Critical Bibliography of David Hume's Philosophical Works," at the conclusion of this dissertation, supplemented by any necessary information for maintaining ease of reading.

philosophical revolution that Hume had hoped for.[4] He spent the remainder of his

career expressing regret over publishing the *Treatise* as he did, calling it "a work

which the Author had projected before he left College, and which he wrote and

published not long after," that amounted to "a very great Mistake" which

"pretended to innovate in all the sublimest Parts of Philosophy."[5] He made

extensive manuscript corrections for a new edition, but they never saw publication

on account of his prohibitive agreement with John Noon. There would not be a

new edition until 1817 – nearly half a century after his death.[6] Believing the

Treatise's failure arose "more from the manner than the matter," he refashioned its

parts into a succession of essays, enquiries, and dissertations published across

numerous subsequent books, believing that, "By shortening & simplifying the

Questions, I really render them much more complete."[7]

    Despite Hume having published the *Treatise* in a castrated and incomplete

form, and disowning it repeatedly, scholars today regard it as his seminal text, the

central expression of his philosophical system, and often the only one worthy of

close study. This is a false state of affairs if we are to take Hume's own words

seriously – even allowing for the irony and sense of humour that peppered his

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4   Hume to Kames, 13 February 1739, HL, Letter 8.

5   "Author's Advertisement," in *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (1778). Entry 055. Hume to John Stewart, February 1754, HL, Letter 93.

6   Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (London: Printed for Thomas and Joseph Allman and sold by Deighton and Sons, Cambridge; R. Bliss, Oxford; and P. Hill and Co., Edinburgh, 1817). The copies of the *Treatise* with Hume's corrections have not been found, despite an extensive effort by David Fate Norton which involved contacting every major research library and private holder of 18th-century collections in the world. See Norton, "An Historical Account of a Treatise of Human Nature from Its Beginnings to the Time of Hume's Death," in *A Treatise of Human Nature: A Critical Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007),

7   Hume, "My Own Life," ¶8. Hume to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, March or April, 1751, HL, Letter 73. Here he is writing specifically of *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (1748)*,* later retitled *An Enquiry* (1758), in which he refashioned Book I of the *Treatise*.

writing. It ignores his extensive literary career following the *Treatise*, which was meticulously calculated, intellectually meaningful, commercially successful, and culturally resonant. Moreover, it takes no account of the status he would gain later in his life as one of the century's great literary figures and the mark he left on philosophical writing styles, publishing customs, and the intellectual convivial culture of Edinburgh's literati.

The dissertation that follows undertakes a study of Hume's philosophical publishing life with the intention of delineating his complex and inadequately understood body of texts and contributions to Scottish Enlightenment intellectual life, asserting the centrality of his work after the *Treatise*. Where proponents of the *Treatise* see unfortunate and reluctant pandering to a fickle, unenlightened marketplace, my study unearths a thoughtful and deliberate process of manipulating elements of style and format to convey a truly novel philosophical system to a large audience. I will show that Hume's grounding of his philosophy in common life, his preoccupation with understanding how individuals form their beliefs, and his interest taking up a variety of subjects – including politics, criticism, and religion, in addition to human understanding and morals – were present from the time of the *Treatise*; accordingly, his career-long devotion to communicating with his audience was central to his philosophy rather than merely strategic. This set him on a joint intellectual and material trajectory of refashioning his philosophy into easier, more popular writing styles, and putting great thought into the construction of his books as commodities and the shaping of his public image and legacy.

A central element of this study is to assert the importance of Hume as an

essayist – one who embraced the genre while dramatically pushing its boundaries. As I will show, his switch to essay writing following the failure of the *Treatise* was not a temporary phase ending in the publication of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (which was, crucially, called *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* upon its publication in 1748), but represented a shift in style and approach to publishing that characterized the majority of his subsequent output. The essay style of Addison and Bolingbroke provided Hume with a useful medium for avoiding the mistake he made with the *Treatise*. Their writing placed philosophical literature into a format that was easy and entertaining; it was also wildly popular, putting it in a position to affect the minds and actions of a population far beyond the learned audience that would encounter the *Treatise*. Here was an opportunity for Hume to enter into the political and moral discourse of the nation and infuse it with his philosophy. The genre's use of history and the experiences of common life for rhetorical purposes were also compatible with his style of argumentation. Starting with *Essays, Moral and Political,* Hume was to push the genre to accommodate far more complex and novel philosophical writing than ever before, attempting to create a literary form that was popular and polite, culturally vital, and intellectually rigorous. A return to his publishing history reveals the extent to which he understood and branded himself as an essayist across his career: the *Philosophical Essays* initially appeared as a continuation of *Essays, Moral and Political;* he called *Political Discourses* (1752) "the second part of my essays;" two of his *Four Dissertations* (1757) were later retitled "essays;" and he titled the authoritative and canonical

collection of his philosophical works *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects.*[8]

ETSS was a collection that encompassed all of the philosophical writings (that is to say, everything outside of the *History*) to which he would sign his name. This included *Philosophical Essays* or *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), *Political Discourses*, the contents of *Four Dissertations*, and most of *Essays, Moral and Political*; the *Treatise* was not included. While the works contained within it were published separately, and are addressed separately by today's readers, they were intended to be purchased as a full set and were available as one from 1753 onward. In many ways, it came to replace the *Treatise*: it would be published in comparably-sized octavos and quartos, at a comparable price, and its second part followed the progression of the *Treatise's* three books. While the physical qualities of a book were often determined by printers and booksellers, in Hume's case, he took an active and even obsessive role in editing and issuing instructions for the constructions of successive editions. In a heated exchange between Hume and his printer, William Strahan, over the preparations for one of his books, Strahan wrote, "If you had a simple grain of Faith in my Promise, you would not only believe this, but believe also, what I have often told you, that everything regarding your Works in future shall be regulated by your own Will and Directions; - in the Manner of Printing; - in the number of the impressions; - and in every thing wherein your Interest or Fame may be affected."[9] The particular construction *ETSS* held great importance for Hume, and yet it has all but disappeared from scholarly discourse. This partially reflects changing literary tastes at the turn of

8   Hume, "My Own Life," ¶9.
9   William Strahan to David Hume, 14 May 1769, NLS MS 23157, fol. 60.

the 19th century: the first edition of *ETSS* appeared in 1753 and the last one in 1825, rendering it very much a relic of 18th-century polite letters and – as I will argue later – the Scottish Enlightenment.[10] In shifting focus from the *Treatise* to *ETSS*, we see Hume as a much more multifaceted writer – interested in moral, political, and literary topics, in addition to religion and human understanding, and striving above all for cultural resonance.

The results of his efforts were dramatic. The success of *Essays, Moral and Political* established him as an incisive and acutely topical polite essayist, and made him "entirely forget [his] former disappointment."[11] The *Political Discourses* were "well received abroad and at home," his first major step toward the reverence he would enjoy across Europe by the 1760s.[12] *ETSS* came out in 21 British editions between 1753 and 1825, while the *History of England* (six vols., 1754-62) became the standard history of England well into the nineteenth century. The copy money paid him for the *History* "much exceeded any thing formerly known in England," and rendered him "not only independent, but opulent."[13]

In parallel to his calculated and cautious authorial persona, Hume established himself as a highly influential member of Edinburgh's literati culture, participating in numerous clubs and societies and holding close friendships and acquaintanceships with the most important figures in government, university, and the clergy. In groups such as the *Edinburgh Select Society* and the *Poker Club,* he

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10 Hume, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (Edinburgh: Printed for Bell and Bradfute, 1825).
11 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶6.
12 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶10. See Ernest Campbell Mossner, *The Forgotten Hume: Le Bon David* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943); Michel Malherbe, "Hume's Reception in France," in *The Reception of David Hume in Europe*, ed. Peter Jones (London, Thoemmes Continuum, 2005).
13 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶17.

had a direct and tangible effect on the minds and customs of the most powerful among his countrymen. He also served as a literary patron to his friends and acquaintances in Edinburgh's literati, helping them refine their works and form lucrative publishing deals with his London bookseller, Andrew Millar. He was also a figure that tested the values and toleration of the eventually dominant Moderate Party of The Kirk, becoming a living example of the virtuous atheist.[14] His experience in this arena helps to answer questions left open by his literary career, such as how he was accepted and even revered by the Edinburgh establishment despite his atheism and how he functioned as a man of letters without traditional institutional grounding.

And yet, despite gaining immense success by most measures, Hume never felt fully comfortable with his philosophical output. He never recovered from the sting of the *Treatise's* failure and the triumph of dogmatism over reason in his rejection from the academy. Accordingly, he was always wary of his readers' ability to understand and assent to his complex and novel system of philosophy. It was this anxiety that, in part, made him obsessive over his publications in the first place and inspired the creation of *ETSS.* But it also pushed him to withhold his more undogmatic and irreligious works, like *A Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion* and the essays "Of Suicide" and "Of the Immortality of the Soul."[15]

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14 See Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*: *The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1985); Roger Emerson, "The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland: The Select Society of Edinburgh, 1754-64," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 114 (1973); D. D. McElroy, "The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth-Century Scotland," unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh (1952); McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement: A Survey of Eighteenth-Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1969); Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 41-48, 86, 120.

15 Hume wrote "A Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion" in 1751 but withheld it from the public, arranging for its publication after his death. The manuscript is held in the National

Despite the relative success of *ETSS* compared with the *Treatise,* and his rising

fame as a man of letters, he was never convinced of his ability to affect the minds

of readers and effect moral and political improvement in society. Moreover,

overall sales of the *History* far outstripped *ETSS*; while the *History* was deeply

philosophical, Hume retained a desire throughout his career to push readers

toward the "difficult" and "true" philosophy found in *ETSS,* where they could

learn more about the philosophical principles underlying the *History.* Whatever

their commercial success, Hume did not feel he had succeeded fully as a man of

letters unless he ended party and faction, toppled superstition and religion, and

improved the political and moral actions of all of society. As he said to Adam

Smith on his deathbed, he endeavoured in his life to see "the churches shut up,

and the Clergy sent about their business," but believed "that won't happen these

two hundred years."[16] This led Hume at the end of his life to consider his legacy –

or, how his works would be received after his death, since they had not seen full

success in his lifetime. This included editing final editions of *ETSS* and *Dialogues*

Concerning Natural Religion, commissioning a funerary monument that would

tower over Edinburgh's skyline, and dying a pagan "philosopher's death" as an

example of how to live and die virtuously without Christianity.[17]

Library of Scotland (MS 23162). "Of Suicide" and "Of the Immortality of the Soul" were written for the book that eventually became *Four Dissertations* (1757). Strahan printed proof copies of *Five Dissertations* in 1755 but Hume decided to withhold the two essays, adding "Of the Standard of Taste," to complete the book. The National Library of Scotland holds proof copies for both essays with Hume's manuscript corrections (MS 509).

16 Adam Smith to Alexander Wedderburn, 14 August 1776, *Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith,* eds. E. C. Mossner and I. S. Ross (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), Letter 163.

17 Iain Gordon Brown, "David Hume's Tomb: a Roman mausoleum by Robert Adam," *Society of Antiquaries of Scotland,* no. 121 (1991); Stephen Miller, "The Death of Hume," *The Wilson Quarterly* vol. 19, no. 3 (Summer, 1995); Eric Schliesser, "The Obituary of a Vain Philosopher: Smith's Reflections on Hume's Life," *Hume Studies,* vol. 29, iss. 2 (2003); Nicholas Phillipson, *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life,* ch. 12, "Hume's Death," (New Haven: Yale

I deliberately use the phrase "philosophical publishing life" in my title to capture the scope and approach of this study. By "philosophical," I mean that I am focusing on Hume's works of philosophy, as well as his highly philosophical approach to publishing as a whole. "Publishing life" refers to the multilayered process by which he placed ideas into the world – primarily through print, but also through acts and symbols, clubs and societies, correspondence, and private conversations. I additionally use the term "publishing" rather than "public" to avoid having this study misconstrued as using the conceptual framework of the Habermasean Public Sphere. As I will show, Hume's publishing life not only contradicts Habermas's central thesis, but offers an alternative explanation of the relationship between discursive reason and public life in eighteenth-century Britain. Rather than weighing down the story with external theory, I have instead tried to present Hume's philosophical publishing life in his own words and with a thorough grounding in the physical material he produced. By focusing on the *Treatise*, we miss one of the richest literary careers of the eighteenth century and indeed from any time period.

This study will draw the limits of Hume's "philosophical" life around what he, his publishers, and his peers considered to be philosophy on their own terms. He frequently identified himself as a "philosopher" throughout his correspondence, and sometimes as a "philosopher" and "historian," drawing a division between the two. In letters to Kames, he referred to the two of them as "we philosophers," and wrote "I am a Philosopher & so, I suppose, must continue," when returning to writing after a hiatus, and expressed his anxiety of

University Press, 2010); Mossner, part v, ch. 39, "Death Comes for the Philosopher;" Hume, *The Life of David Hume, Esq.: Written by Himself* (1777). Entry 060.

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"continuing a poor Philosopher for ever."[18] When working as a secretary to Lord

Hertford in France, he lamented, "I am now, from a Philosopher degenerated into

a petty Statesman,"[19] On the occasion that he referred to himself as an historian, it

was typically with reference to being a philosopher too, as when he wrote of his

quarrel with Rousseau, "It is nothing to dispute my abilities as an Historian or a

Philosopher;" and "to a Philosopher & Historian the Madness and Imbecility &

Wickedness of Mankind ought to appear ordinary Events."[20] Upon giving a proof

copy of the first volume of the *History* to William Mure, he wrote that he would

"burn all [his] Papers & return to Philosophy" if he had not been true, impartial

and interesting.[21] Parallel to this, he differentiated between his "philosophical

works" (or "philosophical essays," or simply "works") and his "history."[22]

Accordingly, 18th-century copies of *ETSS* were most frequently bound with the

label "Essays" or "Hume's Essays" on the spine and the ledgers of William

Strahan report only "Hume's Essays" and "Hume's History" between 1758 and

1777.[23]

By focusing primarily on Hume's philosophical works, this study does not

intend to diminish the *History's* vast importance as an intellectual work, a

commodity, or a cultural production. However, his treatment of his "history" and

"philosophy" as two entities, combined with their deliberate separation into two

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18 Hume to Kames, 2 December 1737, NHL 1; Hume to Kames, January 1747, NHL, Letter 9; Hume to Kames, June 1747, NHL, Letter 10.
19 Hume to Marquise de Barbentane, 13 March 1767, HL, Letter 379.
20 Hume to Jean-Charles Trudaine de Montigny, 12 August 1766, HL 347; Hume to William Robertson, 27 November 1768, NHL 99.
21 Hume to William Mure of Caldwell, October 1754, HL, Letter 102.
22 Among many examples, see Hume to Abbé Le Blanc, 4 November 1755, HL, Letter 113; Hume to Andrew Millar, 18 January 1757, HL, Letter 125.
23 "The Ledgers and Business Papers of William Strahan," BL Add. MS 48800, cf. fols. 113, 121, 141, 150, 151.

internally cohesive commodities as *A History of England* and *ETSS,* warrants

treating his philosophical publishing life as a distinct narrative. Undoubtedly,

Hume's philosophical writing was highly historical and his historical writing was

highly philosophical. This is true in two senses: both in his composing of

philosophical works that were essentially pieces of history, such as "Of the

Populousness of Ancient Nations," "A Natural History of Religion," "Of the

Original Contract," and "Of the Protestant Succession," and in the grounding of

his philosophy as a whole in a history of experience and inherited custom.[24] I will

make frequent reference to the *History* throughout this study, especially

examining the extension of Hume's essay style into his historical writing, and the

publication of *ETSS* and the *History* as twin commodities – two essential parts of

an author's canon made to be placed next to each other on bookshelves. However,

my prime interest lies in understanding Hume as a philosopher in a cultural and

material context. Indeed, part of what makes his philosophical publishing life

interesting is how it was dwarfed in many ways by his historical writing. While a

very successful work by any other standards, sales of *ETSS* never reached the vast

heights of the *History* nor generated the same income for him and his publishers.

In this respect, the work serves as a test case for the possibilities and limits of

selling philosophical literature to a large readership during the Enlightenment.

       There is no lack of studies addressing Hume's development as an author

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24 See Nicholas Phillipson's *David Hume*: *The Philosopher as Historian,* 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 2011); Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Moritz Baumstark, "David Hume: The Making of a Philosophical Historian, a Reconsideration," unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh (2007); Leo Braudy, *Narrative Form in History and Fiction: Hume, Fielding, and Gibbon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

following the failure of the *Treatise*.[25] Those by Mark Box and Nicholas

Phillipson show how Hume entered into the traditions of polite essay writing and

political discourse dominated by Addison and Bolingbroke, and then formed a

unique voice and intellectual agenda that played out across his later philosophical

works and the *History*. Box places the culmination of this process in the

completion of the two *Enquiries*, thus seeing the failure and subsequent

refashioning of the *Treatise* as a complete phase in Hume's writing. Phillipson

takes a longer view, identifying philosophical roots of the *History* in the *Treatise*

and seeing his early political essays as topical and methodological predecessors to

the *History*. Both working as intellectual historians, neither one takes much

interest in the material history of the works under consideration, leaving questions

about how the texts functioned as commodities and how they were consumed

culturally. Richard Sher goes far in the opposite direction with his section on

Hume in *The Enlightenment and the Book,* studying the manner in which Hume

and his publishers worked together to create an authorial identity using his books'

various material elements.[26] He tracks Hume's progress from an anonymous

author of small, duodecimo essay collections, to an authoritative name

prominently featured – both in type and in engravings – on larger editions with

greater stature. Central to Sher's work is the use of "paratexts," or the parts of

publications lying outside their main texts, such as title pages, addresses to

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25 M.A. Box, The Suasive Art of David Hume (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990);
Jerome Christensen, *Practising Enlightenment: Hume and the Formation of a Literary Career*
(Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Nicholas Phillipson, *David Hume: The
Philosopher as Historian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), chs. 1-4; Eric Schliesser,
"The Obituary of a Vain Philosopher."

26 Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors & Their Publishers in
Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland & America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006),
pp. 43-61.

readers, advertisements, and bindings. Never professing to write a work of intellectual history, Sher offers a vivid picture of Hume's relationship with his publishers and the print marketplace without investigating the intellectual grounding for his authorial choices.

Only the ongoing project of the Clarendon editions of Hume's works has attempted to combine bibliographical nuance with a reading of the texts.[27] Each volume attempts a detailed history of editions and variant states of each book from their first appearance through Hume's death. While rigorous and expansive, the Clarendon bibliographies contain numerous oversights that leave more to be desired. Most basically, the purpose of these sections within the series works against their value as detailed documentations of Hume's publishing history. For example, the Clarendon edition of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* assesses all variant states of the book – including manuscript drafts and marginalia – with the intention of piecing together the text that Hume intended to write. The text in the critical edition is presented as the "correct" one and is meant to supersede any variations in other editions. This is reflected not least in style guide for the journal *Hume Studies*, which requires all contributors to use the Clarendon editions of Hume's works whenever referencing his texts. Thus a reference to chapter 12 paragraph 34 of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* is written "EHU 12.34."[28] This actually negates the series' own bibliographical schema, as it draws a line between errant, or incomplete, and "true" instances of

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27 *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of David Hume,* ed. Tom Beauchamp, so far including *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1998); *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (2000); *A Dissertation on the Passions; The Natural History of Religion* (2007); and *A Treatise of Human Nature* (2007).

28 "Notes to Contributors of Hume Studies: A Style Guide," *Hume Studies* website, http://www.humestudies.org/notes.htm. Retrieved 3 August 2013.

the text. Indeed, standard practice for referencing texts in Hume scholarship as a whole negates bibliographical subtlety, as it uses such abbreviations for texts (EPM for *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, PD for *Political Discourses*, etc.) with the assumption that there is a fixed and authoritative version of each. My study takes variations and successive editions of the texts as meaningful in themselves. It matters that the first edition of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* was entitled *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding,* and that Hume changed the name to *An Enquiry* for the 1758 quarto edition of *ETSS*. It matters that Hume's publishers marketed the *Philosophical Essays* differently from *An Enquiry*, that it fell in a particular place in *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects,* and that Hume felt the change was important enough to address it in an advertisement to readers at the book's beginning. Where the Clarendon series could further investigate these attributes of Hume's publishing history, it offers bibliography without commentary and reduces them to missteps en route to the final text. Correcting this oversight is central to my study.

Additionally, the Clarendon bibliographies are incomplete and inconsistent in their scope from one work to the next. The most thorough of the extant Clarendon bibliographies is contained in *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, which includes comprehensive notes on the construction, layout, contents, print runs, and prices of all known editions during Hume's lifetime. Since the work became a part of *ETSS* from 1753 onward, it also includes bibliographical information on all editions of the collection through 1777. However, it separates out *EPM* from each edition of *ETSS,* only including a

detailed account of that one work as it appeared in the collection. Since *ETSS* was

a large collection with several parts, it appeared variously in one-, two-, four-, and

five-volume sets with its contents rearranged and subsections of individual works

changing from one edition to the next. There were also subtle but important

changes to the titles of individual parts and volumes. Once again, this is indicative

of the Clarendon series' intention to create an authoritative version of the text

instead of embracing Hume's rich publishing history: rather than treating editions

of *ETSS* as important and meaningful books in themselves, it only includes

information on *ETSS* as part of the uncovering of an authoritative text of *An*

Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals. Even more critically, the

bibliography for *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* does not offer the

equivalent level of detail on its appearances in *ETSS*, failing to fill the holes in the

other bibliography and rending the project incomplete. This leaves the need for a

holistic *ETSS* bibliography – and indeed, one of Hume's philosophical works as a

whole.

The most extensive and authoritative of full Hume bibliographies is T. E.

Jessop's *Bibliography of David Hume and of Scottish Philosophy from Francis*

Hutcheson to Lord Balfour (1938).[29] Unrivalled in its comprehensiveness, it

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29 In addition to the Clarendon editions and T.E. Jessop's *Bibliography* (originally published in
    1938 and reprinted by Russell & Russell in 1966), which together constitute the best and most
    authoritative Hume bibliographies, there is Thomas Hill Green and Thomas Gross, "History of
    Editions," in Volume III of *The Philosophical Works of David Hume in Four Volumes* (London:
    Longmans, Green, and Co., 1874); Ernest Campbell Mossner*, The Life of David Hume*
    (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1954; 1980), pp. 625-644; William B. Todd, "David Hume, A Preliminary
    Bibliography," in William B. Todd*, Hume and the Enlightenment: Essays Presented to Ernest*
    Campbell Mossner (Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh Press, 1974), pp. 189-205;
    Roland Hall, *A Hume Bibliography, From 1930* (York, 1971); Sado Ikeda, *David Hume and*
    the Eighteenth Century British Thought. An Annotated Catalogue (Tokyo: Chuo University
    Librayr, 1986); and James Fieser, *A Bibliography of Hume's Writing and Early Responses,*
    published online by Thoemmes Continuum in 2004. Fieser's bibliography comes from his
    research notes for the 10-volume *Early Responses to Hume* series (Bristol: Thoemmes

remains the standard reference for Hume's works, yet its orientation and structure limit its usefulness and render it incomplete. It offers a breakdown of major alterations to each edition's contents, like withdrawn essays, as well as essential bibliographical details, including printer, bookseller, year, and changes in title. However, it overlooks smaller but still important changes in contents, such as the rearrangement of individual pieces within works and the movement of sections between different volumes of collected editions. It also does not take account of the physical qualities of the editions, including size, binding, and page length, nor of price, print runs, or style of advertising. Additionally, the division of the bibliography by work rather than date makes it difficult to understand when publications appeared with relation to one another and how they evolved over time.

Accordingly, the bedrock of my study is "A Critical Bibliography of David Hume's Philosophical Works," which strives to add a new level of historical nuance to our understanding of his philosophical publishing history. It starts where the Clarendon editions leave off, offering details on construction and print runs from the ledgers of Hume's printer, William Strahan, as well as format, layout, and pricing.[30] It goes further in including more detailed descriptions of advertisements of the books when available and catalogues changes to contents across all of *ETSS* (e.g., not focusing on a single work). It also includes instances of Hume's works reprinted in newspapers and periodicals – a crucial element of his publishing history, but one never previously documented systematically.

Continuum, 1999-2003); while it was not prepared for official publication, and therefore contains numerous small errors and inconsistencies, it is an extremely useful guide and reference for Hume's publishing history.

30 BL Add. MS 48800.

Additionally, I present several works that were either overlooked or incorrectly recorded in extant bibliographies. Among them are *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* sold as *Twelve Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, the five-volume edition of *ETSS* (1757), and the first appearance of *The Life of David Hume, Esq.* (1777) in *Scots Magazine*.[31] In forming this bibliography, I have had to establish some limits of my own in order to present the material I do cover in the most coherent and detailed way possible. As previously discussed, I do not include the *History*. I also do not include editions printed outside of Great Britain. This is for two reasons: one is that my study hinges upon Hume's control over his works in print, and (except in instances that will be noted) he did not participate thoroughly in the publication of translations nor of Irish and American reprints of his works; the other is that I intend to emphasize the civic element of Hume's philosophy, which revolved around improving the moral and political fortitude of his own society. It is this set of information that will form the grounding for the majority of this study.

My first chapter will re-evaluate the failure of the *Treatise* and Hume's shift to essay writing in *Essays, Moral and Political* (1741-2) and *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (1748). With a close examination of the *Treatise* and Hume's correspondence, I will show that his discomfort with the work preceded its failure and was part of a larger interest in finding a new and engaging form of philosophical publishing. Central to his argument in Book I of the *Treatise* was his assertion that individuals obtained knowledge, and subsequently formed beliefs, based on a history of experiences in the world;

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31 Entries 024, 038, and 050.

therefore, the most basic influence on the beliefs of all individuals was common life. Hume knew that he could only ever gain philosophical assent if he appealed to others in the terms of common life. As the *Treatise* moved toward publication and eventually met its fate, he felt that it had become too large, complex, and removed from the terms of common life to convince readers of its correctness. His solution was to take the polite essay format popularized by Addison and Bolingbroke and infuse it with elements of his philosophical system, thus offering readers a more rigorous yet approachable analysis of culture, morals, and political institutions than was available before. In doing so, he targeted what he identified as middle class, educated but nonacademic readers, who were in a position to affect the political and moral status of their kingdom; they were also more likely to consider Hume's novel arguments because they were not beholden to dogmas like clergymen and academics were. His achievement was marked most clearly by the wide republication of two of his essays in *The Craftsman* and numerous other periodicals and newspapers, placing him squarely within the genre and the position that he wished to claim. This chapter concludes with the publication of the essay "Of the Different Species of Philosophy" in *Philosophical Essays,* in which Hume weighed the value of "easy and polite" and "accurate and abstruse" philosophy, and ultimately asked readers to raise their engagement with the former to the level of the latter.

The second chapter continues following the evolution of Hume's style and publishing strategies across a succession of works that culminated in the collection *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects.* I begin by looking at the stylistic and marketing strategies he and his publishers employed in *An Enquiry*

Concerning Human Understanding, *Political Discourses*, and *Four Dissertations*
in order to show the longer term evolution of his appropriation of the polite essay
into a vessel for more complex and novel philosophy. Parallel to this, I look
closely at the intellectual and material process behind the creation of *ETSS* in
1753, tracking it from its cobbled-together early editions to its finely printed,
more expensive, and meticulously arranged later editions. I pay especially close
attention to the 1758 single-volume quarto edition, in which Hume reconfigured
his philosophical works into the categories and order they would take for the rest
of his life. In the first half were his easier and more polite "Essays, Moral,
Political, and Literary," and in the second were his more difficult, sceptical, and
undogmatic *Enquiries* and *The Natural History of Religion*. As a commodity,
ETSS returned him to the size and stature of a work like the *Treatise*, but it aimed
at reaching and enlightening a much wider audience by grouping together easy
and polite essays with more rigorous enquiries. At points throughout, I will
discuss the publishing strategies that Hume and his booksellers employed in the
construction of successive editions and weigh this against evidence for the
reception of the collection among readers.

In the third chapter, I will look at Hume's role in Edinburgh's literati
culture, focusing on his involvement in societies, clubs, and other forms of
convivial association, as well as his influence on the publications of his friends
and acquaintances. Where throughout his works we see Hume trying to affect the
politics and morals of a mass readership, in his convivial life he poised himself as
an intellectual leader among the most powerful members of Edinburgh society.
After being denied two university chairs, Hume sought institutional grounding

and a place in literati culture by becoming Lord Keeper of the Advocates Library, serving as secretary to the Edinburgh Philosophical Society, co-founding the Edinburgh Select Society, and taking a central role in the Poker Club. In an attempt to uncover his philosophical life off of the pages of printed books, I look at the minutes and proceedings of these clubs, as well as his correspondence with their members and records of their activities together. Far from fulfilling the stereotype of an antisocial sceptic and atheist, Hume was revered as one of the most sociable and clubbable men in town. He became especially close with the Moderate Party of The Kirk and professors at the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow – all institutions that would not have him in an official capacity. Across a number of key political moments – including an excommunication attempt by The Kirk, which the Moderate Party blocked – Hume effected a quiet shift toward religious toleration and secularism in Edinburgh. Parallel to this, he acted as an example to his peers with literary ambitions who felt encouraged by his success to place their works onto a broader market. This chapter is supplemented by an appendix of "Questions Debated by the Edinburgh Select Society."[32]

The fourth chapter will look at Hume's final and boldest publication – the shaping of his legacy and fashioning of his death. Having abstained from philosophical writing after 1760 (save for one more essay, "Of the Origin of Government"), and historical writing after 1762, Hume had considerable time in the final third of his career to edit his works and think about the mark they had made – and would make – on the minds of readers. He accordingly entered into a process of self-canonization that involved withdrawing the last of his overly-

32 The questions were transcribed from the Select Society's minute book, held in the National Library of Scotland (Adv. MS 23.1.1). See appendices 1-3 in Chapter 3 of this study.

Spectatorial essays, writing a final disavowal of the *Treatise* and demand that readers treat *ETSS* as his philosophical works, and later, composing the short autobiography that became "My Own Life." As Hume grew sick across 1775 and 1776, he took great pains to shape his works and persona as they would appear after his death. He made plans to ensure the publication of his previously-withheld "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," purchased a burial plot on Calton Hill, issued instructions for his funerary monument, and arranged to have his autobiography appended to posthumous editions of his works. Parallel to this, he extolled the values of atheism to his friends and acquaintances – clergymen and Boswell included – with the correct expectation that they would record the manner of his death and publish it to the world. By looking at responses to his death and reprints of "My Own Life" in newspapers and periodicals, I show how he successfully controlled the discourse surrounding his legacy and shifted its terms toward the evaluation of his works, his scepticism toward religion, and the pagan manner of his death. He accordingly established an image of himself that others would encounter – and indeed, encounter today upon walking down the Royal Mile and seeing his statue – after he was gone: the virtuous atheist who lived and died according to enlightened principles.

Central to the whole study will be the questions about what it meant for Hume to be a man of letters dependent on the print market and working without traditional patronage, how he opened new possibilities for literary success for his fellow Scottish literati, how he changed the nature of the polite essay, and how his experience complicates any theoretical understanding of the 18th-centry public sphere. In the broadest sense, Hume's experience can tell us about the circulation

of philosophy during the Enlightenment – how it entered the marketplace, how far

it reached, and how much it mattered. In a marketplace of competing moral

systems, political and religious beliefs, and ideas, the most reasonable ones were

not necessarily more likely to triumph. Hume became all too aware of this after

the failure of the *Treatise* and his subsequent literary career can be seen as an

effort to correct this frustrating and even tragic tendency of human behaviour. As I

will show, in the process he developed a highly nuanced conception of the

eighteenth-century reading public. Far from miscellaneous comments (and

complaints), his reflections on the public contained within parts of the *Treatise*,

the *Essays*, and his various paratexts; the structure of his books; and his addresses

to readers, come together into enquiry into nature of reading, learning, and

developing moral beliefs that could be useful for scholars of all disciplines

interested in the public sphere. In a sense, Hume worked with an "implied reader"

throughout his career, and that reader became a subject of his science of man.[33] As

I will show, this element of his philosophical publishing life renders the

assessment of his works and legacy more complex than charting their successes

and failures on the market.

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33 See Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).

Chapter I: From *Treatise* to *Essays*

When David Hume published *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* in 1748, he began the book with an essay on the current state of philosophical writing, entitled "Of the Different Species of Philosophy." On one hand there was the "easy and obvious" philosophy of popular writers like Addison and Bolingbroke, and on the other hand there was the "accurate and abstruse" philosophy of academic writers like Locke and Newton.[34] Each one had "its peculiar merit," he said, and could "contribute to the entertainment, instruction and reformation of mankind."[35] The former had achieved far greater fame in Hume's lifetime, and, he believed, would retain its fame longer than the latter. He predicted that in the future, "Addison, perhaps will be read with pleasure, when Locke shall be entirely forgotten."[36] This comparison represented the culmination of a process that Hume initiated in 1739, when his complex and esoteric *Treatise of Human Nature* "fell still-born from the press," through the early 1740s when he found comparative success with his two volumes of *Essays, Moral and Political*.[37] The former was a rigorous work that few readers could understand, the latter a collection of "trifles" that conveyed simpler ideas but reached a larger audience.[38] Which mode of writing would Hume engage in as a serious philosopher who most certainly had a desire to be read?

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34 Hume, "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," in *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), pp. 1-22. Entry 019.
35 Hume, "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," ¶1.
36 Hume, "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," ¶4.
37 Hume, "My Own Life," in *The Life of David Hume, Esq.* (1777), pp. 1-35. Entry 049.
38 Hume to William Strahan, 7 February 1772, HL, Letter 468.

While the main function of easy philosophy was to "represent the common sense of mankind in more beautiful and more engaging colours," thus avoiding a deeper examination of human nature, it was also useful for cultivating polite and intelligent members of society.[39] "By means of such compositions," he offered, "virtue becomes amiable, science agreeable, company instructive, and retirement entertaining."[40] However, easy philosophy was incomplete without rigorous philosophy in the same way that an artist's work was an incomplete portrayal of the world without the knowledge of an anatomist who "presents to the eye the most hideous and disagreeable objects; but [whose] science is useful to the painter in delineating even a Venus or a Helen."[41] Hume was ultimately optimistic about the possibility of combining easy and accurate philosophy, seeing each as a means of countering the inadequacies of the other. There was great value in clarity and simplicity of language since it could reveal philosophical arguments to more readers without the distortion of rarefied terms known only to specialists. He had tried to break philosophical dogmas in the *Treatise* but ended up writing a book that was only understandable to the very holders of those dogmas. It was also important, however, not to give readers the superficial impression of mental cultivation, but to engage them in true, deeper philosophical learning. He concluded with a cry that echoed across his subsequent works: "Happy, if we can unite the boundaries of the different species of philosophy, by reconciling profound enquiry with clearness, and truth with novelty! And still more happy, if, reasoning in this easy manner, we can undermine the foundations of an abstruse

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39 Hume, "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," ¶4.
40 Hume, "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," ¶5.
41 Hume, "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," ¶8.

philosophy, which seems to have hitherto served only as a shelter to superstition, and a cover to absurdity and error!"[42]

The first decade of Hume's publishing career saw his development from a world-weary, esoteric author into one who was hyper conscious of the stylistic and material presentation of his works. Between the failure of the *Treatise* the success of the *Philosophical Essays*, he developed a distinct approach to authorship that combined elements of popular contemporary writing styles with academical philosophy, or the "easy and obvious" and "accurate and abstruse" forms of philosophy. He arrived at this position following a process of critically examining the role of the philosopher in society. Was he to shut himself up in the "learned" world, as he had done unwittingly with the *Treatise*, or act as "a Kind of Resident or Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation..."?[43] Hume's answer to this question is most apparent in the development of his books as commodities: in their printing and marketing, as well as in the ongoing commentary they contain about the possibilities and limits of selling philosophical writing to a broad public. This process reached a critical moment in 1748 when Hume published the *Philosophical Essays* with William Strahan and Andrew Millar, the two key figures in building a Scottish Enlightenment book trade, and opened the book with his deep examination of the different species of philosophy. At this moment Hume emerged a new type of philosopher – one living by his pen and sensitive to the value of selling books and reaching a wide public, treating the commercial print market as an avenue for

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42 Hume, "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," ¶17.
43 Hume, "Of Essay Writing," in *Essays, Moral and Political, Volume. II* (1742), pp. 6-13, ¶5. Entry 010.

circumventing the firmly entrenched dogmas of the academy and clergy but wary of the intellectual limits of nonacademic readers.

This chapter follows Hume from his initial failure in the print marketplace with the *Treatise* to his first success with *Essays, Moral and Political*, identifying how and why he made this transition, and culminates with his publication of *Philosophical Essays* and a third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* in 1748. Though sources on this period in Hume's print career are relatively scarce, what does exist conveys a revealing narrative about a writer's early development. David Fate Norton has offered a deep historical study of the *Treatise's* publication and my work will not attempt to cover the same ground as his.[44] Instead I am interested in following the transition in Hume's approach to publishing that begins with the *Treatise* and plays out across his subsequent works. My concern here is with the *Treatise, Essays, Moral and Political,* and *Philosophical Essays* as commodities containing numerous elements outside of their main texts that affected the way in which readers encountered the works. The texts with which I am primarily concerned are his correspondence, in which he carries out an intricate commentary on his commercial and intellectual reception; his advertisements, prefaces, and addresses to readers, in which he showed an unusually high interest in the function of his books as commodities; and the sections of the *Treatise* and his essays that address readers' reception of various writing styles. All of these come together to form a metatext that provides lucid and extensive commentary on the possibilities of selling philosophical writing to a

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44 David Fate Norton, "An Historical Account of A Treatise of Human Nature from its Beginnings to the Time of Hume's Death," in *A Treatise of Human Nature: A Critical Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).

wide marketplace, and more broadly, the relationship between the intellectual and society. All accounts show that Hume genuinely hoped the *Treatise* would change the way people thought on a large scale. After the book failed to achieve this lofty goal, he developed an especially strong interest in the presentation of his ideas, both materially and stylistically, believing his success depended on more than composing a sound system of philosophy. Having failed to inspire his philosophical revolution with a vast metaphysical tome, he emulated commercially successful men of letters like Addison, Bolingbroke, Pope and Locke. As expressed in "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," he laboured over finding a balance between easy style and rigorous content, moving farther in the direction of the spectatorial essay in the first two editions of *Essays, Moral and Political,* and then returning to a somewhat more challenging and original style in the *Philosophical Essays*.

　　Hume's earliest direct discussions of the *Treatise* show his growing anxiety over communicating his complex and new philosophical system with a large audience and wariness over dealing with printers. This much is clear from a letter he wrote to Henry Home, later Lord Kames, from 2 December 1737. It begins with Hume informing Home that he cannot summarize his recent work because his "Opinions are so new, & even some Terms I am oblig'd to make use of, that I cou'd not propose any Abridgement." Hume had already tried and failed at doing this at "a Gentleman's request [in London], who thought it wou'd help him to comprehend & judge of [Hume's] Notions, if he saw them all at once before him." Moreover, the letter indicates that the book's religious arguments gave pause to early readers, with Hume telling Home of withholding "some Reasonings

concerning Miracles, which I once thought of publishing with the rest, but which I am afraid will give too much Offence even as the World is dispos'd at present," and of "castrating" his drafts of offensive parts before giving them to Joseph Butler. This and later pieces of correspondence reveal that Hume found the task of publishing the *Treatise* more difficult than expected. He had spent three months in London, "alwise within a Week of agreeing with Printers," and would have to wait much longer before finally publishing with John Noon.[45] Unlike later in the decade when Henry Home helped him seek publishing contacts with Scottish booksellers, Hume was especially alone and unconnected to the London publishing world.

Hume signed a contract for the first two volumes of the *Treatise* with bookseller Noon in September of 1738, forming a partnership that was ultimately short-lived and would worsen many of the problems Hume saw developing in his work. Writing to Francis Hutcheson in 1740, he recalled, "I concluded somewhat of a hasty Bargain with my Bookseller from Indolence & an Aversion to Bargaining, as also because I was told that few or no Bookseller wou'd engage for one Edition with a new Author."[46] In this engagement, Noon paid Hume a respectable but cautious 50 guineas in copy money for a printing run of 1000 copies each volume. Noon placed a precautionary clause in their contact prohibiting Hume from publishing a second edition of the *Treatise* with anyone else until the first run had sold completely, or until he purchased all remaining copies at the bookseller's price.[47] There was no second edition in his lifetime and

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45 Hume to Kames, 2 December 1737, NHL, Letter 1.
46 Hume to Hutcheson, 16 March 1740, HL, Letter 16.
47 NLS MS 23159, fol. 5.

he accordingly never had the opportunity to make any changes to the *Treatise*; the closest he came was to refashion its contents in subsequent publications, all of which took on a very different format from this one. This became more problematic for him as he struggled over the book's poor reception and increasingly held the conviction that he had gone to press too early.

Working with Noon also meant that Hume's *Treatise* appeared at his shop alongside works by dissenters, nonconformists and freethinkers. A list of "Books printed for John Noon, at the White-Hart near Mercer's-Chapel, Cheapside," includes titles like, "A Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John; with large Historical Observations..." by Moses Lowman; as well as works by Thomas Pyle, James Foster, and William Harris.[48] In fact, Hume's *Treatise* sits awkwardly in a list of Noon's publications since it appears as a work of moral philosophy with a grounding in natural philosophy rather than a religious text. Additionally, Noon contracted John Wilson for the book's printing, a major figure in the nonconformist and dissenting press.[49] Notices and reviews of the book accordingly emphasized its irreligious, undogmatic and novel aspects, referring to Hume as a "freethinker" or quoting the book's epigram: "*rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire, quae velis, & quae sentais, dicere, licet.*"[50] The book itself was an expensive commodity, printed in large octavo on fine paper and selling at 10s for the first two volumes together. The *Treatise's* printer and bookseller, then, created a commodity for a small market interested in metaphysical and dissenting or nonconformist works.

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48 Printed in London, c. 1745.
49 David F. Norton, "John Wilson, Hume's First Printer," British Library Journal, vol. 14, 1988.
50 "Seldom are men blessed with times in which they may think what they like and say what they think." Tacitus, *The Histories*, I.1.

Echoing the anxieties he expressed to Home before the book's publication, Hume included an "Advertisement" and "Introduction" preparing readers for a challenging text and humbly expressing his wishes for the approval of the public. In the latter, Hume explains the design of the *Treatise* with an emphasis on preparing readers for an unorthodox and complex philosophical system that will not seem immediately believable. Against this, he argues that the learned world has entered a state where people judge the validity of ideas by their superficial qualities rather than engaging the effort to understand them more deeply. "Admist all this bustle," he claims, "'tis not reason which carries the prize, but eloquence; and no man needs ever dispair of gaining proselytes to the most extravagant hypothesis, who has art enough to represent it in any favourable colours." This gives rise to "that common prejudice against metaphysical reasonings of all kinds, even amongst those who profess themselves scholars," metaphysical reasoning being defined as "abstruse" and requiring "some attention to be comprehended." He goes on to tell readers that "if truth be at all within the reach of human capacity, 'tis certain it must lie very deep and abstruce."[51] Here Hume identified the tension between two styles of writing – and by extension, learning – that he would continue examining for the next decade and finally flesh out in depth in "Of the Different Species of Philosophy."

He goes on to lay the agenda for a science of man, grounding his philosophy in the observation of human behaviour. The implications of this grounding as an argumentative method, and the broad spectrum of subjects it entailed, would underlay his work after the *Treatise*. He begins:

51 Hume, "Advertisement" and "Introduction," in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. 1 (1739), pp. 1-10. Entry 001.

'Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, are in some measure dependent on the science of Man; since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties.

This applies not only to human understanding, but to all the sciences:

If therefore the sciences of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, have such a dependence on the knowledge of man, what may be expected in the other sciences, whose connexion with human nature is more close and intimate? The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas: morals and criticism regard our tastes and sentiments: and politics consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other. In these four sciences of Logic, Morals, Criticism, and Politics, is comprehended almost every thing, which it can any way import us to be acquainted with, or which can tend either to the improvement or ornament of the human mind.[52]

Here he lays bare the scope of his philosophy: by understanding human nature, he is trying to understand the full spectrum of human belief and action. This would have implications on politics and criticism as much as logic and morals – thus necessitating and foreshadowing his turn toward such topics following the *Treatise*.

He continues that with this science of man, "we in effect propose a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security."[53] That foundation would be the study of human behaviour itself; or, "as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation."[54] This entails observing individuals in the world – their habits and customs – and using the experience of common life as the grounding for philosophy.

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52 Hume, *Treatise,* "Introduction," ¶4-5. Entry 001.
53 Hume, *Treatise*, "Introduction," ¶6. Entry 001.
54 Hume, *Treatise*, "Introduction," ¶7. Entry 001.

We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. Where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science, which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension.[55]

As I will show, Hume's disenchantment with the *Treatise* and his turn toward essays is most clearly understood against this mission statement for his philosophy. While the arguments contained in the *Treatise* were indeed grounded in the common experiences of man, or common life, the difficult appearance of the work and its difficult manner of presenting its complex and novel ideas gave it the air of an esoteric metaphysical tome. He was to learn that a more effective way of presenting his philosophy was to use the terms of common life and appeal to common practices of reading. Whether such language and format could convey his complex and novel philosophy was a question that remained on Hume's mind for the rest of his career.

Very soon after the *Treatise's* publication, Hume was convinced it would not sell well or meet with a positive reception. He wrote to Home from London on 13 February 1739, "'Tis now a fortnight since my book was published; and besides many other considerations, I thought it would contribute very much to my tranquility, and might spare me many mortifications, to be in the country, while the success of the work was doubtful. I am afraid 'twill remain so very long." While Hume was right the book would not see great success, it is important to note that he expressed this belief only two weeks after publication, when it would have been difficult to draw such a conclusion with certainty. Both his expectations

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55 Hume, *Treatise*, "Introduction," ¶10. Entry 001.

and anxieties were very high: he wanted to affect the beliefs of a large readership

and knew he had not quite presented his philosophical system effectively. As he

continued in his letter, he revealed the scale of his philosophical aspirations and

the obstacles in his way:

Those who are accustomed to reflect on such abstract subjects, are commonly full
of prejudices; and those who are unprejudiced are unacquainted with metaphysical
reasonings. My principles are also so remote from all the vulgar sentiments on
the subject, that were they to take place, they would produce almost a total
alteration in philosophy: and you know, revolutions of this kind are not easily
brought about. I am young enough to see what will be come of the matter; but am
apprehensive lest the chief reward I shall have for some time will be the pleasure
of studying on such important subjects, and the approbation of a few judges.[56]

Hume's criticism of his readers shows how he failed in two senses: both failing to

sell books, and receiving censure from many parts of the learned world.

The next step he took was to seek out good judges and figures with literary

authority who could give a "serious Perusal of the Book" and lend their support to

its circulation.[57] It was through this process that the book made its way into

journals through notices and eventually reviews. His request for Home to pass on

the book to acquaintances in Scotland was a wise one, as Home was exceptionally

well connected with Edinburgh's political figures, lawyers and literati, and was

active in fostering the city's intellectual life and assisting the careers of young

scholars like Hume and later Adam Smith.[58] Hume made a similar request of

Pierre Desmaizeaux, who was connected to a different type of intellectual circle in

London and Francophone regions of continental Europe.[59] Desmaizeaux's life as a

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56 Hume to Kames, 13 February 1739, HL, Letter 8.
57 Hume to Kames, 13 February 1739, HL, Letter 8; Hume to Michael Ramsay of Mungale, 5
    March 1739, HL, Letter 9.
58 Nicholas Phillipson, *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life* (New Haven: Yale, 2011), ch. 4,
    "Edinburgh's Early Enlightenment."
59 Hume to Pierre Desmaizeaux, 6 April 1739, HL, Letter 10.

French Huguenot refugee in England had put him in touch with figures like Lord Shaftesbury, Joseph Addison, and Pierre Bayle, and he had published works by John Locke and John Toland – all of whom were important influences of Hume's work. Though this exchange with Hume fell near the end of Desmaizeaux's life (he died in 1745), Desmaizeaux was still an active writer and a leading figure in the group surrounding London's Rainbow Coffeehouse, largely comprised of other French Huguenot refugees and known for its interest in scepticism, freethinking and other unorthodox schools of thought.[60] Hume's solicitation of Desmaizeaux's feedback and endorsement had the very important twofold implication of tapping into this tradition and seeking continental readers via the Francophone periodicals with which Desmaizeaux was involved.[61]

Following this request, Desmaizeaux wrote the first published response to the *Treatise* in the Spring issue of the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée* – a French-language learned periodical published in Amsterdam between 1728 and 1753. Desmaizeaux was the chief provider of English literary news to the journal and wrote most of the "Nouvelles littéraires d'Angleterre" section. The notice for Hume's *Treatise* followed the standard format for such texts in continental journals, which was to provide a brief summary of the work and a few sentences of basic evaluation or review. Unlike the majority of short advertisements for the *Treatise,* which began appearing in British newspapers and journals from the time of its publication, notices provided a bit of interpretation and functioned as a

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60 "Rainbow Coffee House group (act. 1702-1730)," ODNB. The group's activities are recorded in a nine-volume manuscript collection of letters to Desmaizeaux in the British Library (Add. MSS 4281-4289.

61 E. C. Mossner, "The Continental Reception of Hume's *Treatise,* 1739-41," *Mind*, vol. 56, no. 2201 (January 1947).

combination of a short review and a summary for readers who did not reasonably

have access to a full copy. The final three sentences especially indicate the book's

role in the marketplace:

A gentleman, a Mr. Hume, has published A Treatise of human Nature: being an Attempt, &c. That is, *Traité de la nature humaine. Essai pour introduire la méthode expérimentale de raisonnement dans les sujets moraux*. In 8vo. 2 vol. This work is divided into two volumes, of which the first, concerning the Understanding, contains four Parts each divided into several Sections. The first Part concerns ideas, their origin, composition, abstraction, connection, &c; the second, the ideas of space and time; the third, knowledge and probability; and the fourth, scepticism and the other systems of philosophy. The second volume, concerning the passions, contains three Parts. The first Part is concerned with pride and humility; the second with love and hatred; and the third with the will and the direct passions. Those who desire something new will find what they want here. The author argues on his own terms, he goes thoroughly into things, and he follows new ways of thinking. He is very original.[62]

While not a negative appraisal of the book, this sets the trend exhibited by later

notices of focusing on the *Treatise's* novelty or unorthodox tendencies to the point

of overlooking Hume's actual arguments and his intentions as a moral philosopher.

Another notice published in the Leipzig-based periodical, *Neuer Zeitungen von*

gelehrten Sachen, on 28 May 1739, went further with the same sentiment:

A new free-thinker has published an exhaustive *Treatise of Human Nature,* 2 volumes, octavo. In it he attempts to introduce the correct method of philosophy into moral matters, examining and explaining, first of all, the characteristics of the human understanding and then the effects. The author's intentions are sufficiently betrayed in the sub-title of the work, taken from Tacitus: *Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire, quae velis, & quae sentais, dicere, licet.*[63]

These notices confirm his fear that readers were too shocked by the novelty of his

claims to consider them in a reasoned manner. That he would be called a free-

thinker, a term he never used to describe himself, showed just how entrenched his

public was in their beliefs.

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62 Qtd. in Norton, "Historical Account," section 6.
63 Qtd. in David Fate Norton, *"Review of Volume 3 of the Treatise:* Authorship, Text, and Translation," *Hume Studies* 32, No. 1, April 2006, 3-52.

Hume understood this as more than a passing dilemma – to the contrary, it

was a deep-seeded characteristic of human nature. Starting in the *Treatise,* he

addressed the problem that readers were more likely to be convinced by the

manner in which they encountered philosophical arguments, whether through

style, material presentation or social circumstances, than by the arguments

themselves. Echoing his correspondence, here Hume states that previously

entrenched belief, like that held by his readers, "is the cause why all systems are

apt to be rejected at first as new and unusual."[64] (I.III.X) In order to show how a

reader's evaluation of truth claims is affected by elements outside a text's contents,

he illustrated the way in which a reader might absorb the same text in different

contexts:

> If one person sits down to read a book as a romance, and another as a true history,
> they plainly receive the same ideas, and in the same order; nor does the
> incredulity of the one, and the belief of the other, hinder them from putting the
> very same sense upon their author. His words produce the same ideas in both;
> though his testimony has not the same influence on them. The latter has a more
> lively conception of all the incidents. He enters deeper into the concerns of the
> persons: represents to himself their actions, and characters, and friendships, and
> enmities: he even goes so far as to form a notion of their features, and air, and
> person. While the former, who gives no credit to the testimony of the author, has a
> more faint and languid conception of all these particulars, and, except on account
> of the style and ingenuity of the composition, can receive little entertainment from
> it.[65]

According to the *Treatise,* the liveliness or force of testimony (in this case, in the

form of a text) is instrumental in the process by which the human mind takes

impressions and transforms them into ideas and beliefs. Before approaching a

text, readers will already have formed their own customs for taking in information

and evaluating its validity; testimony that appeals to those customs is more likely

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64 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), I.IIIX. Entry 001.
65 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), I.III.VII. Entry 001.

to transform the beliefs of the readers than testimony that takes other forms –
especially customarily fictional or questionable forms. Individuals are slow to
change their beliefs, as beliefs are characterized by "a superior *force*, or *vivacity*,
or *solidity*, or *firmness*, or *steadiness,*" reinforced by custom and imagination.[66]
Hume knew before publishing the *Treatise* that philosophical assent was based on
factors more complex than reasonable argument, but depended crucially on the
manner in which individuals encountered ideas, both stylistically and
contextually. Hume had written and published the *Treatise* in the style of a
rigorous, academic and metaphysical work of moral philosophy, and its cold
commercial and intellectual reception told Hume he had communicated
ineffectively with his audience. As moral philosophy, the work was too sceptical
of religion and an innate moral sense to win the appreciation of those actually
teaching the subject. The purpose of moral philosophy was to prepare young men
to live proper lives in political and commercial society; Hume's ideas were too
radical for this practical application of philosophy. Censure from Francis
Hutcheson, the premiere teacher of moral philosophy, and the regents of the
University of Edinburgh would make this clear to Hume, and we can reasonably
assume he was addressing such critics when he lamented to Home the prejudices
of "those who are accustomed to reflect on such abstract subjects." On the other
hand, a work like the *Treatise* was doomed on a larger market, where the most
commercially viable works were histories, essays and sermons.

Within no more than five months after the *Treatise's* publication Hume
began writing short essays in the style of the *Spectator* and *Craftsman*. The

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66 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), I.III.VII. Entry 001.

project was well underway by 12 June, 1739, when he wrote to Home, "You see I am better than my word, having sent you two papers instead of one. I have hints for two or three more, which I shall execute at my leisure."[67] These "papers" refer to the shorter essays that eventually appeared in *Essays, Moral and Political* (2 vols., 1741-1742).[68] This new writing project accompanied his ever-solidifying resolution that the *Treatise* had failed. The letter continues, "I am not much in the humour of such compositions at present, having received news from London of the success of my Philosophy, which is but indifferent, if I may judge by the sale of the book, and if I may believe my bookseller."[69] His use of the term "indifference" is crucial – his book had not been reviewed by this point, and the only two notices it received were the two quoted above. To make matters worse, two months prior John Noon had stopped giving the *Treatise* top billing in advertisements, placing it below Richard Hayes' *Negotiator Magazine* in April issues of the *London Daily Post* and the *London Evening Post*.[70] Restating his anxieties about the book while looking to his future endeavours, Hume went on, "My fondness for what I imagined new discoveries, made me overlook all common rules of prudence; and having enjoyed the usual satisfaction of projectors, 'tis but just I should meet with their disappointments. However, as 'tis observed with such sort of people, one project generally succeeds another, I doubt not, but in a day or two I shall be as easy as ever, in hopes that truth will prevail at last over the indifference of the world."[71] Hume wrote enough essays over the

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67 Hume to Kames, 1 June 1739, HL, Letter 11.
68 Entries 005, 110, and 016.
69 Hume to Kames, 1 June 1739, HL, Letter 11.
70 Norton, "Historical Account," section 6.
71 Hume to Kames, 1 June 1739, HL, Letter 11.

subsequent two-year period to fill two volumes published in rapid succession between Fall of 1741 and early 1742. Accordingly, the remaining history of the *Treatise's* editing and publication took place as Hume developed a thoroughly different approach to philosophical writing.

The first published indicator of this shift was "An Abstract of a Book Lately Published," which served as both a summary of, and apology for, the more controversial and difficult parts of the first two volumes of the *Treatise*.[72] It is not certain when exactly he started it, but we do know he was close to completing it in December of 1739, when the first proper review (which was also to be the only one in English) of the *Treatise* appeared in the "History of the Works of the Learned." Going further than the notices, this review contained a number of sarcastic comments about the book (Hume called them "somewhat abusive") in reference to its novel ideas and difficult language.[73] The writer called Hume's propositions "too dazzling for my weak Sight," mocked "our Author's superlative Modesty," and called his broader project "A most charming System indeed."[74] Hume had originally intended the "Abstract" for publication in the "History of the Works of the Learned," but withheld it in response to this review.[75] Instead he published it as a 32-page pamphlet in March of 1740, advertised in "Daily Advertiser" in a very telling way: "An Abstract of a late philosophical performance, entitled *A treatise of human nature, &c.* wherein the chief argument and design of that book, which has met with such opposition, and had been

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72 Entry 003.
73 Hume to Francis Hutcheson, 4 March 1740, HL, Letter 15.
74 *History of the Works of the Learned,* December 1739. James Fieser reprints and interprets this review in "The Eighteenth-Century British Reviews of Hume's Writings," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Fall, 1996, Vol. 57.
75 Hume to Hutcheson, 4 March, 1740, HL, Letter 15.

represented in so terrifying a light, is further illustrated and exlain'd."[76] Hume

intended the "Abstract" to counter the main criticisms of the *Treatise* – its

complexity, novelty, attacks on dogma, and freethinking leanings – but the

wording of this advertisement suggests the battle had already been lost.

It was within this context that Hume started seeking a new publishing

contract for Book III of the *Treatise.* His letter to Francis Hutcheson of March 15,

1740, reveals so much of this process that it is worth quoting at length:

> I shall set out for London in three Weeks or a Month with an Intention of
> publishing it. The Bookseller, who printed the first two Volumes, is very willing to
> engage for this; & he tells me that the Sale of the first Volumes, tho' not very
> quick, yet it improves. I have no Acquaintaince among these Folks, & very little
> Skill in making Bargains. There are two Favours, therefore, I must ask of you, viz
> to tell me what Copy-Money I may reasonably expect for one Edition of a
> thousand of this Volume, which will make a four Shillings Book; And, if you
> know any honest Man in this Trade, to send me a Letter of Recommendation to
> him that I may have the Choice of more than one Man to bargain with. Tis with
> Reluctance I ask this last Favour; tho' I know your Authority will go a great Way
> to make the Matter easy for me. I am sensible, that the point is a little delicate.
> Perhaps you may not care to recommend even to a Bookseller a Book that may
> give Offence to religious People: Perhaps you may not think it calculated for
> public Sale. I assure you, therefore, that I shall not take in the least amiss, if you
> refuse me.[77]

That Hume seemed overwhelmed by the process of finding a bookseller – much

as he had been with the first two volumes – is a stark contrast to the business

savvy man of letters he would become later in his career. He appears especially

inexperienced with his admission that he has no acquaintances among book

producers and no skills bargaining with them, and moreover has no sense of the

copy money he should expect for one edition. His decision to hand over the

bargaining responsibilities to Hutcheson shows a wariness of commercial print

involvement that would go away as he gained more success. It did not help that he

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76 *Daily Advertiser*, 11 March 1740.
77 Hume to Hutcheson, 4 March 1740, HL, Letter 15.

was completing the deals in London, where he lacked the same close network that he had in Scotland and especially Edinburgh. Hume settled on Thomas Longman as a bookseller and publisher and sought Hutcheson's support again in another letter written soon after the last one. His main fear was repeating the mistakes of his contract with Noon, which prevented him from producing a new edition with changes that he felt were essential given the book's reception. He told Hutcheson, "Tis in order to have some Check upon my Bookseller, that I wou'd willingly engage with another, & I doubt not but your Recommendation wou'd be very servicable to me, even tho you be not personally acquainted with him."[78] Longman had in fact served as a bookseller for Hutcheson's *Essay on the nature and conduct of the passions and affections: with illustrations on the moral sense* (1728), but several people were involved in publishing that book and there is no reason to assume that Hutcheson ever interacted with Longman.[79]

This period, the final months during which Hume edited Book III, was also one of reflection and reevaluation for his writing. He was well into his essay project and little convinced that the publication of Book III would significantly change the *Treatise's* fate. Very candidly showing his despair to Hutcheson, Hume wrote in the same letter, "I wish I cou'd discover more fully the particulars wherein I have fail'd. I admire so much the Candour I have observed in Mr Locke, Yourself, & a very few more, that I would be extremely ambitious of imitating, by frankly confessing my Errors: If I do not imitate it, it must proceed

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78 Hume to Hutcheson, 4 March 1740, HL, Letter 15.
79 Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (London: Printed by J Darby and T Browne, for John Smith and William Bruce, Booksellers in Dublin; and sold by J. Osborn and T. Longman in Pater-Noster-Row, and S. Chandler in the Poutrey, 1928).

neither from my being free from Errors, nor from want of Inclination; but from my real unaffected Ignorance."[80] Hume came out of this process, which began at least two years prior, with two convictions that made themselves apparent in his subsequent writing: one was to appeal to nonacademic readers by using popular writing styles, and the other was to mask his atheistic leanings.

When Book III of the *Treatise* appeared in the Summer of 1740, it bore the physical stamp of Hume's evolution as a writer who was interested in communicating difficult philosophy with a wide audience.[81] The title page follows the same format as the first two volumes, with two substantial changes in contents. One is the new inscription: taken from Lucan's Civil Wars, it means, "Thou that to virtue ever wer't inclined, learn what it is, how certainly defin'd, and leave some perfect Rule to guide Mankind." In the most basic sense it is a call for those who understand virtue to explain its rules to mankind – a task that the author, if forsaking modesty, might see for himself. The epigram is also a reference to Cato's speech to the oracle, which Anthony Collins quoted extensively in his *Discourse on Freethinking*. This again gives the book the atheist overtone of the first two volumes, albeit more covertly this time.[82] The other addition is of "An Appendix Wherein some Passages of the foregoing Volumes are illustrated and explain'd," which in fact contains the reprinted text of the "Abstract." This served the function of grounding readers in Hume's larger philosophical system without requiring them to buy the first two volumes, and

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80 Hume to Hutcheson, 4 March 1740, HL, Letter 15.
81 Entry 004.
82 Paul Russell, "Epigrams, Pantheists, and Freethought in Hume's Treatise: A Study in Esoteric Communication," Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 54., No. 4, Oct 1993, pp. 659-673. Includes his own translation.

allowed readers to skip the difficult presentation of his ideas Hume had provided before.[83]

The first text the reader encountered upon opening the book was the "Advertisement," which again addressed the problems created by the first two volumes. He tells his audience, "I think it proper to inform the public, that tho' this be a third volume of the *Treatise of Human Nature*, yet 'tis in some measure independent of the other two, and requires not that the reader shou'd enter into all the abstract reasonings contain'd in them. I am hopeful it may be understood by ordinary readers, with as little attention as is usually given to any books of reasoning." The term "ordinary readers" is especially important because it shows Hume for the first time explicitly accommodating a non-academic market. This was also the first time that Hume placed value upon requiring "little attention" from readers and explicitly promising to avoid "abstract reasonings" - two qualities that defined the marketing of his next published work.[84]

Appearing in two volumes between late-1741 and 1742, *Essays, Moral and Political* was a much different commodity from the *Treatise*: it was a smaller, slimmer duodecimo, advertised as a "neat Pocket Volume," and selling for a much more affordable 2s 6d.[85] (fig. 1) Hume chose Alexander Kincaid as his bookseller, and Robert Fleming and Alexander Alison as printers, signalling his entrance into the Scottish Enlightenment book trade community. Unlike the *Treatise*, the *Essays* were printed and sold in Edinburgh by fellow Scots, then shipped to London, where they were available in the shops of Andrew Millar, J. and P. Knapton, and

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83 Entry 004.
84 "Abstract," in *A Treatise of Human Nature, Book III* (1740), pp. A2-A3. Entry 004.
85 *Daily Post* (2-4 March 1742); *Daily Advertiser* (1 Mach 1742); *London Evening Post* (2-4 March1742); *Gentleman's Magazine* (March 1742).

C. Hirsch. Later these booksellers, especially Millar and Kincaid, were instrumental in disseminating Scottish Enlightenment texts. By 1741 Kincaid and Fleming already stood at the helm of a flourishing Edinburgh news and periodical industry. The story of the latter trade in Edinburgh helps to explain the type of work that Hume created with his two volumes of *Essays*. In many ways, it was a new vessel for philosophical writing that used conventions from popular essay formats in conjunction with established book publishing practices.

The news and periodical press flourished in Edinburgh following the Act of Union, when changes in censorship laws allowed for a greater focus on local affairs. The essay style developed by Addison and Steele in the *Spectator* and *Tatler* had especially strong resonance in this press, sparking several Edinburgh reprints and copies, like *The Tatler, by Donald McStaff of the North* (1711) or *The Mercury, or the Northern Reformer, by Duncan Tatler* (1717).[86] These initiated a long line of essay writing in Edinburgh that had grown only more prominent and relevant by Hume's lifetime. While the *Spectato*r and *Tatle*r saw immense popularity all across the British Isles, there were particular circumstances to its growth in Scotland that rendered it a viable medium for Hume's philosophy by the time he wrote *Essays, Moral and Political*. Addison and Steele's emphasis on morality and politeness in conversation, commerce and taste, set in an urban environment, was especially vital for young, educated men in lowland Scotland who wished to raise the status of their kingdom in relation to England following the Act of Union. This style was especially popular among young men at the

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86 *The Tatler, By Donald McStaff of the North* (Edinburgh: Printed by James Watson, and sold at his shop, next door to the Red Lyon, opposite the Luckenbooths), first issue 13 January 1711. *The Mercury, or the Northern Reformer, by Duncan Tatler* (Edinburgh, Printed by William Brown and John Mosman, sold by the said W. Brown), first issue 1 January 1717.

universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow who saw it as a way of applying their

moral philosophy courses outside of the classroom and in way that was equal

parts exciting and instructive. Professors like Francis Hutcheson at the University

of Glasgow (1729-1746) and John Stevenson (1730-1774) in the University of

Edinburgh advocated this type of engagement in the public square, emphasizing

practical application of moral philosophy and championing the use of clear

language. They took seriously Addison's words in Spectator 10, where he wrote:

"It was said of Socrates that he brought Philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit

among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought

Philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and

assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses."[87] Across the 1720s and 30s,

Edinburgh newspapers and magazines increasingly incorporated "weekly essay"

sections into their pages, sometimes reprinting English essays and other times

publishing original Scottish content addressing localized questions in a

Spectatorial framework. As Lord Woodhouselee wrote:

...the effect of those writings, and more particularly of the papers of *Addison*, was conspicuous in substituting an ease and elegance of composition as a more engaging vehicle for subjects of taste, in the room of the dry scholastic style in which they had hitherto been treated; so, in Scotland, the attention of our youth, fresh from their academical studies, which yet retained a strong tincture of the antient school dialects, was insensibly attracted to the more pleasing topics of criticism and the belles lettres. The cultivation of style became an object of study; and in a few attempts at that lighter species of essay-writing, of which Addison had furnished a model, we see the dawning of a better taste in composition than had hitherto appeared in any publications from the Scottish press.[88]

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87 Joseph Addison, *The Spectator,* 8 vols. (Glasgow: Printed by R. Urie and Company, for A. Stalker and J. Barry, 1745), issue 10.

88 Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, *Memoirs of the life and writings of the honourable Henry Home of Kames* (Edinburgh: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1814), Bk. II, p. 164.

The first such *Tatler* copy, entitled simply *The Tatler* by Donald McStaff of The North, was composed by a young and accomplished advocate named Robert Hepburn who embodied the traits that Woodhouselee associated with those interested in Addison. Hepburn had studied law in Holland and continued at the University of Edinburgh, where he was a student when he began publishing his *Tatler* on 13 January 1711. He completed 40 issues, the final one dated 30 May 1711, and was admitted to the Faculty of Advocates the following year. Under the moniker of Donald MacStaff, Scottish cousin to Isaac Bickerstaff, Hepburn used his *Tatler* to critique local culture and politics and more general matters of taste and morality with Addisonian language.[89] The first issue began with a letter to Bickerstaff imploring him to take notice of Scottish affairs, since the Scots "imagine that what [Bickerstaff says] does not concern them, or seem to be insensible of their Faults and Misbehaviours." He offers to Bickerstaff "some Necessary Hints of the Temper and Genius of [his] Countrymen," and makes a promise that doubles as a call to Enlightenment: "...our greatest Fault, in my Opinion, seems to be, Want of Ambition. We lazily decline that industry and Application, which was always an ingredient in the Characters of all the Great Men of Antiquity, and without which we may drop our Pretentions to Honour and Immortality, and can never deserve the Applause and Admiration of future Ages." By importing the critical framework of the *Tatler* to Edinburgh, Hepburn placed Scots on a cultural footing with the English and measured Scotland's progress against the highest point of human achievement. In doing so, he set the agenda for his readers: to raise Scotland above its provincial status and strive for a

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89 Hamish Mathison, "Robert Hepburn and the Edinburgh Tatler: a study in an early British periodical," *Media History*, Vol. 11, Iss. 1-2, 2005, pp. 147-161.

remarkable place in history. This process championed many of the values that Hume later pulled into his *Essays*. Hepburn advocated moderation, criticizing papers that were "only read with a tolerable satisfaction by the men of their several parties," and stating that "the greatest piece of disservice that can possibly be done to mankind, [was] to publish any thing that tends to the dishonor of virtue or religion."[90] He also promised to, "Give the town some small diversion by drawing some pictures of the vices and follies of mankind, in as familiar a manner as I can," and "entertain rather than instruct; or at least to reprove people for their faults in a diverting manner."[91]

A host of other Edinburgh copies of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* appeared over the following three decades before Hume began writing essays, alongside the growing presence of essays in Scottish newspapers and periodicals. There was the Craftsman-influenced *Thistle* (1734) and the Shaftesburian *Letters of the Critical Club* (1738), in addition to essay sections in *The Edinburgh Gazette* (1714), *The Caledonian Mercury* (1720), and *Scots Magazine* (1738).[92] Alexander Kincaid began publishing the long-running *Edinburgh Evening Courant* in 1735 and *The Reveuer* in 1737, while Fleming printed another periodical, *The Echo, or the Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, from 1729-34, and joined Kincaid on the *Edinburgh*

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90 *The Tatler, By Donald McStaff of the North*, no 1.
91 *The Tatler, By Donald McStaff of the North*, nos. 2 and 5.
92 *The Thistle* (Edinburgh, printed and sold by W. Cheyne, at the foot of Craig's Close, opposite to the Cross), first issue 13 February, 1734. *Letters of the Critical Club* (Edinburgh, printed by W. Cheyne, and sold by A. Martin, and other booksellers in town, 1738). *The Edinburgh Gazette, or Scots Postman* (Printed by Robert Brown, and the printes are to be sold at his printing house, Forrester's Wynd, and Caledona and Royal Coffee Houses), first issue 11 March 1714. *The Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh, Printed for W. R. by William Adams, Junior, and are to be sold at the sign of the printing Press in the Parliament Close), first issue 28 April 1720. *Scots Magazine* (Edinburgh: Printed by Alex Champman and for James Watson), first issue January 1739.

Evening Courant in 1739.[93] Accordingly, Hume's choice of Kincaid, Alison and Fleming as publishers of *Essays, Moral and Political* was much better suited to his work and his authorial ambitions than Noon was for the *Treatise.* These were individuals who appreciated the value of periodical literature as a popular mode of intellectual expression and who had already, successfully and uncontroversially, sold it to a buying public. Additionally, Kincaid had already worked with Hume's primary mentor, friend and intellectual advisor, Henry Home, when he published *Essays Upon Several Subjects in Laws* in 1732.[94]

The book itself copied the periodical essay genre in some respects while rejecting it in others, ultimately infusing a familiar style with more rigorous philosophical content and transforming it into a new type of commodity. There was, to start, the fact that it was a book at all. By their nature, periodicals were normally only available in bound collections if a bookseller or reader compiled individual issues after their initial publication. Booksellers and printers catered to this common practice by publishing periodicals with instructions for placing them together into yearly volumes or offering them in fully reprinted multivolume sets. By the time Hume's *Essays* appeared it was common to print and sell *The Spectator* in sets of eight volumes of duodecimos or small octavos; indeed, the size of the *Essays* made the book visibly similar to such collections. Hume himself owned an edition of *The Spectator* in eight duodecimo volumes,

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93 *The Edinburgh Evening Courant* (Edinburgh: Printed by Mr. James McEuen, William Brown, and John Mosman, to be sold at the said Mr. James Mc Euen and William Brown, their shops), first issue 15 December 1718. Kincaid took over in 1735 and Fleming joined in 1739. *The Reveur* (Edinburgh: Printed for A. Kincaid and sold at his shop opposite to the Parliament Closs), first issue 18 November 1737. Fleming added to imprint from issue 4 onward. *The Echo, or the Edinburgh Weekly Journal* (Edinburgh: Printed by R. Fleming and Company, and sold by J. McEuen and several other booksellers), first issue 10 January 1729.
94 Henry Home, *Essays Upon Several Subjects in Law* (Edinburgh: Printed by R. Fleming and Company, and sold at Mr. James McEwan's Shop, 1732).

published in London in 1720, which matched the *Essays* in size when the two were placed on bookshelf next to each other.[95] (fig. 2) But it was rare for a work professing to emulate The Spectator and The Craftsman to appear as a single bound volume without the individual essays having been published separately. One rare Scottish exception was *The Letters of The Critical Club* (1738), which claims to have been a collected volume, yet no evidence exists of it ever having appeared as a weekly paper. The work itself was a close emulation of The Spectator with a "Critical Club" that discussed moral, philosophical and literary questions in a Shaftesburian framework, with a principal narrator that responded to readers' letters. It appears to have been the work of a single hand, and yet the author felt it necessary to follow Spectatorial conventions to the extent of emulating the collected edition format.[96]

This helps to explain why Hume began the *Essays* with an "Advertisement" to readers explaining his medium and creating an authorial persona for himself. It claimed that most of the essays that followed were written "with a View of becoming publish'd as Weekly-Papers, and were intended to comprehend the Designs both of the Spectators and Craftsmen." Whether Hume ever actually had intentions of publishing a periodical is uncertain, but he certainly wanted readers to approach his book of essays as if they were picking up a newspaper or perusing the "Weekly Essays" section of *Scots Magazine*. Where his last work had presented a vast metaphysical system, Hume called the *Essays* a

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95 Joseph Addison, et al., *The Spectator* (London: Printed for J. Tonson, at Shakespear's-Head, over against Katharine-street in the Strand, 1720), 8 vols. Duodecimo. David Fate Norton, *The David Hume Library* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Bibliographical Society in association with the National Library of Scotland, 1996).
96 *Letters of the Critical Club* (Edinburgh, 1738).

series of "Trifles," and told readers they "must not look for any Connection" among them, "but must consider each of them as a work apart," providing "an equal Ease both to the Writer and Reader, by freeing them of Any tiresome Stretch of Attention or Application." Hume also used the Advertisement to protect himself against the controversy that the *Treatise* sparked, promising to show "Moderation and Impartiality in [his] Method of handling Political Subjects," and endeavouring to repress "Party-Rage" with essays that "will be acceptable to the moderate of both parties" and "displease the Bigots of Both." The book itself was published anonymously and Hume claimed in the advertisement to be a "new Author," anxious over the success of his work and seeking the judgement of the public. In this manner Hume thoroughly copied the authorial voice of numerous periodical writers, especially Bolingbroke, Addison and Steele, who placed great emphasis on politeness, political moderation, and ease of communication. Such a voice and medium cut away all of the problems he faced with the *Treatise*, from its difficult prose to its offensive arguments and poor marketability.[97]

Hume continued his self-conscious examination of his medium and writing style in "Of Essay Writing" at the opening of the second volume of *Essays, Moral and Political*.[98] Later he removed this essay from the 1748 edition of *Essays, Moral and Political*, as it would have been redundant with his more developed examination of the same themes in "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," published in the *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* in the same year. Accordingly, "Of Essay Writing" functions as a snapshot of Hume's approach to writing and publishing philosophical works at the specific time when

97 Hume, "Advertisement," in *Essays, Moral and Political* (1741), pp. iii-v. Entry 005.
98 Entry 010.

he emerged as writer of essays. More so than at any other point in his career, he praised Addison and Steele and couched his discussion of authorship in the language of The Spectator. "The elegant Part of Mankind," he begins, "may be divided into the *learned* and *conversible,*" the former engaging in a "higher" profession that requires leisure and solitude and must employ great preparation and labour to bring their work to perfection. The latter seeks pleasure and the company of others and engages in "the easier and more gentle Exercises of the Understanding," and enjoys making "obvious" reflections on human affairs, duties and the objects that surround them. The separation of the learned and conversible worlds was "the great Defect of the last Age," with learning "being shut up in Colleges and Cells," worse for its lack of reference to "common Life and Conversation," and *Belles Lettres* becoming "totally barbarous" and being cultivated by men without taste and poor abilities in thought and expression. In Hume's own age, much to his delight, he felt that this division was narrowing as "Men of Letters" lost their "Shyness" and "Bashfulness of Temper," and "Men of the World" looked to books for their topics of conversation. It is at those inhabiting this middle ground that he directed his *Essays*. He saw himself as "a Kind of Resident or Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation," and believed it was his "constant Duty to promote a good Correspondence betwixt these two States."[99] Hume virtually parrots *The Spectator* in this essay; that he published it only once is a testament to the extent of his crisis as an author following the failure of the *Treatise*. The popularity of the *Spectator* and *Craftsman* offered Hume the best solution to the problems he saw with the

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99 Hume, "Of Essay Writing," in *Essays, Moral and Political, Volume II* (1742), pp. 1-8. Entry 010.

Treatise: this was philosophical writing that reached beyond the educated readers holding to their own dogmas, offering Hume the hope of being revered for the reasonableness of his arguments.

Compared with the *Treatise,* the success of the *Essays* was immense. As Hume wrote to Home in June of 1742, "the Essays are all sold in London, as I am informed by two letters from English gentlemen of my acquaintance. There is a demand for them; and, as one of them tells me, Innys, the great bookseller in Paul's Churchyard, wonders there is not a new edition, for that he cannot find copies for his customers."[100] Indeed his emulation of the genre was so successful that some of the individual essays were reprinted widely by the very newspapers and magazines he professed to copy. The essay "Whether the British Government inclines more to absolute Monarchy, or to a Republick," appeared on the front page of The Craftsman on October 10 of 1741, as an anonymous letter to Caleb D'Anvers.[101] It was subsequently reprinted in Gentleman's Magazine, The London Magazine, and *Scots Magazine.* Then, after he published the second volume of *Essays* in January of 1741, he saw even more widespread reprints of "A Character of Sir Robert Walpole."[102] This was largely due to the fall of the Walpole government on 11 February 1742, a coincidence that made Hume's essay a hyper-current piece of political commentary. The popularity of the short piece, and mild controversy it sparked due to its criticism of Walpole, prompted Hume to answer a set of queries about his position and have them published in the March edition of *Scots Magazine.*[103] It seems "A Character" was the most important element in the

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100 Hume to Kames, 24 June 1742, HL, Letter 17.
101 Entry 006.
102 Entries 011, 012, 013, and 014.
103 Entry 015.

success of the *Essays*. Where "Whether the British Government" appeared anonymously as an essay from The Craftsman, reprints of "A Character" contained a reference to Hume's book – whether by title or as an anonymously published essay collection from Edinburgh. A second edition of Volume I appeared in May and the two volumes were re-marketed together as a set for 5s. Kincaid placed a large advertisement in newspapers from May through July that placed both under a single title and listed, in two columns, the individual essays contained within.[104]

In this way, Hume successfully achieved the voice of a periodical essayist whose pieces followed the genre's customs of moderation and politeness sufficiently enough to sit seamlessly alongside the "easy and obvious," but widely read, philosophical writing of his day. The success of the *Essays* put Hume in a position to influence public discourse without the blessing of the academy or The Kirk. Even if each essay contained only a tiny part of his larger philosophical system, the mere scale of their circulation rendered them more likely to test readers' dogmas than the largely-unnoticed *Treatise*. Hume saw advantages and disadvantages to this approach – as he remarked to Home, "They [the *Essays*] may prove like dung with marl, and bring forward the rest of my Philosophy, which is of a more durable, though of a harder and more stubborn nature."[105] In many respects, the need for clear writing was a practical nuisance standing in the way of his philosophical revolution, compounded by market factors that removed the success of his work from the strength of the arguments contained within. The

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104 *Universal Spectator* (11 May 1742); *London Evening Post* (22 May 1742); *London Evening Post* (15 and 27 July 1742).
105 Hume to Kames, 13 June 1742, NHL, Letter 17.

failure of the *Treatise* had been a rude reminder of the difficulty of reaching wide readership with rigorous philosophical writing; but soon he faced an even more definite failure with his rejection from the academy, leaving commercial success his only option for pursuing a life as a man of letters.

While the *Essays* offered Hume greater success than the *Treatise*, they did not prove helpful when he was a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1744. The leader of the opposition, University of Edinburgh Principal and clergyman William Wishart, circulated a list of excerpts from the *Treatise* highlighting its allegedly sceptical and atheist content in an attempt to smear Hume and bolster the candidacy of William Cleghorn. Hume responded by writing a letter to John Coutts with a point-by-point refutation of the charges raised against him. Henry Home published the letter, without Hume's explicit permission, in May of 1745 as a pamphlet entitled *A Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh: Containing Some Observations on a Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality, said to be maintain'd in a Book lately published, intituled, A Treatise of Human Nature.*[106] Assuming the voice of an anonymous and neutral reader, Hume again took on the apologetic language he had used in the Abstract, in the preface to the third volume of the *Treatise*, and in his letters to Home and other acquaintances. He asserted again that the problem rested in the book's form and not its central arguments: "I am indeed of Opinion," he wrote, "that the Author had better delayed the publishing of that Book; not on account of any dangerous Principles contained in

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106 Hume to Kames, 15 June 1745, NHL, Letter 7. Hume wrote, "I am sorry you shou'd have found yourself oblig'd to print the Letter I wrote to Mr Couts, it being so hastily compos'd that I scarce had time to revise it." Entry 017.

it, but because on more mature Consideration he might have rendered it much less imperfect by further Corrections and Revisals." He believed his opponents had pulled excerpts from the book, which, taken out of context, improperly portrayed its philosophical system as atheistic and sceptical. There would have been no objection to his candidacy "if the Matter had been to be judg'd by Reason," but Wishart instead took Hume's arguments and decided to "pervert them & misrepresent them in the grossest way in the World."[107] In many ways this represented the fulfillment of Hume's anxieties over the *Treatise's* reception beginning before its publication and growing dramatically after it was published. At no point in the affair did the *Essays* come into play. It is very possible that the people involved did not see through Hume's anonymity and know that he was the author of both publications; indeed, he admitted to having trouble concealing his authorship of the *Treatise* but never made similar remarks about the *Essays*. More tangibly, his criticism singles out the audience that he had in mind when he criticized the limited scope of "accurate and abstruse" philosophy: the *Treatise* was known among university professors and the clergy, both of whom were too committed to their own dogmas to asses it reasonably. In a remark that captured his affinity for a different philosophical marketplace, he continued to Home, "I never was very fond of this Office of which I have been dissappointed, on account of the Restraint, which I forsaw it wou'd have impos'd on me."[108] Nonetheless, the sting of his rejection from the academy remained for the rest of his life and served as a continuous source of vitriol for the clergy.

   The three years between the University of Edinburgh affair and Hume's

107 Entry 017.
108 Hume to Kames, 15 June 1745, NHL, Letter 7.

next set of publications saw him critically reevaluating his philosophical

ambitions and the role he could play in society as a man of letters without the

backing of the academy. He spent this time pursuing an income from a series of

jobs that he obtained through acquaintances and supporters: first as a tutor for the

Marquis of Annandale, then as secretary to Lieutenant-General St. Clair, the latter

including an attack on the coast of Brittany in September of 1746 and a diplomatic

journey across Europe from January through April of 1748. In his idle time – the

most substantial block of which came in late 1747 when he returned to Ninewells

– he worked on "philosophical & moral essays" that he had conceived at least by

June 1745 and had ambitions of starting his *History of England*.[109] The former

referred to his plan of recasting the *Treatise* in clearer and less offensive language,

the "philosophical" essays appearing in 1748 as *Philosophical Essays Concerning

Human Understanding* and the "moral" essays appearing in 1751 as *An Enquiry

Concerning the Principles of Morals.*[110] He also wrote three political essays that

were heavily influenced by Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* and his diplomatic

travels and added them to a new edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* in 1748.[111]

While he was working on a wide variety of projects in 1748, his publications from

that year still fell under the marketing strategy developed with *Essays, Moral and

Political*, branding him as a polite essayist that reached above – but not so far

above as to tax readers – the level of discourse in newspapers in periodicals. Even

though Hume later changed the title of the *Philosophical Essays* to *An Enquiry

Concerning Human Understanding*, regarding the "essays" as chapters in a

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109 Hume to Kames, 15 June 1745, NHL, Letter 7. Hume to Kames, January 1747, NHL, Letter 9.
110 Entries 019 and 025.
111 Entry 020. Moritz Baumstark, "David Hume: The Making of a Philosophical Historian, A
Reconsideration*,"* PhD. thesis in history at the University of Edinburgh (2007).

unified work and associating it more closely with *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* as the "first" and "second" enquiries, upon their publication the *Philosophical Essays* and third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* were extremely similar commodities. The next phase of Hume's philosophical writing career, which I will cover in Chapter 2, involved him differentiating between more and less rigorous writing styles while simultaneously finding ways of combining his increasingly disparate works into *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*. The closing of the first phase brought important beginnings and endings: he moved away from emulating Addison and Bolingbroke, instead working to establish himself as a more rigorous philosopher – a writer of enquiries, dissertations and treatises – whose status was derived from a commercial vocabulary rather than institutional affiliation or patronage. At the same time, a crucial part of his authorial image was to do this while retaining the broader identity of an essayist, ultimately pushing the genre to encompass far more rigorous and novel philosophy than it had under the *Spectator* and *Craftsman*

The *Philosophical Essays* were Hume's first work published in London by Andrew Millar and printed by William Strahan. In this respect, they signified his entrance into the publishing mode that defined his career from the early 1750s onward and helped to bring him immense success. Millar had spent the 1720s and 30s primarily selling Scottish reprints of English books and reissues of Edinburgh books, but was more engaged in publishing new Scottish books after he became the London agent for the Foulis Press in Glasgow in 1741 and for Alexander Kincaid in 1748. Hume was one of the first among the Scottish Enlightenment literati he published but far from the last. Within the following decade, Millar

became the standard bookseller for Scottish Enlightenment texts, selling works by Hugh Blair, William Robertson, Adam Smith, John Home, and many others. He also took an unusually active role in funding books by his authors and paid them unprecedentedly high amounts of copy money.[112] In the words of Samuel Johnson, Millar "raised the price of literature," and Hume in particular was one of the first to receive the benefits.[113] Conversely, as I will show in Chapter 3, Hume was instrumental in acting as a literary advisor to Millar and patron to the Scottish literati in his circle – especially William Robertson, Hugh Blair, Adam Smith, John Home, and Alexander Gerard, whose works Hume helped through the press.

Hume finished the *Philosophical Essays* and prepared them for publication during his time at Ninewells in the Autumn of 1747. He met with Millar in London during the following February and January, before leaving with General St. Clair, and made publication arrangements both for them and for a new edition of *Essays, Moral and Political*.[114] At every step, Millar presented the two works as complimentary essay collections by the same author, similar in style but covering different sets of topics. Advertisements for the *Philosophical Essays* featured the word "Philosophical Essays" prominently and "on human understanding" as a subtitle. Instead of including Hume's name, the book appeared as "By the Author of Essays, Moral and Political," and was available in Millar's shop, where *Essays, Moral and Political* were also sold.[115] Millar intended buyers to see the

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112 Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors & Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland & America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 275-294. "Millar, Andrew (1705-1768)," ODNB.

113 James Boswell, *Life of Johnson,* ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), bk. i, p. 287.

114 Hume to Kames, June 1747, NHL, 10. Entries 019 and 021.

115 *Jacobites Journal* (16 April 1748); *General Evening Post* (16-19 April); *General Advertiser* (20-22 April 1748); *London Evening Post* (23-26 April 1748); *Gentleman's Magazine* (April 1748), vol. 18, p. 192.

Philosophical Essays as a continuation of Hume's earlier essays and hoped to build on the success of those volumes. This was bolstered by the printing of a third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* in November 1748 as a single duodecimo volume identically sized to the *Philosophical Essays*. (fig. 3) Consumers who already owned the first and second editions of *Essays, Moral and Political* were also given the option of buying the new *Three Essays* separately and having them sewn into the earlier volumes.[116]

The semi-anonymous publication of the *Philosophical Essays* seems to have been a precautionary measure against the controversy that haunted the *Treatise*. Henry Home would have preferred that they were never published, and had advised Hume that they would only strengthen his reputation as an infidel. Hume, on the other hand, was "too deep engaged to think of a retreat," and could not see "what bad consequences follow, in the present age, from the character of an infidel; especially if a man's conduct be in other respects irreproachable."[117] The latter was probably wishful thinking given his rejection from the University of Edinburgh post. It is more likely that Hume believed strongly in the need to recast the *Treatise* in a more accessible form and was willing to break from his mentor's advice and take on a second risk. "I won't justify the prudence of this step," he wrote to Home, "any other way than by expressing my indifference about all the consequences that may follow."[118] The final printed book and its corresponding marketing achieved a bit of each goal: it excluded Hume's name but featured "By the Author of *Essays, Moral and Political*" on the title page,

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116 *General Evening Post*, Nov. 19-22, 1748; *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer,* Nov. 17-19, 1748.
117 Hume to Kames, January 1747, NHL, 9.
118 Hume to Kames, 9 February 1748. HL, 2.

linking itself to a successful work while avoiding any potential controversy generated by Hume's name.[119] The third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political*, appearing in November, forewent this caution and displayed Hume's name on the title page, becoming the first book to which he signed his name in public.[120] This was partially due to the fact that the *Essays* had proven to be a successful and uncontroversial work, more likely to boost the stature of Hume's name rather than tarnish it, but it also fit with Millar and Strahan's penchant for building their authors into recognizable figures whom buyers would seek out in a large marketplace.

The commercial unity of these two works masked the reality of their contents showing Hume moving in three substantially different directions as a writer: that is, composing Spectatorial essays; refashioning the *Treatise* into shorter enquiries; and tackling political topics with the depth of Montesquieu and the wide appeal of Bolingbroke. The following chapter will show how Hume followed these avenues while developing a singular persona as a man of letters using a set of symbols and terms that were dependent on his marketplace. In many ways, Hume worked together with Millar and Strahan to forge a new place for the distinguished, credible man of letters with high philosophical stature and wide commercial appeal. The seeds of this identity were contained more clearly than anywhere else in "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," and the subsequent decade of Hume's career saw Hume assert this identity over a set of commodities. This would culminate in the gathering of his philosophical works into *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects,* which came to represent the canon of a major

119 Entry 019.
120 Entry 021.

philosopher, but in a manner that was distinctly tied to the 18th-century print

marketplace. By 1748, the greatest indicator of Hume's eventual rise to fame was

that he had finally published a book to which he could sign his name.

Fig. 1, First print editions of *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Entries 001, 002, and 004) and *Essays, Moral and Political* (Entries 005 and 010). McGill University David Hume Collection.

Fig. 2, Eight-volume collected edition of *The Spectator* compared with *Essays, Moral and Political* (Entries 010 and 016). On the left, the *Treatise*. McGill University David Hume Collection.

Fig. 3, First printing of *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (Entry 022) and third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* (Entry 021), both from 1748. McGill University David Hume Collection.
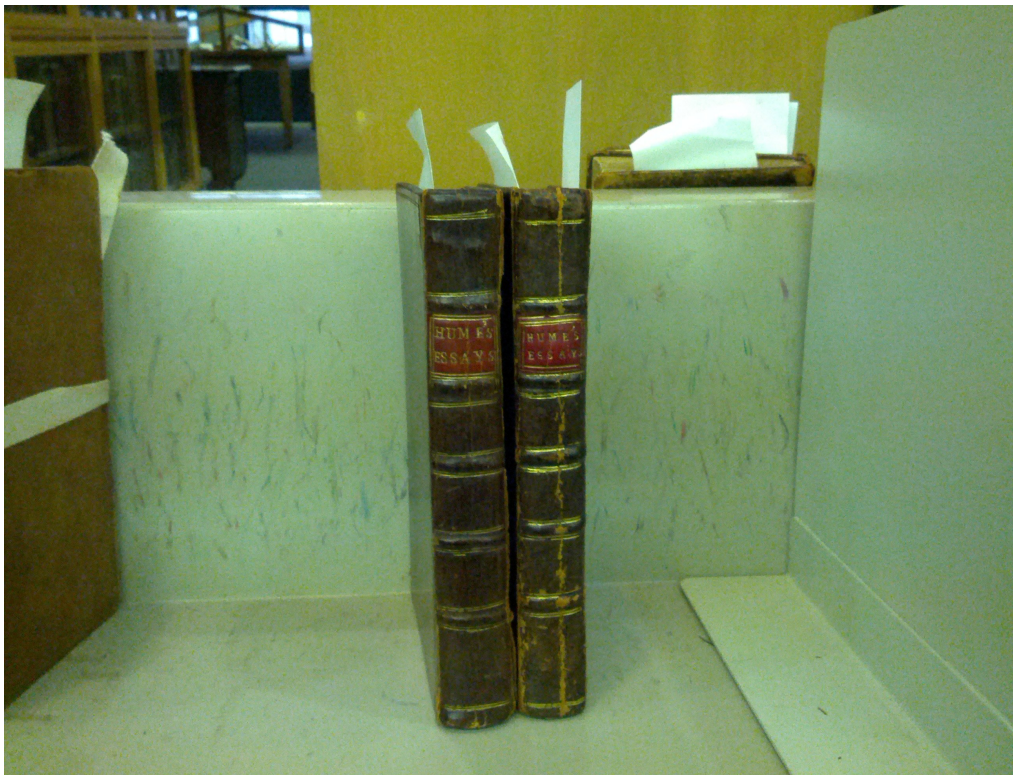
Chapter II: The Intellectual and Material Construction of *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*

Part One

In "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," Hume crystallized his approach to philosophical writing and set the mission for his works to follow. Having obtained moderate fame as an essayist, albeit one pushing the limits of the genre, he hoped to use his status and reputation to convey his more complex philosophical system to a large readership. As "Of the Different Species" outlined, and as his early use of the essay format had shown, this was not a simple task; there was no existing literary style that could fulfill his mission with full effectiveness. The Spectatorial and Bolingbrokian formats were too easy and polite, too undemanding of their readers' attention, to affect the minds of a large public in a meaningful way. They lacked the reason and moderation that Hume hoped to inject into British political discourse, instead propagating the party squabbling they professed to detest. Conversely, a metaphysical philosophical tome like the *Treatise* was too dense and complex, too unfashionable a commodity, to extend beyond a specialist market and make its way into the homes of educated nonacademic consumers who were part of a vital and expanding middle class. Moreover, the *Treatise's* reputation as an irreligious and sceptical text spread farther than the *Treatise* itself, turning off many potential buyers before they opened the book. Hume's solution was to perform a radical surgery on the polite essay tradition – a process that began in *Essays, Moral and Political*,

and reached a critical moment of reflection in *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding*. With the intellectual groundwork laid by 1748, it remains to be seen how this played out across his subsequent works and ultimately *ETSS*.

Hume's radical surgery involved more than a mere change in writing style, but also subject matter, formatting, presentation, and marketing. He had argued since the *Treatise* that individuals developed their beliefs through a history of experiences in common life; his use of the essay format represented an attempt to appeal to those experiences in an attempt to instil his philosophical system into the minds of the British public. By publishing essays and a history, he was self-consciously placing his novel and complex ideas into the most popular formats available. But how could he push these formats beyond their customary use, to instil a genuine change in the minds of readers?

This chapter is concerned with the genesis and development of *ETSS* in particular and its implications for Hume's manner of writing and publishing philosophy. The decade between 1748 and 1758 began with Hume engaged in a variety of projects and ended with an assertion of unity, canonization, and singular philosophical authorial identity in the form of *ETSS*. In the former year, he was refashioning the *Treatise* into a set of shorter books, beginning work on the *Political Discourses*, and laying the groundwork for his *History*; in the latter year, he pulled together his philosophical writings into *ETSS* and published them in a single, large quarto edition physically matching the first two volumes of the *History*.[121]

Richard Sher calls *ETSS* a "bibliographical inconvenience" for

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121 Entry 041. For comparison of volumes, see fig. 2.

philosophers and intellectual historians who focus solely on texts at the expense of knowing "Hume the man or Hume the writer." In a short section of *The Enlightenment and the Book*, Sher outlines the genesis and successive phases of *ETSS* with a mind to displaying the construction of Hume's identity as an author in conjunction with his publishers. He uses *ETSS* to support Foucault's "author function," or the creation of an author to organize and make sense of a large and otherwise disparate body of texts; then further proposes a "publisher function," centring on the role of the publisher in creating and marketing an author's identity. As I outlined in the introduction to my study, Sher emphasizes the importance of "paratexts," or the parts of publications lying outside their main texts, such as title pages, addresses to readers, engravings, bindings, etc.[122] My own study of *ETSS* below begins by covering similar ground and bolsters Sher's work in some places while adding to it or critiquing it in others. I intend, however, to go further in forming a link between these aspects of Hume's publications and his intellectual intentions. Sher sees *ETSS* as a means to understanding Scottish Enlightenment print culture more broadly and accordingly overlooks its place in Hume's career-long examination of style, medium, reader habits, and the possibilities of conveying complex and undogmatic ideas to a broad public. With a grounding in the intellectual process I outlined in my first chapter, I intend to show how *ETSS* was not only an important but also a highly meaningful text in Hume's development as an author.

As with his earlier essay collections, *ETSS* was both an intellectual and

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122 Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 43-61.

commercial construction. His particular position as a man of letters working without the safety of conventional patronage made him unusually dependent on book sales to sustain his lifestyle; by parallel, his desire to communicate with readers and foment his philosophical revolution made him especially keen on using popular modes of expression to convey his unorthodox ideas to a large public. In the broadest sense, *ETSS* was the physical embodiment of an author's interaction with his public, capturing a particular style of discourse, set of ideas, manner of presentation, and marketing strategy that was intricately tailored to appeal to 18th-century readers. Insofar as Hume treated *ETSS* as his philosophical canon, this was the manner in which the 18th-century public consumed his work as a philosopher. The decision he and his publishers made to place his philosophical works into a single collection required them to make numerous other decisions about the presentation, naming, and marketing of those works and of his authorial identity. While these qualities of an author's books and public persona might be less important in other cases, they are crucial for Hume because he was so intricately involved in the publishing of his works.

Hume passed through three distinct phases as he developed *ETSS* in conjunction with his booksellers and printers across the 1750s and 60s. The first lasted from 1748 until 1753, when he wrote a series of books and published them separately: the *Philosophical Essays* in 1748, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* in 1751, and the *Political Discourses* in 1752.[123] Here he expanded his partnership with Strahan and Millar and built upon the reputation he had earned as an essayist – both in the composition of his books and their

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123 Entries 020, 025, and 026.

marketing. The second phase came between the first appearance of *ETSS* in 1753, as a set of four-volume, duodecimo pocket editions, and the first single-volume quarto edition in 1758.[124] In this period, Hume and his publishers shifted entirely to the pocket duodecimo format and added cancel title pages and bindings to previous editions of his philosophical works, creating a deliberate and clear but somewhat cobbled together coherence among his books. The publication of a single quarto edition of *ETSS* in 1758 marked the beginning of the third phase; this was the first time when Hume's philosophical works appeared in a single, nicely-printed, large, commanding edition, which broke from the collected essay format and took that of an authoritative intellectual work. From this point onward, *ETSS* became the official collection of Hume's philosophical works and a compliment to his *History of England* – one half of an author's canon that any consumer should have in full on their bookshelves. It was published in a variety of formats and at a variety of prices, but always with the singular intention of increasing sales, gaining assent from readers, and raising Hume's profile as an author. (fig. 1)

Returning to 1748, we find Hume having just finished the *Philosophical Essays* and third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political,* and beginning work for *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, *Political Discourses*, and *A History of England.* He was hopeful of reaching a wide audience in each case and employed the principles outlined in "Of the Different Species of Philosophy" in slightly varying ways according to the nature of each work. The first *Enquiry* began as the *Philosophical Essays* and was marketed as a set of essays until he

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124 Entries 028-034 and Entry 041.

changed the name to *An Enquiry* in the 1758 edition of *ETSS*. He did not hold to this strategy for the second *Enquiry*, always treating it as a unified work. The *Political Discourses* brought him back to the style of the more politically-oriented pieces in *Essays, Moral and Political* and *Three Essays,* though in a more refined and focused manner than in those collections. There was, however, a common stylistic thread through these works of attempting to complex and novel arguments in understandable, if not plain, language and appealing to the experiences of common life. They were also built upon a central conception of human nature. What was published as a separate set of books was in fact a group of closely related texts taking up various moral, political, economic, and literary topics with the same philosophical framework. The decision that Hume and his publishers made to put them together into *ETSS* was symptomatic of this unity.

Hume wrote in his autobiography that the *Philosophical Essays* and third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* "met not with a much better reception" than the *Treatise* upon initial publication.[125] This only changed while he was on a writing retreat at his brother's house, between 1749 and 1751, when:

My bookseller, A. Millar, informed me, that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends, and Right Reverends, came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company.[126]

These statements contain a somewhat curious take on the works' fate: all available figures indicate that both sold well – certainly better than the *Treatise* – and the overwhelming majority of the "answers" he cites were critical. One of the "new

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125 Hume, "My Own Life," in *The Life of David Hume, Esq.* (1777), pp. 1-35 ¶8. Entry 049.
126 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶9.

editions" to which Hume referred would have been the second edition of

Philosophical Essays that Strahan printed in September of 1749.[127] Coming a year

and a half after the first edition with the copy count increased from 750 to 1,250,

it gives all the indications of the second printing of a successful book rather than

an unexpected upturn.[128] With a reissue of the second edition in 1756 numbering

1,000, there were a total of 3,000 copies printed before 1758, which hardly

constituted a failure next to the *Treatise's* unsold 1,000.[129] The third edition of

Essays, Moral and Political displayed even higher sales.[130] Already a successful

book and on its third printing by 1748, Strahan printed another 1,000 copies in

April of 1753 when preparing the first edition of *ETSS*.[131] Even if it was given

only modest print runs of 750 for each of its first three editions (a very

conservative estimate considering successive printings usually increased in

number), there would have been a minimum of 3,250 copies in circulation by

1753. In his remarks, Hume seems to have been exhibiting tendencies that

coloured his perception of the *Treatise's* failure: slow sales could mean few copies

sold in the first weeks, and poor reception could refer to a lack of attention from

the "zealots," whether positive or negative.

Central to the book's marketing was Hume's self-fashioning as an essayist

despite the fact that it was a unified and more difficult work of philosophy. Hume

and his publishers placed all editions of the *Philosophical Essays* from 1748 –

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127 Entry 022.
128 "The Ledgers and Business Papers of William Strahan," BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 78. Entry
    022. Millar delayed publication until September 1750 due to earthquakes (Hume to John
    Clephane, 18 April 1750, HL, Letter 66).
129 BL Add. MS 48800, fols. 84 and 113. Entry 036.
130 Entry 032.
131 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 97.

1756 in the pocket duodecimo format that was common for collected periodicals and had worked effectively for *Essays, Moral and Political*. As outlined in the previous chapter, the reputation that Hume gained as an essayist from *Essays, Moral and Political* dominated the marketing of *Philosophical Essays* in 1748. This trend continued as *Philosophical Essays* saw further editions, even while he moved away from the polite essay and took on a more rigorous authorial voice. For example, an advertisement for the second edition, published in June of 1751, named the book incorrectly as "Twelve Essays Concerning Human Understanding," listing the individual essays (later, chapter) titles underneath, and identifying the author: "By Mr. Hume, Author of the *Essays, Moral and Political*."[132]

With relatively high sales on the one hand and numerous critical responses on the other, we see the divide in the reading public that Hume identified during his early reaction to the *Treatise's* failure. Educated readers, especially those working in the academy and clergy, were most apt to understanding his complex philosophical system but more likely to reject it based on their deeply entrenched beliefs. The *Philosophical Essays* garnered cries of scepticism and irreligion, just as the *Treatise* had, but they still sold far more copies than the *Treatise* and nearly as many as *Essays, Moral and Political*. This fulfilled Hume's prediction that a nonacademic and nonclerical market would be more open to considering his ideas based on the reasonableness, strength, and ease of his arguments. Here was as much a victory as Hume could ask for: he held little hope for converting the zealots but saw immense potential in appealing to middle class educated readers

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132 *General Advertiser,* 6 June 1751.

who inhabited a moderate and malleable place in the political spectrum. He was also aware that there were far more of the latter.

A review of *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* published in the Monthly Review of January, 1752, offers insight into the nature of his reputation once these works had gained more popularity:

The reputation this ingenious author has acquir'd as a fine and elegant writer, renders it unnecessary for us to say any thing in his praise. We shall only observe in general, that clearness and precision of ideas on abstracted and metaphysical subjects, and at the same time propriety, elegance and spirit, are seldom found united in any writings in a more eminent degree than in those of Mr. Hume. The work now before us will, as far as we are able to judge, considerably raise his reputation; and, being free from that sceptical turn which appears in his other pieces, will be more agreeable to the generality of Readers. His subject is important and interesting, and the manner of treating it easy and natural...[133]

Even if this review portrays him still battling the charges of atheism and scepticism in critical responses the *Treatise* and *Philosophical Essays*, it shows immense success in his efforts to improve the clarity and effectiveness of his philosophical writing style. On this point it could not be farther from reviews of the *Treatise*. That his reputation would be self-apparent shows the dramatic shift that occurred between the failure of the *Treatise* and the success of his subsequent collections of essays. He might not have been known for the finer points of his philosophical system, but he had gained some degree of public approbation for his engaging, entertaining, and eloquent writing style. His earlier correspondence showed that he understood this to be a crucial first step toward reaching a wide readership.

The fate of the second *Enquiry* displayed the complexity and delicateness

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133 William Rose, review of *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* in *Monthly Review*, January 1752, vol. 6, pp. 1-19.

of Hume's position. He wrote in his autobiography that the book was "of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world."[134] Strahan's ledgers indicate a large first printing of 1,500 copies in July of 1751, likely banking on the success of *Essays, Moral and Political* and the *Philosophical Essays.*[135] This was a reasonable gamble: if Book I of the *Treatise* had sold well in its refashioned state then it should have followed that Book III would sell well too. While by no means a failure, the second *Enquiry* was Hume's worst-selling book since the *Treatise*, only seeing a second print run after it became Volume III of *ETSS*.[136] It additionally received few responses from other writers, whether positive or negative, as the attention of his critics remained focused primarily on the *Philosophical Essays* and soon the *Political Discourses*, which were published three months later.[137] The relative change in fortune reflected, in part, a shift in format and marketing away from the image he and his publishers had cultivated up to that point. Hume had not been comfortable publishing the first *Enquiry* as *Philosophical Essays* since they were in fact a unified work and were intended as a refashioning of a single book. Moreover, "Of the Different Species" had asked readers to stretch their attention beyond that due to polite essays and the second *Enquiry* was the next logical step. In advertisements, the book was identified as "By David Hume, Esq.," without the references to *Essays, Moral and Political*

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134 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶10.
135 BL MS 48800 fol. 94.
136 BL MS 48800 fol. 97.
137 For a concise chronological list of responses to Hume's works, see James Fieser's, "A Bibliography of Hume's Writings and Early Responses," cataloguing the contents of his eight-volume *Early Responses to Hume* series (Thoemmes, 2000-2004).

that dominated advertisements for the *Philosophical Essays*.[138]

Still, as Hume published these books and judged their reception, his conviction that he had made a mistake in publishing the *Treatise* as he did only grew stronger, and he became more confident in the quality and effectiveness of his newer philosophical works. He wrote to Gilbert Elliot in early 1751, "I believe the Philosophical Essays contain every thing of Consequence relating to the Understanding, which you would meet with in the Treatise; & I give you my Advice against reading the latter. By shortening & simplifying the Questions, I really render them much more complete."[139] In another letter to John Stewart in 1754, he said he had made "a very great Mistake" in publishing the *Treatise*, a book which "pretended to innovate in all the sublimest Parts of Philosophy." Referring to the *Philosophical Essays* and second *Enquiry*, he continued, "But what Success the same Doctrines, better illustrated & exprest, may meet with, Ad huc sub judice lis est...I am willing to be instructed by the Public; tho' human Life is so short that I despair of ever seeing the Decision. I wish I had always confin'd myself to the more easy Parts of Erudition."[140]

While of great importance to Hume, the refashioning of the *Treatise* was an old project and the second *Enquiry* was its last major effort (Book II would find its way into the much shorter "Dissertation of the Passions" in *Four Dissertations*).[141] At the same time when Hume wrote the second *Enquiry* on retreat at his brother's country house, between 1749 and 1751, he also composed

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138 *General Advertiser*, 30 Nov., 1751.
139 Hume to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, March or April, 1751, HL, Letter 73.
140 Hume to John Stewart, February 1754, HL, Letter 93. "Ad huc sub judice lis est" is Latin for, "The issue is still under judgement."
141 Entry 037.

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the pieces that formed the *Political Discourses*. Having applied his philosophical system to public life in *Essays, Moral and Political* and *Three Essays*, he was to do it again here. He had conceived the *Political Discourses* as a continuation of these works, calling it "the second part of my Essays" in his autobiography and later naming it "Part II" or "Volume II" of *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary*.[142] In most respects, this was similar territory: while he turned more toward economic topics, his practice of carrying out philosophical-historical analyses of political institutions and customs remained the same. Indeed the discourse, "Of the Protestant Succession," was originally written for *Three Essays* but he withheld it for fear of being perceived as a sceptical Whig.[143]

In the beginning of the first discourse, "Of Commerce," he continued the examination of philosophical literature, style, and reader habits that he had last addressed at length in "Of the Different Species of Philosophy."[144] "The greatest part of mankind," it begins, "may be divided into two classes; that of shallow thinkers, who fall short of the truth, and that of abstruse thinkers, who go beyond it. The latter class are by far the most uncommon, and I may add, by far the most useful and valuable." While they might "start difficulties" and put forth "uncommon" ideas, they can produce great discoveries with the help of "men who have a more just way of thinking" and, at the very least, offer to others "the pleasure of hearing something that is new. An author is little to be valu'd, who tells us nothing but what we can learn from every coffee-house conversation." Here he returns to familiar territory: he has recognized a culture of polite

142 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶9.
143 Hume to Henry Home, 9 February 1748, HL, Letter 62.
144 Hume, "Of Commerce," in *Political Discourses* (1752), pp. 4-24. Entry 026.

discourse and easy philosophy and hopes to infuse it with deeper learning. Only

by engaging in the difficult of act of challenging their inherited beliefs and

considering complex, novel ideas could the British public improve their political

structures and behaviours.[145]

The introduction that follows is far more nuanced than its length would

suggest. What is on the surface an apology for a difficult and unconventional

work is also a close analysis of the manner in which individuals formulate, argue,

and act upon their political beliefs; knowing his positions will immediately seem

counter to the experiences of common life and rejected, he asks readers to

consider his work more deeply before drawing conclusions. He starts by

identifying the tendency of shallow thinkers to reject the more abstruse:

All people of shallow thought are apt to decry even those of solid understanding
as abstruse thinkers and metaphysicians and refiners; and never will allow
anything to be just, which is beyond their own weak conceptions. There are some
cases, I own, where an extraordinary refinement affords a strong presumption of
falsehood, and where no reasoning is to be trusted but what is natural and easy.[146]

He owns that elaborate reasoning can obstruct practical action related to specific

issues. However, this is an incomplete approach to politics that mitigates deeper

philosophical principles.

But when we reason up on general subjects, one may justly affirm, that our
speculations can scarce ever be too fine, provided they be just; and that the
difference betwixt a common man and a man of genius, is chiefly seen in the
shallowness or depth of the principles, upon which they proceed.[147]

He then goes deeper into the connection between general and particular reasoning,

warning that both can give the impression of rigour and lead individuals to a false

sense of correctness. It is too common, he believes, to marginalize the role of the

145 Hume, "Of Commerce," p. 1. Entry 026.
146 Hume, "Of Commerce," p. 2. Entry 026.
147 Hume, "Of Commerce," p. 2. Entry 026.

philosopher in the everyday process of politics; and while the philosopher is not

needed at every turn, it is absolutely essential not to reduce the philosopher to a

secondary role.

General reasonings seem intricate, merely because they are general; nor is it easy
for the bulk of mankind to distinguish, in a great number of particulars, that
common circumstance in which they all agree, or to extract it, pure and unmixt,
from the other superfluous circumstances. Every judgement or conclusion, with
them, is particular. They cannot enlarge their view to those universal propositions,
which comprehend under them an infinite number of individuals, and include a
whole science in a single theorem. Their eye in confounded with such an
extensive prospect, and the conclusions deriv'd from it, even tho' clearly exprest,
seem intricate and obscure. But however intricate they may seem, 'tis certain, that
general principles, if just and sound, must always prevail in the general course of
things, tho' they may fail in particular cases; and 'tis the chief business of
philosophers to regard the general course of things.[148]

That said, he allows that statesmen can focus on particular deliberations for the

benefit of the public good. He is not giving statesmen license to think

superficially; rather, he is issuing a final warning that the public good is the

ultimate end of their occupation and should not be overlooked for the sake of

philosophy. Philosophy is, however, crucial for the public good if it is ever to rise

above the most particular considerations.

I may add, that 'tis also the chief business of politicians; especially in the domestic
government of the state, where the public good, which is, or ought to be their
object, depends on the concurrence of a multitude of cases; not, as in foreign
politics, upon accidents, and chances, and the caprices of a few persons. This
therefore makes the difference betwixt particular deliberations and general
reasonings, and renders subtilty and refinement much more suitable to the latter
than to the former.[149]

With the role and value of philosophy established, he moves on to ask readers for

their attention.

I thought this introduction necessary before the following discourses on
commerce, luxury, money, interest, &c., where, perhaps, there will occur some

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148 Hume, "Of Commerce," p. 3. Entry 026.
149 Hume, "Of Commerce," p. 3. Entry 026.

principles, which are uncommon, and which may seem too refin'd and subtile for such vulgar subjects. If false, let them be rejected: but no one ought to entertain a prejudice against them, merely because they are out of the common road.[150]

It is crucial that Hume's example for the worst kind of political writer is one "who tells us nothing but what we can learn from every coffee-house conversation." The "common road" here was that laid by Addison and Bolingbroke, which Hume believed carried the falsely grounded and dangerously divisive ideologies of Whig and Tory, court and country. Popular political writing in that style was too likely to give readers the feeling of philosophical cultivation when in fact it only reaffirmed their beliefs and kept them within their party framework. Hume was prepared to make his philosophy more polite and easy in order to affect the minds of readers – statesmen included; but he required them to challenge themselves too, working outside of the literary discourse and beliefs with which they felt comfortable. In the *Political Discourses,* Hume took this further than in *Essays, Moral and Political*: the more "trifling" moments peppering the latter, with their invocations of Addison, were gone.[151]

Where the *Political Discourses* departed from its predecessor essay collections, it worked under the heavy influence of Montesquieu. *The Spirit of the Laws* was nothing less than an agenda-setting work for Hume the Scottish literati. It thoroughly dismantled natural jurisprudence and universal legislation, instead attributing the nature of individual societies to a variety of external factors and cultural behaviours that culminated in the principles behind the different forms of government. As Dugald Stewart recalled, it turned the literati toward "the natural or theoretical history of society in all its various aspects: to the history of

150 Hume, "Of Commerce," ¶1-2, in *Political Discourses* (1752). Entry 026.
151 Hume to Adam Smith, 24 September 1752, HL, Letter 78.

languages, of the arts, of the sciences, of laws, of government, of manners, and of

religion."[152] In the second *Enquiry*, Hume called it "the best system of political

knowledge that perhaps has ever yet been communicated to the world".[153] He

believed it addressed a crucial set of political questions in an ingenious

philosophical framework; he also felt that its philosophical framework was wrong,

denying that the principles behind governments had any grounding in truth.[154]

Between the publication of *The Spirit of the Laws* in 1748 and *Political

Discourses* in 1752, Hume assisted in the dissemination of Montesquieu's text

while positioning his own as an oppositional counterpart. Hume wrote to

Montesquieu on 10 April, 1749, with a long response to *The Spirit of the Laws*

that contained many compliments and more criticisms.[155] The two engaged in a

project to publish the book in Edinburgh, which involved Hume sending proof

sheets to Montesquieu.[156] This culminated in the first British edition of *De l'esprit

des lois,* in French with Montesquieu's corrections, published in Edinburgh by

Gavin Hamilton and John Balfour.[157] Later in the year, the same firm published an

English translation of two chapters from the work – "Of the Constitution of

England" and "Of the Character and Manners which result from this

Constitution."[158] This was followed by a full English translation of Hamilton and

152 *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, ed. Sir William Hamilton (Edinburgh: Published for T. Constable and co., 1854), Vol. I, p. 69.
153 This is how Hume phrases his assessment of Montesquieu in the first two editions of *Political Discourse* (Entries 026, 027, and 033).
154 James Moore, "Montesquieu and the Scottish Enlightenment," *Montesquieu and His Legacy*, ed. Rebecca Kingston (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).
155 Hume to President de Montesquieu, Londres, 10 avril 1749, HL, Letter 65.
156 John Hill Burton, *The Life and Correspondence of David Hume* (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1846), vol. I, p. 304.
157 Baron de Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat, *De l'esprit des loix. ... Nouvelle edition, avec les dernieres corrections & illustrations de l'auteur* (Edinburgh: G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1750).
158 Baron de Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat, *Two Chapters of A celebrated French Work,*

Balfour's French edition in London.[159]

When Hume's *Political Discourses* were published in March of 1752, the book's material construction helped to position it as a counterpart to *The Spirit of the Laws*. He returned to Fleming, Kincaid and Donaldson, with whom he had successfully published *Essays*, *Moral and Political*, returning to a proven strategy and further asserting the relationship between the two works. They sold the book to numerous London booksellers, including Andrew Millar, P. Knapton, Rivington, Hirch and Hawes, J. Nourse, and D. Wilcox. It came "Elegantly printed in Octavo," marking the first time since the *Treatise* that one of Hume's works appeared in a larger and finer edition than a pocket duodecimo.[160] In this respect, it matched both the Edinburgh and London editions of *The Spirit of the Laws*. Additionally, Hume's discourses "Of Commerce," "Of Luxury," "Of Money," "Of Interest," and "Of the Balance of Trade" mirror the contents of Books XX – XII of *The Spirit of the Laws*, rendering the book in most places a point-by-point response to Montesquieu. These qualities served multiple purposes. Readers of *The Spirit of the Laws* would automatically associate the two texts, both through their common topics and their size and quality, and could intuitively

Intitled, De l'esprit des loix, *Translated into English*. (Edinburgh: Mess. Hamilton and Balfour, 1750). Hume's involvement in the publication of the French edition and his relationship with Hamilton and Balfour (they were among the most important Edinburgh printers and booksellers and published the first volume of his *History*), as well as his historical interest in the British constitution, suggest that he had a hand in translating and publishing these two chapters. Extant evidence is only circumstantial. I suggest that the book's Advertisement resembles Hume's own addresses to readers: "As many, who have neither time nor inclination to read so large a work as the treatise on *the Spirit of the Laws*, nor are perhaps sufficiently acquainted with the *French* language, may yet have curiosity to see the opinion of so eminent a *Frenchman* concerning the *British* constitution, a translation of these two chapters has been attempted. And tho' 'tis impossible to aequal the strength and conciseness of the original, it is hoped at least, that the sense of the author has in few places been mistaken."

159 Baron de Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat, *The Spirit of the Laws, Translated from the French of M. De Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, With corrections and additions communicated by the author* (London: J. Nourse and P. Valliant, 1750).

160 *London Evening Post*, 3-5 March 1752.

place the two books next to each other on their bookshelves. Where the formatting of *Essays, Moral and Political* and the *Philosophical Essays* created an association with collected periodical essays, here it placed Hume alongside a philosopher whose works were of great relevance to public life and who was widely regarded as a great and authoritative intellectual. *The Spirit of the Laws* opened exciting possibilities for Hume. Here was a rigorous philosophical work that placed the structures and customs of political society on a historical grounding rather than one of natural jurisprudence; here as well was a work that was met with widespread approbation and raised new questions among numerous men of letters. With the *Political Discourses,* he could enter that debate, adjust its philosophical framework to fit his own, offer it a British context, and present it in a way that portrayed him as an established intellectual with a growing reputation for refined writing.

Hume called the *Political Discourses* "the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication," being "well received both abroad and at home."[161] Like his last bona fide success, *Essays, Moral and Political*, it saw a second edition within months. This one came in a pocket-sized duodecimo version to match his previous works and – once *ETSS* appeared a year later – to put them together into complete sets.[162] The availability of the work in two formats allowed Hume the aforementioned association with *The Spirit of the Laws* on one hand, and uniformity with his existing publications on the other. Those who had read Hume as an essayist would be happy to see another collection of political essays; those who read Montesquieu would be happy to see his British counterpart. The

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161 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶10.
162 Entry 027.

success of such a novel and complex set of essays – veering toward the "abstruse" and "true" species of philosophy – must have served as an inspiration for Hume to demand more from readers of his philosophy, since he only continued distancing himself from his more "trifling" essays from this point onward. He had also found a better vessel for his easier style in the *History of Great Britain* (or *History of England* in collected editions from 1762 onward).

Hume first spoke of writing a history in a letter to Henry Home from January of 1747, when he reported, "Had I any Fortune, which cou'd give me a Prospect of Leizure & Opportunitys to prosecute my historical Projects," and a year later wrote to James Oswald of Dunniker, "I have long had an intention, in my riper years, of composing some History."[163] In both cases he was commenting on the ways in which his experiences traveling Europe and seeing diplomatic culture with General St. Clair was helping to prepare him for such a subject.[164] He began serious work on his history in 1752 when he became keeper of the Advocates Library, making extensive use of its holdings for research.[165] The first of six volumes saw publication on 20 November 1754 as *The History of Great Britain, Vol. I. Containing the reigns of James I and Charles I.*[166] He had decided to begin with this period since it was when "the misrepresentations of faction began chiefly to take place," and then work backwards through Volume II, *The*

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163 Hume to Kames, January 1747, NL, Letter 9; Hume to James Oswald of Dunniker, 29 January 1748, HL, Letter 61.
164 For an sustained examination of this period in Hume's intellectual development, see Moritz Baumstark, "David Hume: The Making of a Philosophical Historian, a Reconsideration," unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh (2007).
165 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶11.
166 In Volumes III-VI he used the name "A History of England" because the union had not been formed yet. From 1762 onward, when Strahan and Millar printed the whole work in multivolume sets, it became *A History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688.*

Commonwealth, and the reigns of Charles II and James II (1757); Volumes III-IV,

The House of Tudor (1759); and Volumes V-VI, *From the Invasion of Julius*

Caesar to the accession of Henry VII (1762).[167]

Nicholas Phillipson has presented Hume as "the most historically minded

of philosophers and the most subtly and profoundly philosophical of historians,"

arguing that the *History of England* embodied his historically-grounded

philosophy turned toward British political culture.[168] Phillipson and Duncan

Forbes have demonstrated that the purpose of the *History* was to expose the

Revolutionary Settlement, the British constitution, and foundations of organized

religion as myths, thus removing the roots of contemporary political discourse and

ending party faction and religious zealotry.[169] Indeed, shortly after the firm of

Hamilton, Balfour, and Neil finished printing the first volume in September of

1754, Hume wrote to Jean-Bernard, abbé Le Blanc, "The philosophical Spirit,

which I have so much indulg'd in all my Writings, finds here ample Materials to

work upon."[170] Here Hume continued the critique of British political culture that

he had began in small pieces in *Essays, Moral and Political*, using history as the

material for his science of man.

Where he was moving increasingly toward more difficult and rigorous

writing in his philosophical works, here was a perfect medium for applying the

easier and more polite style of his essays to a far more sustained and nuanced

enquiry. Just as he had used popular political and moral journalism as a vehicle

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167 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶11.

168 Nicholas Phillipson, *Hume: The Philosopher as Historian*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale
University Press, 2010), p. 4.

169 Phillipson, *Hume*; Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1975).

170 Hume to the abbé Le Blanc, 12 September 1754, HL, Letter 94.

for his philosophy in *Essays, Moral and Political*, here he used history – "the most popular kind of writing of any."[171] He applied the same principles of moderation and affiliation with no party in the *History*, offering a far more novel and complex analysis of the subject than the ease of his style would suggest. For example, upon the death of each English ruler he supplied an assessment of their character following the same style and approach as "A Character of Sir Robert Walpole." As I showed in Chapter 1, this short piece represented his first major literary success and showed him the possibilities of bringing new ideas into British political discourse when couched in the language of political journalism.

Where the essay format had provided a way of putting his works into a marketable commodity, so did the genre of history. The *History of England* became one of the best selling works of the century and the standard history of England well into the nineteenth century. It provided his publishers with huge profits and Hume with copy-money that "much exceeded any thing formerly known in England."[172] This is made especially clear by the difference paid him for the first and final volumes he wrote: where Gavin Hamilton offered £400 for the first edition of *James I and Charles I,* Andrew Millar gave him £1400 in advance for the *Caesars* in 1759.[173] As we turn to formation of *ETSS*, it is important to keep the growing success of the *History* in mind. While there were periods during which *ETSS* sold more quickly than the *History*, which I will discuss later, the *History* was a vastly more successful work and brought far greater profits to both Hume and his publishers. This is part of what makes *ETSS* so interesting: despite

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171 Hume to William Strahan, 15 February 1757, HL, Letter 129.
172 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶17.
173 Hume to Adam Smith, 28 July 1759, HL, Letter 169.

being dwarfed by the *History*, and certain pieces of its contents inspiring continued criticism, Hume remained equally interested in the fate of *ETSS,* constantly petitioning Millar for new editions, making continuous edits, and always seeing his "philosophy" and "history" as a pair of works.

By the beginning of 1753, Hume had published a set of texts that appeared more disparate than their internal cohesion would have it. He had spanned topics from literature to politics, metaphysical to moral philosophy; he had published in Edinburgh and London, with different groups of printers and booksellers; his reputation variously hinged upon his irreligion and scepticism, and his eloquent, politically-relevant essays. It was at this point that Hume, with this printers and booksellers, undertook their large project to pull his philosophical works together into *ETSS.* More than a one-time commodity, *ETSS* represented a reorientation of his books into a coherent body of texts; as it remained the format for his philosophical publications into the early-nineteenth century, and came out in eight more editions by 1777, he and his publishers made numerous decisions about its contents and presentation that must be taken as meaningful for the communication of his philosophy to readers.

The initial step involved taking old stock of the duodecimo editions and refashioning them as a four-volume set by adding new title pages and in some cases new bindings.[174] Strahan's ledgers show him printing the 500 new title pages in April, along with 1000 new copies of *Essays, Moral and Political* in the same month and 1000 of the second *Enquiry* the following August.[175] Kincaid and Donaldson additionally commissioned the printing of a second edition of *Political*

174 Entries 028-031.
175 BL MS 48800 fol. 97

Discourses in April with an unnamed printer.[176] This means the 500 loose title pages would have been used primarily for old stock of *Philosophical Essays*, and then any remaining old editions the booksellers had not sold.

The 1753 edition of *ETSS,* like others to follow, was a collaborative publishing effort between Millar in London and Kincaid and Donaldson in Edinburgh. Such arrangements were common in the 18th-century British book trade, especially for large works that required a large amount of capital investment. Joint publications entailed some element of sharing financial risk; most frequently, two or more booksellers would divide the cost of printing, paying copy money, and advertising, according to a number of "shares." The first edition of Johnson's *Dictionary*, for example, was published collaboratively between nine London booksellers.[177] It was also common for a secondary partner to purchase a set number of books wholesale from the primary partner, who in turn was responsible for paying the printer and author and commissioning the book as a whole.[178] There is no extant contract or correspondence detailing the precise booksellers' agreement for *ETSS*, but numerous other pieces of evidence offer considerable insight into the process. Millar's London firm, and Kincaid's in Edinburgh – which became Kincaid and Donaldson's during the 1750s – had worked together as distributers for each other's books since Millar first took up shop in London, each purchasing copies from the other and offering exposure in their respective cities. The two began their working relationship when they both

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176 Entry 033.

177 Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Langauage* (London: Printed by W. Strahan, for J. and P. Knapton; T. and T. Longman; C. Hitch and L. Hawes; A. Millar; and R. And J. Dodsley, 1755-56).

178 Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book,* pp. 154-62.

apprenticed under the Edinburgh bookseller James McEuen. Their officially joint publications began with Hume. Kincaid and Millar co-published for the first time on *Three Essays* and the third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political,* then on successive editions of *ETSS.* They went on to publish several major Scottish authors including Lord Kames, Adam Smith, Alexander Bruce, Francis Home, William Wilkie, John Douglas, and George Campbell.[179] Altogether, The English Short Title Catalogue lists 49 books published by Kincaid and Millar and 65 by Kincaid and Willian Creech, Millar's successor, rendering their partnerships among the most active in the London-Edinburgh book trade axis. Donaldson, Kincaid, and Millar, as a trio, only published one book together outside of *ETSS.*[180]

The arrangement developed in part out of an exchange in literary property. The bookseller or booksellers who published the first edition of each of Hume's works retained their role in every successive edition, meaning they either held exclusivity agreements or (more simply) Hume was happy with their work. He was not afraid of switching booksellers when he felt they had insufficiently publicized and sold his books: this was the case for Book III of the *Treatise*, when he moved from Noon to Longman, and for Volume I of the *History*, initially published with the Edinburgh firm of Hamilton, Balfour, and Neil, and later exclusively with Millar. The latter case also displayed Millar's competitive tendencies; if he wanted a book, or felt entitled to it, he was willing to use

179 "Andrew Millar (1705-1768)," and "Alexander Kincaid (1710-1777)," ODNB.
180 Lind James, *An Essay, on the Most Effectual Means, of Preserving the Health of the Royal Navy* (London: Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; and A. Kincaid, and A. Donaldson in Edinburgh, 1757).

cutthroat tactics, litigation, and vast amounts of money to acquire it.[181] Despite some momentary lapses, Millar, Kincaid, and Hume were on amicable terms and their partnership was not formed out of necessity or reluctance. Each bookseller had a piece of Hume's works: Millar held rights to the *Philosophical Essays, Three Essays*, and the second *Enquiry*; Kincaid to *Essays, Moral and Political*; and Kincaid and Donaldson to the *Political Discourses*.

In the first phase of *ETSS* – that is, before the four volumes were put together into a quarto in 1758 – printing duties were divided between London and Edinburgh, with Kincaid and Donaldson commissioning the printing of *Political Discourses* (Volume IV) in Edinburgh and Millar hiring Strahan to print the other four volumes and *ETSS* cancel title pages in London.[182] After printing they transported books to one another unbound or in sheets; in cases where one needed to replenish their store's stock, they purchased bound volumes or full sets. In a letter from 1757, Hume reported to Millar that Kincaid and Donaldson wished to purchase 200 sets from his stock of four-volume 1753 editions of *ETSS* (at that point Millar had 400 sets) in exchange for the equivalent price of shares in the upcoming 1758 quarto edition.[183] Transactions like these were common and payment was most often made in credit or shares. Millar assumed more of the responsibilities over time, commissioning William Strahan to print all editions after 1758, and Kincaid and Donaldson moved to a system of investing in a certain number of shares in a book. This essentially meant promising to purchase a certain number of each print run. One exchange from 1763 shows Kincaid and

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181 Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book*, pp. 132-40.
182 BL MS 48800 fol. 97
183 Hume to Andrew Millar, 4 December 1756, HL, Letter 121.

Donaldson purchasing from Millar two hundred copies of the 1760 four-volume

duodecimo edition of *ETSS* for 7s each – though they were trying to bargain

Millar down to 6s.[184]

Over the following four years, *ETSS* was a cobbled-together collection

consisting of various duodecimo editions of Hume's philosophical works. Upon

initial release, there were two versions each of Volume I, *Essays, Moral and

Political*, and of Volume IV, *Political Discourses*: one newly printed and the other

an older edition with a cancel title page.[185] Between then and 1758 there appeared

new editions of *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1753), *Political

Discourses* (1754), and *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding*

(1756).[186] Advertisements for the collection prominently featured "David Hume,

esq." as the author followed by the titles of the individual volumes. Whole sets

were available for 12s bound and each volume could be purchased separately "to

complete Gentlemens Sets."[187] Upon its publication in February of 1757, *Four

Dissertations* became available as Volume V of *ETSS.* Advertisements for the

1758 quarto edition offered an alternative five-volume duodecimo set for 15s

bound and "most" individual volumes to complete sets.[188] The inclusion of *Four

Dissertations* in pre-1758 sets of *ETSS* has not been noticed by any bibliographers

of Hume's works, including T. E. Jessup, Richard Sher, Tom Beauchamp, and

James Fieser, and accordingly they have sustained a slightly, but significantly,

distorted view of the collection. From its inception, *ETSS* represented the

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184 Hume to Andrew Millar, 10 March 1763, HL, Letter 202.
185 Entries 028 and 032; 029 and 033.
186 Entries 034, 035, and 036.
187 *Public Advertiser*, 18 April 1753.
188 *Whitehall Evening Post Or London Intelligencer*, 25 March 1758.

grouping together of Hume's philosophy into a whole; one was to own all pieces of the set or lack essential parts of an author's canon. It was not a collection conceived with certain parameters in 1753 that came to include *Four Dissertations* in 1758. Just as Hume understood his works to be linked – taking up different topics with the same philosophical framework – the creation of *ETSS* redefined his seemingly-disparate books as a single unit. Where the shift involved the reshuffling and rebranding of existing books between 1753 and 1757, it came into full fruition as a work in the 1758 quarto edition, at which time Hume was able to shape it in accordance with his intellectual vision.

Hume had begun petitioning Millar, Kincaid, and Donaldson to make a quarto edition of *ETSS* by Winter of 1756. In a letter to Millar, he wrote, "I am extremely desirous to have these four Volumes, with that which you will publish this Winter [*Four Dissertations*], brought into a Quarto Volume," and then entered into negotiations for its publication. Millar was reluctant to make a new edition – and a more expensive one at that – before selling more of the 400 sets of *ETSS* he had in stock. Conversely, Kincaid and Donaldson felt "the small Size was rather more proper for their Sale." At Hume's suggestion, they offered to purchase 200 of Millar's duodecimo sets in exchange for relinquishing the equivalent monetary value of shares in the quarto edition – "That is, if the Quarto Volume were sold at the same Price with the four Volumes, then Set for Set: If at more, then such Allowance to be made as upon Calculation wou'd appear to be an Equivalent." This way Millar would more quickly deplete his inventory to the point of necessitating a new edition and Kincaid and Donaldson would receive more of a proven product. Referring to Volume II of the *History*, which Millar had published

in the previous October, he continued, "If the History meet with Success, it will certainly quicken the Sale of the philosophical Writings; & the taking two hundred Sets from you leaves you so small a Number on hand, as gives you a certain Prospect of coming soon to a new Edition." Kincaid and Donaldson had given Hume permission to initiate the transaction if Millar agreed, asking him to place the 200 sets on a ship bound for Leith as soon as possible. In a revealing final remark to Millar, Hume said, "The bringing these scatterd Pieces into one Volume will of itself quicken the Sale; & every new Edition has naturally that Effect."[189]

Preparations for the quarto edition began soon thereafter and Hume was to take a very active role in the process. By January of 1757, he had made corrections to a duodecimo set of *ETSS* and sent it to Millar via stagecoach as the updated text for the new edition.[190] Eager to see the new edition and begin work on an index, he wrote to Strahan the following month and asked that he send copies of proof sheets as he printed them off. Despite Hume's presumption that Strahan had "begun" and was "somewhat advanc'd" in printing, he only completed and sent the first two sheets by early April.[191] It was at this point that Hume began giving numerous instructions to Strahan ranging from adjusting punctuation style to changing the names of texts and adding segments of new ones.[192] The latter included inserting and renaming the contents of *Four Dissertations*, adding chapter titles to "The Natural History of Religion," adjusting the order of individual essays, and writing a preface explaining the new orientation of the book. By 25 May he had received most of the book's sheets and

189 Hume to Andrew Millar, 4 December 1756, HL, Letter 121.
190 Hume to Andrew Millar, 18 January 1757, HL, Letter 125.
191 Hume to Andrew Millar, 15 February 1757, HL, Letter 129a.
192 Hume to William Strahan, 18 April 1757, HL, Letter 131.

was optimistic for finishing the index soon.[193] This, however, proved to be a more

difficult task than expected and he would only report having finished by 3

September, after which he was determined never to make another index

himself.[194] Despite the long and tedious process of preparing the work, he reported

that he was "extremely pleasd with the Correctness of this Edition of [his]

philosophical Writings, so far as it has gone," and added that he had "not seen any

thing better executed in that particular. The Type & Paper are also very good."[195]

In a parcel from 3 September 1757, Hume sent Strahan his complete index, title

page, and advertisement "to be inserted in any corner."[196]

All printing and alterations were completed by October of 1757. Being

printed in quarto, each sheet was folded into quarters and contained four pages on

either side for a total of eight pages per sheet. The process of printing proof

sheets, receiving the author's corrections, and completing the edition's 750 copies

was thus a slow one that spanned across nine months. Altogether each copy

consisted of 68 1/2 sheets at a total price to the bookseller of £71.18s.6d. Over the

following two months, Millar had the sheets collated and bound into 750 finished

copies and shipped the proper share to Kincaid and Donaldson. If they had

relinquished the monetary value in shares for 200 copies of *ETSS* priced at 12s,

then for the quarto edition – assuming a proportional wholesale price on its 15s –

then they had given the equivalent of 160 copies of the quarto edition over to

Millar. If they had started with an event split of shares then this amounted to

Kincaid and Donaldosn taking 42% less of their stake in the book; this would

193 Hume to William Strahan, 25 May 1757, HL, Letter 133.
194 Hume to Andrew Millar, 3 September 1757, HL, Letter 140.
195 Hume to William Strahan, 25 May 1757, HL, Letter 133.
196 Hume to William Strahan, 2 September 1757, HL, Letter 141.

mean that Millar took on a much higher proportion of the financial risk – 71% of the total printing cost, or about 51.1.4. Millar's proportion was likely even higher than this given his role in commissioning the book with Strahan in London and taking care of shipping it to Kincaid and Donaldson. With both firms taken together, the book could yield profits of about £475 after subtracting money paid to Strahan for printing and the approximate costs of advertising, binding, and incidentals.[197] This figure, however, does not subtract copy paid to Hume, for which there are no records pertaining to *ETSS* or his philosophical works outside of the *Treatise*.

The finished, bound quarto was of a size and quality that exceeded any of Hume's philosophical works until then – including the *Treatise*. This lent it a stature normally reserved for academic books, histories, great pieces of literature, legal or parliamentary records, or other works of the highest importance or authority. The size prompted consumers to consider Hume as a substantial, established, and even great author in the realm of a Pope or Hutcheson. This was much to Boswell's chagrin, who complained of seeing the great infidel's works in quarto in the library at Pembroke College.[198] At 27cm the edition also matched the first two volumes of the *History.* (fig. 2) This created cohesion between his historical and philosophical works and designated *ETSS* as one of two essential components in his authorial canon. Consumers could feel they possessed the "complete" Hume if they owned his *History* and *Essays*. David Allan's study of reading in the *Scottish Enlightenment* shows libraries almost invariably containing

197 Approximated from the prices provided by Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book,* p. 345.
198 Boswell, *Ominous Years* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1963)*,* 278. Qtd. in Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book,* p. 47.

these two works of Hume, as a pair, placed next to each other on shelves despite their falling under normally different filing categories.[199] The 1758 edition marked the first instance in a long trend of Strahan and Millar, later Creech, issuing matching volumes of *ETSS* and the *History* in quarto and octavo.

The structure and orientation of the volume contained numerous changes deliberately made by Hume that amounted to a critical examination and reevaluation of his philosophy on par with the period following the failure of the *Treatise* and the publication of "Of the Different Species of Philosophy." Here he placed his philosophical works in a particular order, under new headings, and retitled them, in such a way that offers great insight into the relationship between his previously-separate books. Far from an arbitrary reshuffling, these changes came out of his close editing of *ETSS* across 1757, and remained permanent in subsequent editions. His "Advertisement," which Strahan placed immediately after the title page, orients readers to the changes and captures the depth of Hume's reorganization:

Some Alterations are made on the Titles of the Treatises, contained in the following Volume. What in former Editions was called *Essays moral and political*, is here entitled *Essays, moral, political, and literary, Part 1.* The *Political Discourses* form the *second Part.* What in former Editions was called, *Philosophical Essays concerning human Understanding,* is here entitled *An Enquiry concerning human Understanding.* The *four Dissertations* lately published are dispersed thro' different parts of this Volume.

The major divisions were ordered as follows, with the space indicating a shift from headings with separate pieces to unified works.

Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Part I
Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Part II

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199 David Allan, *Making British Culture: English Readers and the Scottish Enlightenment, 1740-1830* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 94

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding
A Dissertation on the Passions
An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals
The Natural History of Religion

The first and clearest implication of these changes is the division of his works into two categories, upholding the title's differentiation between "essays" and "treatises." Where before there was ambiguity over which books were united works and which were collections of separate pieces, now there was a clear line between the two.

There was never any doubt in Hume's mind that the two *Enquiries* were each unified works, each part of the same project to refashion the *Treatise*, and here they received their proper titles. Similarly, *A Dissertation on the Passions* and *The Natural History of Religion* had little in common with their counterparts in *Four Dissertations*. As the recasting of Book II of the *Treatise*, the former found its proper place between the two *Enquiries*; as a critique of religious dogma, which was most likely to convince readers when read after Hume's other works, the latter found its proper place at the book's end – as the culmination of his philosophy. Mirroring the *Treatise*, the second half of *ETSS* contained *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Book I), *A Dissertation on the Passions* (Book II), and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Book III), followed by a fourth dividing out the topic that had made the *Treatise* so scandalous but that was also in many ways the most dear to Hume. Conversely, other "discourses" and "dissertations" took the form of essays in the two parts of *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary.* Part I saw addition of the former dissertations "Of Tragedy" and "Of the Standard of Taste," while in Part II the

Political Discourses became "essays" and came to include "Of the Original Contract" and "Of Passive Obedience" from *Three Essays* and *Essays, Moral and Political*.

In the Clarendon edition of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,* Tom Beauchamp writes:

> The words essay, enquiry, and treatise can be invested with too much meaning in the interpretation of this history. 'Essay' and 'treatise' are literary genres, but 'enquiry' suggests content rather than genre. Hume was clear neither about the precise meaning of these terms nor about his reasons for changes. None the less, Hume's title changes are revealing. They reflect shifting conceptions and directions in his work. In the 1740s he laboured more as an essayist than as a philosopher with a grand metaphysical system. The author of a systematic treatise evolved to the author of essays and from there to the author of short enquiries envisaged as sustained monographs or treatises.[200]

In the narrative presented in this chapter and the last, I have attempted to offer a much more nuanced view of these changes. In many cases, the names Hume initially gave his works were somewhat off base. *Essays, Moral and Political* contained several "literary" essays; *Three Essays* foreshadowed *Political Discourses*; *Philosophical Essays* and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* were in fact two *Enquiries*; *Four Dissertations* was a cobbled together collection of texts that belonged in other places. This happened for two main reasons. One was simply that Hume did not write and publish all of his works in thematic order – that is, he switched from politics, to human understanding, to morals, back to politics, etc., and placed his works into the most fitting format available to him at the time. The other, more complex reason is that he had to deal with changing commercial factors. Having published a successful two-volume set

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200Tom Beauchamp, "Introduction: A History of the Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding," in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: A Critical Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. xxii - xxiii.

of essays, it made more sense to present his next work as *Philosophical Essays* rather than an *Enquiry*; having gained some success with the *Philosophical Essays,* which were really an enquiry*,* it made sense to try publishing the second *Enquiry* as such. The reshuffling that occurred in the 1758 edition of *ETSS* put his works in their proper places regardless of the circumstances of their initial publication. This is not to say, however, that Hume was acting disingenuously or deceptively as he moved from book to book before 1758. At each step, he was attempting to reach the minds of readers using the language and format that seemed most effective at the time. His larger trajectory following *Essays, Moral and Political* was toward more sustained enquiries and dissertations, but what remained constant was the grounding of his philosophy in the experiences of common life.

How better to explain such a system than by appealing to the political, historical, and cultural experiences of readers? With this in mind, the apologetic addresses to readers that pepper his longer and more complex works read like the wise warnings of an astute observer of human nature – one who knows that propositions which seem foreign to the experiences of common life are difficult to understand and harder to believe, but if the reader can stretch their attention and give credence to uncommon ideas, they can truly advance their knowledge of humanity and act better in the world. With this in mind, the reorientation of *ETSS* reads like a knowing attempt to pull readers toward a novel and complex system of philosophy using the terms of common life. Contained within *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Part I* is a miscellaneous set of pieces emulating the polite essay while pushing readers beyond coffee house conversation. In *Essays, Moral,*

Political, and Literary, Part II is a more rigorous examination of political topics. In the first *Enquiry*, *Dissertation on the Passions*, and second *Enquiry* is the refashioning of the *Treatise* in less abstruse but still very difficult terms. In *A Natural History of Religion* is Hume's attack literally on the most sacred dogmas of readers – an attack that might only gain headway among the pious after passing through the rest of *ETSS*.

What we ultimately see in *ETSS* is Hume carrying out his earliest promise to readers, in the Advertisement to the *Treatise*, that with the approbation of the public he "shall proceed to the examination of morals, politics, and criticism."[201] In other words, the range of topics covered in *ETSS* represented the breadth of Hume's science of man. It was both fitting and philosophically potent to address such topics together, with an attempt at ease, system, and concision, as Hume did in *ETSS*. This achievement came not as a single outpouring of genius, but as a careful, calculated work that tried taking close account of the people who would read it, the printers and booksellers who would make it, and the possibilities these offered for conveying a genuinely new philosophical system to a large public.

Part Two

The publication of the 1758 quarto edition offers an appropriate place to pause because it represents the height of Hume's intellectual involvement in the construction and orientation of *ETSS*. This is not to say he lost interest in later editions – to the contrary, he never ceased editing the collection's contents and

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201 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Advertisement.

regularly pushed Millar to publish new editions, even when sales lagged behind the *History*. However, the structure of *ETSS* remained the same from 1758 onward, even when spread across two- and four-volume editions, and it was consistently treated by Hume as his "philosophical works" or "essays" rather than a grouping together of his books. In the second part of this chapter, I will follow the history of *ETSS* editions from the next one in 1760 to his final, posthumously-published edition in 1777.[202] I will highlight the changes he made and focus on the way in which he continued treating *ETSS* as the physical and intellectual canon of his philosophy, placing this narrative alongside an enquiry into evidence of the successes and failures of his authorial strategies.

With the structure of the collection in place, Hume's most substantive changes to *ETSS* after 1758 revolved around adding and removing texts. This continued the trend, beginning with the third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* in 1748, of Hume removing his more Spectatorial essays and adding new ones that were more rigorous, more politically focused, and intellectually related with themes in the *History*.[203] He had removed three essays in 1748, namely "Of Essay Writing," "Of Moral Prejudices," and "Of the Middle Station of Life," and was to remove three more from the 1764 edition of *ETSS* ("Of Impudence and Modesty," "Of Love and Marriage," and "Of the Study of History"), and "Of Avarice" from the 1771 edition.[204] As demonstrated in Chapter 1, "Of Essay Writing" closely resembled the language of *The Spectator* and was rendered redundant by "Of the Different Species of Philosophy." He had plans of removing

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202 Entries and 043 and 058.
203 Entry 021.
204 Entries 021, 044, 047.

"Of Love and Marriage" and "Of the Study of History" in the same stroke, but as he reported to Smith in 1753, "In that Edition, I was engag'd to act contrary to my Judgement in retaining the 6th & 7th Essays, which I had resolv'd to throw out, as too frivolous for the rest, and not very agreeable neither even in that trifling manner: But Millar, my Bookseller, made such Protestations against it, & told me how much he had heard them praisd by the best Judges; that the Bowels of a Parent melted, & I preserv'd them alive."[205]

He presented similar reasoning regarding his retracted essays when he wrote to Strahan in 1772, "I suppress'd these Essays, not because they coud give any Offence, but because, I thought, they coud neither give Pleasure nor Instruction: They were indeed bad Imitations of the agreeable Triffling of Addison. But if any one think otherwise, and chuse to preserve them, I have no Objection."[206] John Hill Burton reasoned that Hume was referring to two of his suppressed essays from *Four Dissertations*, "Of Suicide" and "Of the Immortality of the Soul," which had appeared for sale in a French edition in London that year.[207] However, these were not polite essays in the style of the others he withdrew. It is far more likely that he is referring to the book *The Beauties of the Magazines, and other Periodical Works, Selected for a Series of Years: Consisting of Essays, Moral Tales, Characters, and other Fugitive Pieces.*[208] The collection promised otherwise unavailable works by Colman, Goldsmith, Murphy, Smollett, and Thornton, as well as Hume – in his case, "Of Impudence and Modesty," "On

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205 Hume to Adam Smith, 24 September 1752, HL, Letter 78.
206 Hume to William Strahan, 7 February 1772, HL, Letter 468.
207 HL, Letter 468, n. 1. Also see Hume to William Strahan, 25 January 1772, HL, Letter 465.
    The edition was *Recueil philosophique, ou, Me?lange de pie?ces sur la religion & la morale,*
    ed. Jacques Andre? Naigeon Londres (Amsterdam : M.-M. Rey, 1770).
208 Entry 048.

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Love and Marriage," and "On Avarice." Hume's suppression of these essays, coupled with their afterlife in a publication of this sort, is a testament to how thoroughly he wished to avoid fitting squarely into the Spectatorial essay format with *ETSS*.

Conversely, he added a total of three essays to *ETSS* after 1758 – "Of the Jealousy of Trade" and "Of the Coalition of Parties" in 1760, as well as "Of the Origin of Government" in 1777.[209] Hume had completed the former two sometime between late 1757 and Winter of 1759 and intended them to be added to copies of the 1758 and 1760 editions of *ETSS*. On 18 December 1759 he expressed to Millar that he was "surprised" Strahan had not printed them yet, as it should have taken him only a week to finish.[210] Strahan got to printing them the following March and Millar had them inserted into unsold copies of the 1758 edition and printed proper in the 1760 edition.[211] Both were inserted into Part II of *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, alongside the contents of the *Political Discourses* and related essays. "Of the Origin of Government" was the last work Hume wrote in his life, save for his autobiography, and it represented an elegant and masterful distillation of much of his political theory. He sent a copy of this "small essay" to Strahan for printing in the Spring of 1776, just as he began making preparations for his death, and also had it inserted into *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, Part II.[212] These additions show that, while Hume had largely abstained from writing philosophical pieces after publishing *Four Dissertations* in 1757, the pieces he did write continued in the style and subject matter of the *Political*

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209 Entries 043 and 059.
210 Hume to Andrew Millar, 18 December 1759, HL, Letter 171.
211 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 121.
212 Hume to William Strahan, 8 June 1776, HL, Letter 525.

Discourses and *History*. While happy to retain the appearance of an essayist, and take some of the consumers who otherwise stayed with polite literature, he worked toward shaping *ETSS* into a collection that contained more rigorous writing than *The Spectator*. The removal of his more Spectatorial essays set against the addition of political essays works to capture the moral and political impact for which he was striving with *ETSS*.

Following the publication of the 1758 quarto edition, Hume and his booksellers in London and Edinburgh entered into a three-way conversation over the future of *ETSS* that was at various points heated and harmonious. Both sets of booksellers had envisioned an updated duodecimo edition since before Hume began petitioning them for a quarto edition. Explaining that, "Millar seems to have some intention of printing another edition in twelves," Hume sent Strahan an edited duodecimo set of *ETSS* in 1757 and instructed him to use it as the grounding for future editions.[213] Kincaid and Donaldson had been reluctant to invest in a quarto edition in the first place, had relinquished a large percentage of their shares in the 1758 edition in return for duodecimo copies, and can be assumed to have supported a new duodecimo edition at this point too.[214] Strahan printed 1,000 copies of all four volumes in March of 1760 and the collection was published the following month.[215] This edition was 12s bound like previous duodecimo collections aside from *ETSS* in five volumes (15s). However, the 1760 edition varied in its marketing significantly by appearing as "all his Essays, formerly printed in five Volumes, 12mo," rather than four pieces that might be

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213 Hume to Millar, 18 January 1757, HL, Letter 125; Hume to Strahan, 15 October 1757, NHL Letter 26.
214 Hume to Millar, 4 December 1756, HL, Letter 121.
215 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 121.

purchased together or separately to "complete gentlemens sets."[216] The 1758 and

1760 editions together represented the beginning of *ETSS* as a thoroughly updated

work that rendered previous collections incomplete and outdated.

Unfortunately, with 1,750 new copies printed over three years, *ETSS*

seems to have suffered from a bit of market saturation in the early 1760s. The

1758 quarto edition sold particularly poorly, leaving Millar – with his larger share

in the edition – uninterested in printing more. This placed him in conflict with

Kincaid and Donaldson, whose larger stock of duodecimo editions sold out more

quickly, and Hume, who was always desirous for more and newer editions. As

Hume reported to Millar from Edinburgh in March of 1762, "I find the

Booksellers here have sold off all their Share of my Essays, and are desirous of

another Edition, which, however, I told them, I believd you was not ready for."[217]

Indeed, Millar needed convincing. As Hume wrote in his next letter, "Mr Bell

swears to me, that he sent up none of the last Edition of my Essays to London, &

Donaldson owns only twenty. I do not think the Sale has been bad in the last two

Years: For you & they have sold above six hundred of both Editions. If my

History take a great run, it will quicken the Sale of the other."[218]

Indeed, Millar was more concerned with the *History* at this point, as it had

proven itself an extremely successful work. In the time between publishing the

1758 quarto edition of *ETSS* and April of 1763, when Hume wrote the letter

above, Strahan printed 5,750 copies of various volumes of the *History* and 1,750

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216 *Whitehall Evening Post* (1-29 April 1760), (1-3 May 1760); *London Evening Post* (22-29
    April 1760), *London Chronicle* (17-19 April 1760), p. 384.
217 Hume to Andrew Millar, 15 March 1762, HL, Letter 189.
218 Hume to Andrew Millar, 8 April 1762, HL, Letter 191.

of *ETSS*.[219] When Hume spoke of the *History* "quickening the sale" of *ETSS*, he

was referencing the first collected edition of all six volumes. As he had written to

Strahan the month before, "I always intended, that the whole six Volumes shoud

be printed and shoud read as one continued Work, and that the Chapters shoud go

on without Interruption from beginning to end. In that Case, the first Chapter of

James I is the forty fifth of the whole."[220] The six-volume collection was

published that year and appears to have been a rebinding and retitling of older

quarto volumes.[221] Hume expected sales of the *History* in this format would bring

renewed attention to the matching quarto edition of *ETSS* and help to deplete

Millar's stock, thus demonstrating the need for a new edition.

The tensions between the three parties appeared more aggravated in March

of 1763, when Hume attempted to broker a deal between Millar in London and

Kincaid and Donaldson in Edinburgh. Hume's plea is so revealing of their

relationship at this point that it is worth quoting at length.

I was applyd to lately by Kincaid & Donaldson with regard to the Duodecimo
Edition of my Essays. I told them, that I did not believe they would come to a new
Edition this twelvemonth, and that if they wanted any Copies they might apply to
you, who would afford them at the same price as to other Bookseller, but, I
imagind, would not give them any cheaper. They said, that this would do for their
Shop Sale, but they could not afford to furnish other Booksellers at that Rate; and
if you would give them Encouragement by abating somewhat of the Price, they
would take a considerable Number off your hand. I desird them to give me their
proposals, which I offerd to transmit to you. They said, that they would take a
hundred Copies at 6 shillings a piece & a twelvemonths Credit: Your ordinary
Price they said, was 7 shillings. I am sensible, Dr Sir, that they have no manner of
Title to make such a Demand, or rather make it with the worst Grace imaginable,

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219 In February 1759, Strahan printed 750 copies of *the Stuarts* Volume I, 750 copies of *the
    Stuarts* Volume II, and 2,250 copies of *the Tudors* Volume I (fol. 120); in November of 1761,
    he printed 2,000 copies of *the Caesars* (fol. 133).
220 Hume to William Strahan, March 1762, HL, Letter 190.
221 Hume, *The History of England, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the revolution in 1688.
    In six volumes. A New edition, corrected* (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1762), in six volumes
    quarto.

after having interferd with your Sale in London, and sold their Copies at the full Price to your Neighbours: But yet I own, that I wish you could think it proper to accept of this Offer. Such a considerable Number taken off your hand might enable you to bring the Book to a new Edition next Winter, when I propose to make some pretty considerable Improvements on it; and perhaps you might regain by this means, as much as you lose by this Diminution of the Price. They affirm, that they sent very few Copies to London; and seem resolvd (but I shall not answer for the performance) never to send any more of any future Edition. If you agree to the proposal, you may send down the Copies by the first Ship.[222]

This proposal shows how thoroughly Millar had assumed control over *ETSS,* first taking on the role of printing via Strahan and then holding copies in his shop while refusing to publish new editions before they sold. If the collection proved more successful in Edinburgh than London, he kept himself in a position to avoid any loss or disparity of profits in London by holding copies and selling them to Kincaid and Donaldson. Hume's assurance that the Edinburgh booksellers would not sell copies to London booksellers additionally shows how tightly Millar observed and attempted to control the market – and how readily he would mistrust his long-time partners. Millar finally agreed with Kincaid and Donaldson to ship them one hundred copies of the quarto edition in return for payment at six months credit. Sympathizing with Millar, Hume wrote, "I am sorry to see so many of the Quartos on hand; and to be sure you cannot print a new Edition till they be more diminishd."[223]

In the same letter, Hume reveals that he and Millar had initiated discussions of printing the next edition in octavo, and that Hume wanted it published as soon as possible. As usual, Millar was more cautious:

I am extremely oblig'd to you for paying so much Attention to my Request; but I sincerely desire you much rather to follow your own Judgement, which is much more to be depended on. I am very uncertain whether my last proposal of

222 Hume to Andrew Millar, 10 March 1763, HL, Letter 202.
223 Hume to Andrew Millar, 28 March 1763, HL, Letter 205.

publishing the Octavo Edition this Season will contribute to the Credit of the Book: It is perhaps better not to glut the Market, and to wait till the Demand of the Public bring it out: Therefore I would not have venturd to propose my Opinion, if I had not thought, that you would very freely have taken upon you to follow your own Opinion and lay no more weight on my Desire than I did myself.[224]

Millar finally commissioned Strahan to print 1,000 copies of a new edition, in two volumes octavo, in May of 1764, and it was published that month.[225] However, continuing to privilege the *History*, he finished publishing an eight-volume octavo set of that work early the following month and presented the octavo edition of *ETSS* its counterpart.[226] This edition of the *History* was published in serial, with one volume arriving per month at 5s a piece in boards, between December 1763 and June 1764. The octavo edition of *ETSS* was presented as necessary for the completion of the set, with the following appearing at the bottom of advertisements for the eighth volume: "Speedily will be published, in two Volumes, Octavo, A new edition of his ESSAYS, which completes his Works in that size."[227] Accordingly, there were now complete sets of his "Works" in both quarto and octavo and Millar and Hume intended for consumers to purchase both. After this edition of *ETSS*, Millar continued employing the strategy of releasing new editions together with equivalently-formatted sets of the *History*. For instance, the next octavo edition of *ETSS* was published with an eight-volume octavo set of the *History* and placed at the bottom of advertisements for that

224 Hume to Andrew Millar, 28 March 1763, HL, Letter 205.
225 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 141. Andrew Millar to David Hume, 26 November 1764, HL, Appendix C, Letter 7. Entry 044.
226 *The history of England, from the invasion of Julius Cæsar to the revolution in 1688. In eight volumes. A new edition, corrected* (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1763), eight volumes octavo, published in serial between December 1763 and May 1764.
227 *London Chronicle* (24-31 May 1764), (2-5 June 1764); *Edinburgh Advertiser* (5-8 June 1764); *Public Advertiser* (30 May 1764), (5-7 June 1764).

work.[228] In both cases, the octavo editions of the two works fit together

handsomely on bookshelves. (fig. 3)

The two-volume octavo format became the standard for *ETSS* and was

preferred by Hume.[229] He was unhappy when Millar printed a large, two-volume,

decadently printed and bound quarto edition of 1768.[230] At 30cm it towered above

even other quartos, and its price of £1.16s bound rendered it a commodity only for

wealthy collectors.[231] Hume expressed his dismay in a letter to Strahan, writing, "I

wish Millar had savd the Expence of this Magnificent Quarto Edition, which can

serve to no purpose but to discredit the Octavo; and make the sale, if possible, still

more slow."[232] Hume was especially unhappy with the engraving of his head at the

front of the book by John Donaldson, which Hume only permitted Millar to

include because he insisted.[233] Conversely, Millar asked whether Hume he wanted

him to print another four-volume duodecimo edition as early as 26 November

1764, when he reported to Hume that all the 1760 duodecimo sets had sold out.

No doubt both sets of booksellers would have supported such a proposition, as the

duodecimo editions had outsold all others until that point. Hume must have

encouraged Millar to continuing publishing *ETSS* in two-volume octavo editions,

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228 *London Evening Post* (24-7 January, 1767); *London Evening Post* (30 April – 2 May, 1767).
   The history of England, from the invasion of Julius Cæsar to the revolution in 1688. In six
   volumes. A new edition, corrected. (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1767), eight volumes
   octavo. Entry 045.
229 The 1767, 1772, and 1777 editions were two-volume octavos; additionally, all of the eleven
   posthumous editions between 1779 and 1825 followed this format. See Fieser, *A Bibliography*
   of Hume's Writings and Early Responses.
230 Entry 046.
231 *London Evening Post* (27 February – 1 March 1770); *General Evening Post* (3-6 March
   1770); *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (5 March 1770).
232 Hume to William Strahan, 4 June 1770, HL, Letter 445.
233 Hume to Andrew Millar, 19 October 1767, HL, Letter 411. He wrote, "The Picture which
   Donaldson has done for me is a Drawing; and in every body's Opinion, as well as my own, is
   the likest that has been done for me, as well as the best Likeness. Since you still insist that an
   Engraving shoud be made from it, we are more likely to have a good Engraving made than by
   any other Means."

as the next (and final) four-volume duodecimo did not appear until May of

1771.[234]

The two-volume octavo format was also most fitting for Hume's

intellectual agenda as it physically divided the two major parts of *ETSS*: in the

first volume was "Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary," and in the second were

his more rigorous philosophical works: *An Enquiry Concerning Human*

Understanding, A Dissertation on the Passions, An Enquiry Concerning the

Principles of Morals, and *A Natural History of Religion.* Where the logic behind

this division had only been implied (albeit strongly) in previous editions, Hume

made his intentions clear in the "Advertisement to Readers" he had Strahan attach

to the first posthumous edition of *ETSS*:

Most of these principles and reasonings were published in a work in three
volumes, called A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE: A work which the Author
had projected before he left College, and which he wrote and published not long
after. But not finding it successful, he was sensible of his error in going to the
press too early, and he cast the whole anew in the following pieces, where some
negligences in his former reasoning and more in the expression, are, he hopes,
corrected. Yet several writers who have honoured the Author's Philosophy with
answers, have taken care to direct all their batteries against that juvenile work,
which the author never acknowledged, and have affected to triumph in any
advantages, which, they imagined, they had obtained over it: A practice very
contrary to all rules of candour and fair-dealing, and a strong instance of those
polemical artifices which a bigotted zeal thinks itself authorized to employ.
Henceforth, the Author desires, that the following Pieces may alone be regarded
as containing his philosophical sentiments and principles.[235]

While this advertisement was intended in part as a final note to his critics like

James Beattie and Thomas Reid who focused their attacks on the *Treatise*, it also

indicated the extent to which the second part of *ETSS* embodied the newly-recast

version of that work.

234 Entry 047.
235 "Author's Advertisement," in *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (1777), Entry 059.

Having established the extent to which Hume exerted control over the material and intellectual construction of *ETSS,* the question remains whether the book's attributes resonated with readers. Undoubtedly the number and size of print runs of the *History* far exceeded those of *ETSS*, yet it was not always the better seller. Sales of *ETSS* did not increase immediately in parallel to the *History* after Millar began pairing them together more directly in advertisements starting in June of 1764. He reported to Hume the following November that he had sold nearly 2,000 octavo sets of the *History* and 400 octavo sets of *ETSS,* though he assured Hume that the latter figure only represented sales since its publication in May and that he could not remember how many copies of *ETSS* he had sold in other formats.[236] However, the fortunes of the two works appeared to have flipped by October of 1766, when Hume wrote to Millar, "Mr Bell & Mr Donaldson tell me, that they are quite out of Copies of my philosophical Pieces. The former assurd me that he sold but a few of his Quota at London; the second none at all...I own, that the quick sale of my Philosophy surprizes me as much as the slow sale of my History. You have scarce dispos'd of 2000 copies in three years."[237] The success of the two works had flipped again in January of 1771, when Hume wrote to Strahan, "I own, that this quick Sale of my philosophical Writings is as unexpected as the slow Sale of my historical, which are so much better calculated for common Readers."[238] This puts into question the relationship between print runs and sales. The *History* went through numerous editions, but there were also several times when Millar saturated the market and overestimated the extent to

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236 Andrew Millar to David Hume, 26 November 1764, HL, Appendix C, Letter 7.
237 Hume to Andrew Millar, 8 October 1766, HL, Letter 360.
238 Hume to William Strahan, 21 January 1771, HL, Letter 453.

which new editions would raise sales. Additionally, Hume's Edinburgh

booksellers' persistent petitioning of Millar for more copies of *ETSS* during the

1760s suggests the work sold better in Scotland and that Millar might have under-

printed it during this period. In either case, Millar held great respect for *ETSS*,

writing to Hume, "I considered yr Works as Classicks, that I never numbered ye

Editions as I did in Books We wished to puff. This I said before many Clergy."[239]

Marginal notes in some copies of *ETSS* offer more detailed records of the

ways in which particular individuals interacted with the work. For instance, a

copy of *ETSS* in the McGill Hume Collection contains marginalia that suggests

Hume's paratexts had a strong influence on the ways in which readers approached

his works.[240] (fig. 4) Before the title page of the second volume, the owner

(Thomas Langues, whose bookplate indicates he purchased the volumes in 1798)

inscribed two pieces of writing that had served to introduce and orient Hume's

past works. On the left page, he copied the epigram from the title page of the

Treatise, "Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire, que velis; & que sentias, dicere

licet." On the right page, he copied the entirety of Hume's advertisement to

readers attached to the 1777 edition of *ETSS* and onwards. These marginal texts

display a reader who was very aware of the position Volume II of *ETSS* held in the

collection – this was the proper refashioning of the *Treatise,* hence that book's

epigram, and it held the entirety of Hume's philosophical sentiments. The owner's

act of copying in this case was so important because these were not key texts,

such as withdrawn essays, nor were they notes for study or reference. These were

239 Andrew Millar to David Hume, 26 November 1764, HL, Appendix C, Letter 7.
240 MG, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (London: Printed for A. Millar in the Strand, and A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, in Edinburgh, 1764), 2 volumes quarto. Entry 044.

front matter materials so tied to historical and commercial context that they rarely appear in modern editions of these works, yet a reader in 1798 felt they were crucial enough to deserve full transcription on the first page of the book. On the other hand, another instance of marginalia in *ETSS* discovered by David Allan shows a lack of interest in Hume's more rigorous philosophical essays. This copy of the book contains extensive highlighting marks in the margins that indicate a close reading of his more polite essays, especially "Of Refinement in the Arts" and "Of the Standard of Taste," while "Of the Idea of the Perfect Commonwealth" and the two *Enquiries* virtually blank.[241]

These examples are revealing, but they are also just capture two particular reading experiences. Mark Towsey offers a far more extensive study of readers' responses to Hume.[242] In his doctoral dissertation and subsequent his book, *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment*, he surveyed 450 18th-century Scottish library catalogues for Scottish Enlightenment works; rightly understanding that the presence of a book did not mean it was actually read, he also studied evidence of readers' interactions with books, such as marginalia, circulating library records, and commonplace books.[243] In general, his research shows that Hume's efforts to fashion a successful literary career after the *Treatise* were successful. Where a mere 35 of the library catalogues surveyed contained the *Treatise, ETSS* was present in 194 (or 45%). His other pre-*ETSS* philosophical works were present in

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241 David Allan, *Making British Culture: English Readers and the Scottish Enlightenment, 1740-1830* (New York: Routeledge, 2008), 105.

242 Towsey, "'Philosophically Playing the Devil': recovering readers' responses to David Hume and the Scottish Enlightenment," *Historical Research,* vol. 83, no. 220 (May 2010).

243 Towsey, *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment: Books and their Readers in Provincial Scotland, 1750-1820* (Boston: Brill, 2010); "Reading the Scottish Enlightenment: libraries, readers and intellectual culture in provincial Scotland, c. 1750-1820," Ph.D. Thesis, University of St. Andrews, 2007.

even fewer catalogues, with *Philosophical Essays* appearing in 34 and the second

Enquiry in 13.[244] It is worth noting that owners of these books as independent

commodities could have rebound them and placed them together with volumes to

form collections of *ETSS.* However, the numbers are most certainly different

enough to assert the vastly greater success of *ETSS* – and to claim that the

collection was successful in bringing Hume's more rigorous and controversial

philosophical works onto library shelves where they would not have appeared

otherwise. By comparison, the *History of England* is listed in 294 (71%) of

catalogues surveyed, rendering him "a readily familiar presence on most Scottish

bookshelves in the eighteenth century."[245]

However, his examination of evidence regarding readers' interactions with

his books reveals that they frequently missed the more original and complex

points of his works and were almost invariably adverse to his religious scepticism.

In library borrowing records, *ETSS* "barely made any impression,"[246] and while

the *History* was one of the most widely read and borrowed books of the

Enlightenment, readers avoided its most religiously sceptical volume (on the

Tudors) and show few if any signs of understanding Hume's broader intention of

deflating British historical assumptions about the constitution and the Revolution

Settlement.[247] Particularly wary of Hume's religious positions, readers frequently

turned to Common Sense philosophers like Thomas Reid, George Campbell and

James Beattie to counter his atheism, and cited William Robertson as a more

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244 Towsey, "'Philosophically Playing the Devil': recovering readers' responses to David Hume
    and the Scottish Enlightenment," pp. 302-303.
245 Towsey, "'Philosophically Playing the Devil,'" p. 306.
246 Towsey, "'Philosophically Playing the Devil,'" p. 309.
247 Towsey, "'Philosophically Playing the Devil,'" 310-311.

impartial historian.[248] This leads Towsey to conclude, "Although Hume may have been an important inspiration, he was never entirely a part of the Scottish Enlightenment. He was instead an alien other against whom Scottish philosophers and readers alike defined themselves."[249]

It is somewhat difficult to assess the reception of *ETSS* for two reasons. One is that even at its most successful, its sales were still outstripped by those of the *History* – at least in the long run – and therefore any quantitative analysis of its circulation will make it seem like a relatively minor work. The other is that Hume's idea of "success" meant effecting a large-scale change in the beliefs and behaviours of society, and since this did not happen, he sometimes spoke with frustration even of his most successful works. Conversely, knowing the challenge he faced, he also occasionally proceeded with drastically lowered expectations – hence his early remark that his essays, "like dung with marl," might bring forward his more difficult philosophy.[250] In this sense, he considered it a victory if his works were purchased and read at all, and exceeded the success of the *Treatise.* The extent to which *ETSS* ended up on bookshelves next to the *History* is a vast success in this respect, and a testament to Hume and Millar's dogged persistence that *ETSS* was a classic and deserved continued print runs. For Hume, reaching the minds of readers with the full extent of his novel and complex philosophy was a constant and nearly un-winnable challenge, with small gains made through individual essays, chapters of the *History*, and occasionally an *Enquiry*. We can safely say that *ETSS* was a very well-selling book, comparisons with the *History*

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248 Towsey, "'Philosophically Playing the Devil,'" 220.
249 Towsey, "Philosophically Playing the Devil," p. 320.
250 Hume to Kames, 13 June 1742, NHL, Letter 17.

not withstanding, and that its more difficult and sceptical pieces were not readily accepted by readers. If Hume was to affect the minds of readers, he knew he had to insert himself into their common reading habits, and that began by appearing on their bookshelves and in their preferred genres. Barring an actual philosophical revolution, this was the most he had hoped for. We cannot reduce or negate his relevance to the Scottish Enlightenment on the grounds of readers disagreeing with his scepticism and atheism, since his expectations of negative responses from readers were so thoroughly built into his philosophy and publishing strategies. Moreover, as I will show in the next chapter, his influence on Scottish Enlightenment intellectual and publishing culture was not limited to his own books.

Fig. 1, *ETSS* editions from left to right: the 1768 deluxe quarto edition (Entry 046); the 1758 quarto edition (Entry 041); the 1767 two-volume octavo edition (Entry 045); and a 1753 four-volume duodecimo collection (Entries 028 – 031). McGill University David Hume Collection.

Fig. 2, The 1758 quarto edition of *ETSS* (Entry 041, right) alongside the the 1754 and 1757 quarto editions of *A History of England*, vols. I and II. McGill University David Hume Collection.

Fig. 3, Matching 1767 octavo editions of *A History of England,* in an eight-volume set, and *ETSS* in two volumes (Entry 045). On the right, the 1758 quarto edition of *ETSS* (Entry 041). McGill University David Hume Collection.

Fig. 4, A copy of Volume II of the 1764 octavo edition of *ETSS* (Entry 044) with marginalia by the owner. On the left, the epigram to the *Treatise*; on the right, the "Advertisement to readers" from the 1777 edition of *ETSS* onward. (Entry 059)
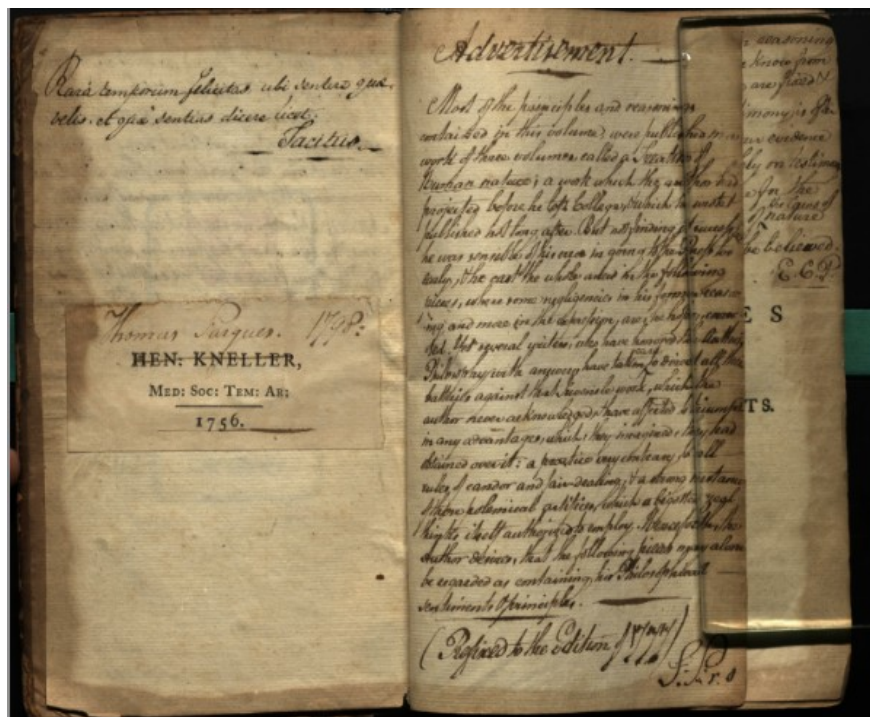
Chapter III: Hume in the Convivial Society of Edinburgh's Literati

Much of David Hume's intellectual life took place in semi-public and private spaces like clubs, societies, and dinners, to such a large extent that he was widely known as one of the most sociable literati in Edinburgh. Across the 1750s especially, his activities among Edinburgh's sphere of literati became an important foil to his career in letters, offering new opportunities for intellectual expression as he faced rejection from the academy, an excommunication attempt, and various controversies over his works. The style of inquiry that Hume developed in his philosophy and *History* spoke in part to Scotland's vibrant convivial world, which served both as a social gathering point for Scottish literati and centres for intellectual advancement. Through his involvement in Edinburgh's convivial world, and his relationship with a particular inner circle of his friends and close acquaintances, we begin to see a more holistic picture of Hume's philosophical publishing life. Where he was often criticized and rejected in the literary sphere for his atheism and scepticism, here he counted many members of the Moderate Party of The Kirk among his closest friends and allies. Here he also exerted considerable influence over the philosophical and literary orientation of Scotland's most esteemed literati. Philosophically, he was a leader or founding member in numerous clubs and societies and a staple of suppers and more convivial gatherings. In the literary realm, he was an advocate of belles-lettres, edited the *Edinburgh Review*, and assisted several literati in constructing their works and

seeking publishing agreements with Andrew Millar.

The early- to mid-18th century in particular saw the emergence of clubs and societies formed by members of the professional ranks, including churchmen, university professors, advocates, and merchants, for the improvement of their country following its union with England. These included the Society for Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture (1723), the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture (1755), and the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language (1761), among many others. While convivial groups for numerous purposes had operated in Scotland for a long time, these took a special interest in scientific, moral, literary, and political matters, and saw their inquiries as a potent means of bettering themselves and their society. Hume himself is known to have been a member of the Literary Society of Glasgow (1752), the Edinburgh Philosophical Society (revived in 1752), the Select Society (1754), and the Poker Club (1762), and was an honorary member of the Edinburgh Belles-Lettres Society (1759).

These groups served several vital functions for Hume's philosophy. In some cases, they offered testing grounds for his writing in progress, and more frequently, they were forums for discussing ideas he had put forward in his works and building social ties with other men of letters. In the case of the Select Society and subsequent groups that it inspired, they bore the imprint of the style of discourse he introduced in his essays of combining the popular, polite language of the *Spectator* and *Craftsman* with rigorous philosophical inquiry that addressed socially relevant questions. They were also groups in which he was actively involved: he was a co-founder and treasurer of the Select Society, the secretary of

the Edinburgh Philosophical Society, and (in jocular fashion) the "assessor to the assassin" of the Poker Club. Moreover, he was a staple of suppers and other more casual gatherings. These commitments gave some institutional grounding to his life as a man of letters in the absence of a university chair or career in law. Here he could influence the minds of his most socially prominent countrymen, both his peers and a younger generation, without requiring the approval of The Kirk or the Scottish universities. It is in these spaces where we can see him forming bonds and holding discussions with other Edinburgh literati, some of whom lived very different lives from his in their occupations and in their printed works. In light of all this, we can gain a more holistic understanding of Hume's publishing life. This is especially relevant for an author who took such care tailoring his authorial identity to the public. By the 1750s he was very aware that certain elements of his work were not fit for public consumption and he accordingly developed private and semi-public intellectual personas into which he channelled different parts of his philosophy.

I will focus especially on Hume's social and intellectual ties with a group of friends and close acquaintances who were among the most active, prominent, and prolific figures in the Scottish Enlightenment. These included the Moderate Party clergymen John Home, Hugh Blair, Alexander Carlyle, John Jardine, Adam Ferguson, and William Robertson; the university professor Adam Smith; advocates Patrick Murray (Lord Elibank), Lord Kames, and Gilbert Elliot (Lord Minto); and the painter and essayist Allan Ramsay. Among the clergymen, Hugh Blair and William Robertson were especially powerful: Blair was positioned at the High Kirk of Edinburgh, St. Giles, in 1758 and four years later became the first

Regius Professor of Belles-Lettres at the University of Edinburgh, while William Robertson became the rector of the same university in (1762).

As this chapter will show, these individuals and Hume came together in a succession of events across the 1750s that marked them as sharing a similar intellectual mission and proved their strength as a group that could assert their ideals in the face of opposition and controversy. These events included the revival of the Edinburgh Philosophical Society in 1752, the founding of the Select Society in 1754, the publication of *The Edinburgh Review* in 1755-6, the attempted excommunication of Hume and Kames in 1756, the *Douglas* affair of the same year, and the founding of the Poker Club in 1762, accompanied along the way by their convivial gatherings, correspondence, and intellectual exchanges. In a sense this group is an expansion upon Richard Sher's "moderate regime" of the mid-eighteenth century, but more precisely, it is a constellation of Hume's contacts in Scotland who had a substantial impact on his life as a man of letters.[251] Even though Hume was far from being a clergyman, he left an undeniable mark upon the Moderate Party, and affected their reputation as much as they protected his. To that end, John Witherspoon wrote a pamphlet in 1753 satirizing the Moderate Party as infidels who read only Leibniz, Collins, Hutcheson, Hume's *Essays* and Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*.[252] In many respects, the party's activities over the subsequent decade would serve to affirm Witherspoon's conviction.

The rejection of Hume from a university post, for the second time, set the

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251 Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
252 John Witherspoon, *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (Glasgow, 1753); Richard Sher, *Church and University*, pp. 45-64.

stage for events that followed during the 1750s. The Chair of Logic at the

University of Glasgow became open at the end of 1751 when Adam Smith

vacated the position to assume the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the same

university. Hume had several supporters within the university who suggested his

candidacy for the Chair of Logic, including William Mure, who became Rector in

1752; Gilbert Elliot, the prominent statesman; Hercules Lindsay, professor of civil

law; and William Cullen, professor of anatomy. On the other hand, Hume's

candidacy aroused ire from members of the clergy, especially those associated

with the Popular Party, as well as the influential professor of divinity, William

Leechman. Adam Smith summarized the dilemma when he told Cullen, "I should

prefer David Hume to any man for a colleague; but I am afraid the public would

not be of my opinion; and the interest of the society will oblige me to have some

regard to the opinion of the public."[253] The public role of the Chair expressed by

Smith best captures the reason why a figure like Hume, despite his widely

recognized brilliance, did not belong in a mid-eighteenth-century Scottish

university. Hume had encountered the same problems when he applied for the

Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1744. Scottish

universities were closely intertwined with town and Church authority and

professors were expected to play a civic role in their communities – that is, the

preparing of young students for living moral lives within Scottish society.[254]

Hume's perceived atheism and scepticism in the *Treatise* rendered him

fundamentally unfit to fulfill this role.

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253 Qtd. in Mossner, p. 248.

254 Richard Sher, "Professors of Virtue: The Social History of the Edinburgh Moral Philosophy
    Chair in the Eighteenth Century," *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*
    (1990), 87-126.

Hume subsequently found another form of patronage, albeit modest, by being named Keeper of the Advocates Library in Edinburgh 28 January 1752. Here he had access to over 30,000 books and received a small stipend of £ 40 per annum. However, the main appeal of the office was to give him the freedom and resources to undertake research for the *History*.[255] The Advocates Library also represented one of the intellectual centres of Edinburgh literati and professional culture. His presence was not without its own controversies – shortly after assuming his duties, the Curators of the library rebuked him for ordering three works of French *Belles-Lettres*, banning them from the shelves and mandating that future purchases must meet their approval before going through. Among the Curators, Sir David Dalrymple had opposed Hume's candidacy from the start and James Burnet's adversity to Hume extended into his published writings.[256] But Hume would comply with their demands, if only to retain access to the library, and ultimately leave under his own accord in January of 1757. The Advocates Library became more than an academic resource for Hume. It was his foundation in Edinburgh literati culture, and offered him the institutional security and social position he needed to pursue a life of letters and intermingle with the city's most important literary and political figures. It later served as a meeting place for the Select Society for the first year of its existence.

Shortly after relocating to the city, Hume also became the secretary for the Edinburgh Philosophical Society. The Philosophical Society grew out of a group established in 1731 by the University of Edinburgh professor of anatomy

255 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶11.
256 "Dalrymple, Sir David, third baronet, Lord Hailes (1726–1792)" and "Burnett, James, Lord Monboddo (bap. 1714, d. 1799)," ODNB.

Alexander Monro for the improvement of medical and natural knowledge and in 1783 it turned into the Royal Society of Edinburgh.[257] In the interim, it operated until the '45 and then flourished after its revival in 1752. In its latter phase it fell under the unofficial leadership of Kames, who took a centre role in recruiting members and soliciting papers. Hume and Alexander Monro (the younger) served as secretaries and were "directed to arrange, and superintend the printing of such papers as had been declared worthy of public attention."[258] There is no extant minute book for the group and therefore what we know comes from outside accounts and their published Essays. Hume gave insight into the nature of their meetings when he wrote to Benjamin Franklin, "after a paper is read to them, it is delivered by them to some number, who is obliged, in a subsequent meeting to read some paper or remarks upon it."[259] They had published five volumes of *Medical Essays and Observations* between 1732 and 1744 and then another three volumes of *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary* between 1754 and 1771.

Hume was heavily involved in the institutional framework of the Philosophical Society at its revival, though his interest seems to have waned quickly, and in either case there is no evidence of him making a substantial intellectual contribution to the group outside of one instance. This was when he engaged in a debate with Robert Wallace over the question of whether the ancient or modern world had a larger population. Wallace originally spoke on the subject

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257 Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, *Memoirs of the life and writings of the honourable Henry Home of Kames* (Edinburgh: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1814), vol. 1, p. 184.
258 *Medical Essays and Observations, Published by a Society in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Printed by Hamilton, Balfour, and Neill, 1752), "Preface."
259 Hume to Benjamin Franklin, 10 May 1762, HL, Letter 192.

in the Philosophical Society, after which he and Hume entered into a friendly disagreement. Hume published his position in the *Political Discourses* as "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations," and Wallace published his in 1753 as *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind* – a piece that was originally intended for the Philosophical Society's *Essays*, but which he printed earlier when the debate was receiving public attention. Hume had helped Wallace prepare his dissertation for publication, editing the proof sheets before it went to press.

This aside, Hume's involvement in the Philosophical Society was more important for its social implications than for his intellectual commitment. Kames had considerable influence over the intellectual life of Edinburgh and was deeply committed to making the Philosophical Society an institution that equalled the greatest European scientific academies. This was yet another place where Hume gained institutional affiliation and – at least in principle – assumed a position of influence over the intellectual business of his fellow literati. His role as a secretary involved receiving papers for inclusion in the Philosophical Society's meetings and journal; this was advertised at the conclusion of the Preface to the first volume of *Essays and Observations*. However, the Preface and contents of the volume show more clearly why Hume did not participate more deeply in the Philosophical Society's intellectual output. The change in title from *Medical Essays and Observations* to *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary*, signalled a much broader philosophical orientation for the group than its publications indicated. The Preface too claims that the Philosophical Society had been founded on the model of other academies "in different parts of Europe," for the "promoting of natural philosophy, and of literature," the former being "more

promoted by the observations of facts, than the most ingenious reasonings and disputations." However, "The sciences of theology, morals, and politics," it continued, "are resolved entirely to exclude from their plan. However difficult the inferences in these sciences, the facts on which they are based, are extremely obvious; and we could not hope, by our collections, to be in this respect of any service to the public...And it is the peculiar happiness of geometry and physics, that as they interest less the passions of men, they admit of more calm disquisition and inquiry."[260] While Hume would have appreciated the group's commitment to rigour, nothing else here overlaps with his immediate intellectual interests. By the time the Edinburgh Philosophical Society published their first volume of *Essays and Observations*, it was clear that that their direction would not deviate far from medicine and natural philosophy like their earlier incarnation.

In the early months of 1752 Hume also became a member of the Glasgow Literary Society. While he did not attend meetings regularly, the group's discussions fell much closer to his interests and in several cases centred specifically on his writings. Its membership was composed primarily of University of Glasgow professors, including those who had supported his candidacy there, as well as Adam Smith, Joseph Black and Thomas Reid. Meetings consisted of a member reading a paper followed by friendly criticism and debate. During the first month of meetings, they focused on "new books" rather than original papers, and in one of these cases Adam Smith put forward Hume's *Political Discourses* for discussion. Other known topics included historical composition (James Moor), the origin and progress of Roman poetry

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260 *Medical Essays and Observations*, "Preface."

(Muirhead), and the history of architecture (Robertson), as well as a discourse on Hume's *Natural History of Religion* introduced by William Leechman.[261] Hume did not attend very many meetings of the *Literary Society* – seemingly more out of geographical inconvenience than lack of interest. From 1752 onward his life was far more thoroughly rooted in Edinburgh. When the members demanded that he fulfill his obligation to present a paper, he sent a section of the *History of England* by post.[262]

Hume showed greater involvement in the formation and earlier proceedings of the Edinburgh Select Society - without hyperbole, possibly the most important debating club of the Scottish Enlightenment. It contained the vast majority of Scotland's major literati, politicians, merchants, and clergymen who were alive and active between the group's founding in 1754 and its dissolution in 1764.[263] Reporting on the Society's reputation in London a year after its founding, Hume wrote to Allan Ramsay: "It has grown to be a national concern. Young and old, noble and ignoble, witty and dull, laity and clergy, all the world are ambitious for a place among us, and on each occasion we are as much solicited by candidates as if we were to choose a Member of Parliament."[264] The group's size was such that Roger Emerson used it as his central reference point in a study of the "Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland," where he called it "the most important circle of intellectuals in Scotland" during its time.[265] In his account of

261 D. D. McElroy, "The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth-Century Scotland," unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh (1952), pp. 118-127. "Minutes, Literary Society in Glasgow College," UG MS Murray 505.

262 McElroy, "The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth-Century Scotland," pp. 124-126.

263 Roger Emerson, "The Social composition of enlightened Scotland: the select society of Edinburgh, 1754-1764," in Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (1973), vol. 114, p. 291.

264 David Hume to Allan Ramsay, between April and May 1755, HL, Letter 109.

265 Emerson, "The Social composition of enlightened Scotland: the select society of Edinburgh,

the Society appended to Dugald Stewart's *Works of William Robertson*, Alexander

Carlyle less cautiously claimed that by 1759 the Society's 130 members "included

all the Literati of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, and many of the Nobility and

Gentry."[266]

A close examination of Hume's role in the Select Society offers a nuanced

picture of his involvement in the convivial life of Edinburgh, and more broadly,

his intellectual engagement with a semi-public sphere of literati outside of the

pages of his printed works. Hume was among a handful of leaders in the Society

during its formative years, between 1754 and 1757, when he helped to establish it

as a place where he his peers could improve Scotland and Great Britain as a whole

by applying rigorous philosophical inquiry to practical questions affecting the

kingdom's political, commercial and moral status. This reflected Hume's own

literary turn toward political affairs after the *Treatise* and his shared interests with

a group of literati who were particularly active in the intellectual and civic life of

18th-century Edinburgh. With the term "political affairs," I refer both to the

subject of his writing (as shown in the *Political Discourses* and various essays)

and to the intentions behind his writing of reaching a large audience and affecting

the manner in which the British populace conceptualized their history and formed

their political beliefs (as shown in the stylistic turn in *Essays and Treatises on*

Several Subjects and the *History*). At the same time, there were limits to Hume's

interest in the Select Society, especially as it grew in size and deviated from its

original mission as a rigorous debating club to include a large-scale initiative

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1754-1764," p. 291.

266 Alexander Carlyle, "Appendix, Note A., p. 15," in Dugald Stewart, *An Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson* (London: Printed by A. Strahan, Printers Street, for T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies in the Strand, and E. Balfour, in Edinburgh, 1802).

offering awards to Scottish improvement efforts in a wide variety of categories from essays to whiskey. In the process, Hume gravitated toward a smaller group of friends and acquaintances and sought out more private and controlled spaces for philosophical debate, finding a more comfortable home in smaller suppers and The Poker Club.

There is quite a bit of uncertainty among historians over the role Hume played in the Select Society. A handful of seminal studies assert the centrality of Hume's essays in the Society's debates, but without detailed explanations of the connection between them nor of the significance of Hume's works being treated in this way.[267] Nicholas Phillipson offers the most nuanced interpretation when he writes that the Society's questions reflected a group of men who "were responsive to a peculiarly Scottish language of civic morality and to the writing of Hume," and were regular material for Adam Smith's lectures at Glasgow.[268] This clashes with Alexander Carlyle's memoirs, in which he claims that Hume never spoke in debates, and other accounts that downplay the role of intellectual inquiry in the club altogether.[269] A return to the Society's minute book helps to clear up these discrepancies.[270] Here we can learn the date of each meeting, the questions discussed, and the member who presided over each discussion, as well as a wealth

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267 In *Scotland's Age of Improvement* (Washington State University Press, 1969), which remains the most thorough published work on the topic to date, D. D. McElroy claims that Hume's essays provided regular topics of discussion in the Society; Roger Emerson's ODNB entry on the Society repeats this claim and adds the works of Shaftesbury and Addison to the list (Select Society [act. 1754–1764]).

268 Nicholas Phillipson, "The Scottish Enlightenment," in *The Enlightenment in National Context*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 33.

269 Carlyle, *The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805* (London: T.N. Foulis, 1910), 221-227; Carlyle, *The Life of William Robertson,* Appendix; John Rae, *Life of Adam Smith* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895), VIII, 8-25; McElroy, "The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth Century Scotland," pp. 176-188.

270 "Minutes of the Select Society," NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1.

of other information on the group's style of debate, its rules, the ebb and flow of its membership, the places where meetings occurred, and its involvement in local affairs.

The Society was founded by the painter Allan Ramsay as a place "for Philosophical Inquiry, and the improvement of the Members in the Art of Speaking," on the model of continental clubs, and initially consisted of 14 handpicked members in addition to himself.[271] Among this original group were Hume and Smith, ministers John Jardine and Alexander Carlyle, physicians Francis Home and Alexander Stevenson, and several advocates including Alexander Wedderburn, John Swington, and John Campbell. An additional 17 were admitted at the Society's first meeting in May of 1754, including ministers Hugh Blair, later appointed to the High Kirk and named Regius Professor Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at the University of Edinburgh; William Robertson, later rector of the University of Edinburgh; and John Home, author of the tragedy *Douglas*; advocates Lord Elibank, Gilbert Elliot, and Sir David Dalrymple; James Russell, the surgeon and public official; John Hope, curator of the Royal Garden of Edinburgh.[272] These men could be found at all levels of local power, including the General Assembly of The Kirk, the Town Council, the Court of Session, the Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Arts and Manufactures of Scotland, and in various improvement schemes across the mid-18th century. Most were in their 30s, standing at the beginning of successful careers, and came from comfortable but non-aristocratic families.[273] The formidable bloc of clergymen constituted the core

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271 Carlyle, *The Life of William Robertson,* Appendix.
272 Emerson compiled a list of the Select Society's members, including the date each one was admitted, in the appendix to "The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland."
273 For an analysis of the activities and social and economic positions of the Select Society's

of the Moderate Party of The Kirk. The Society experienced substantial shifts in its membership and activities in the decade between its founding and dissolution, expanding from this initial group to over 133, experiencing periods of inactivity, and undertaking ventures off of the debate floor.

Further evidence suggests the primacy of Hume and Smith in particular in Ramsay's initial founding of the Society. Ramsay consulted both men about his idea for a debating club early on, and Smith presided over their first meeting.[274] Moreover, by this point Hume and Ramsay had entered into a close intellectual and personal relationship that showed their devotion to the style of inquiry present in the Select Society. Ramsay led a remarkably distinguished life as a man of letters, publishing several substantial pamphlets and earning Voltaire's blessing as a *philosophe*.[275] He prefaced his essay "On Ridicule" (1753) with a call for "experimental reasoning in philological and moral enquiries," a remark that echoed the subtitle to Hume's *Treatise*.[276] He would also use Humean terms to criticize religious dogmatism and the power of institutional religion in his *Dialogue on Taste* and *Essay on the English Constitution*, and showed a familiarity with Hume's essay "Essay on Miracles" in his *Letter from a*

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members, see Emerson, "The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland."

274 Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, VIII.9; Alastair Smart, *Allan Ramsay: painter, essayist and man of the enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 111; NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1, May 1754. Due to the nature of the source, the Minutes of the Select Society will be cited by date.

275 These include *An essay on ridicule* (1753), *A letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of – concerning the affair of Elizabeth Canning* (1753), *The investigator* (1755 and 1762), *An essay on the naturalization of foreign Protestants* (1762), *A Dialogue on Taste* (1762), *Thoughts on the Origin and Nature of Government* (1769), *An historical essay on the English constitution* (1771), *A plan on reconciliation between Great Britain and her colonies* (1776), *Letters on the present disturbances in Great Britain and her American provinces* (1777), *Observations upon the Riot Act* (1781), *A succinct review of the American contest, addressed to those whom it may concern* (1782), *An essay on the right of foreign conquest* (1783), and *The arno miscellany, Being a collection of fugitive pieces written by the members of a society called the Oziosi at Florence* (1784)

276 "Ramsay, Allan, of Kinkell (1713–1784)," ODNB.

Clergyman. More concretely, Ramsay was an important intellectual advisor to Hume, such that he sought Ramsay's criticism on an early draft of the first volume of his *History* and also gave him a proof copy of *Five Dissertations* with the ultimately suppressed essay "On Suicide."[277] It was also in 1754 that Ramsay painted his iconic portrait of Hume in a philosopher's cap.[278]

The group spent their first four meetings expanding their membership and establishing rules and procedures; having increased their ranks to sixty, they set about appointing officers and forming committees for various purposes. This is when Hume was named the Society's treasurer and elected to a "special committee to receive & consider all proposals relating to the orders, laws & regulations of the Society," which included Ramsay among its members.[279] As treasurer, Hume's job was to collect dues from each member of five shillings per year, disperse the Society's money as he saw fit, submit his accounts at the end of each year. He also had the task of recording which members did not pay and recommending them for expulsion if necessary.[280] Hume would be reelected to these two posts twice, holding them until the beginning of 1757.[281]

The committee for orders, laws and regulations met at the Exchange Coffee House the following week and presented their proposal to the Society on July 17th. The rules were rigorous in their requirements for every member to attend and participate in meetings on a regular basis. Each member was to take his

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277 For an overview of the intellectual relationship between Ramsay and Hume, see Smart, 111-125.
278 *David Hume*, 1754 (Collection of H.I.T. Gunn).
279 The other members were Alexander Monro, Charles Hamilton-Gordon, George Brown, James Burnett, William Johnston, and John Jardine.
280 NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1, June 1754.
281 NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1, 6 December 1754; 5 December, 1755.

turn presiding over debates, a role that entailed reading the question of the evening, timing speakers' contributions, and choosing a question to be debated at the following meeting. Members could miss no fewer than six meetings per year and had to contribute to at least three debates in the same period, whether in verbal or written form, or vacate their seats. A clerk was to keep a close record of attendance and participation and report on any infractions. When seats were vacated, the Society was to propose and elect new members to fill them immediately. There is no clear record of a vote on these orders, though deliberations did spread across at least two meetings. Other parts of the minute book indicate that members were barred from discussing any topics pertaining to revealed religion or Jacobitism, from naming members in debates, and from speaking more than three times per meeting; nowhere does there appear any effort to record the resolutions to debates. At the very least, we can take the proposals to show that the committee, Hume and Ramsay included, intended the Select Society to be forum for serious debate that would expect consistent and high quality participation from its members.[282]

In keeping with his duties, Hume presided over two meetings: one on December 4, 1754, and another on August 3, 1756. The first came at a time when founding members were still the only ones leading meetings.[283] The question debated that night was, "Whether ought we to prefer ancient to modern manners with regard to the Condition and treatment of Women?" and the question he chose for the following meeting was, "Whether the Difference of national Characters be

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282 NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1 17, July 1754.

283 Leading meetings before him were Adam Smith, Alexander Wedderburn, Simon Fraser, Allan Ramsay, James Stevenson, James Burnett, John Campbell, Alexander Stevenson, Patrick Murray, Alexander Carlyle, and Patrick Home.

chiefly owning to the nature of different climates or to moral and political causes?"[284] The latter was a topic that Hume focused on in his own writings. He devoted a lengthy essay to it, "Of National Characters," and it would inform his *Political Discourses* and *History of England*. It was also a question that stood at the root of Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* – a work that Hume read and discussed directly with Montesquieu, and which he helped to publish in Edinburgh.[285] The Society would return to this question two more times within the following three years, placing it among their most frequently debated topics and making it a staple of the period when Hume was active in the group.[286]

The evidence for Hume's involvement in the Society problematizes the claim that he never spoke in meetings and was inactive in its proceedings. This claim appears in an appendix to Dugald Stewart's *Life of William Robertson,* wherein Stewart prints Alexander Carlyle's short account of the club and a list of its members. The passage runs: "Among the most distinguished Speakers in the Select Society were Sir Gilbert Elliott, Mr. Wedderburn, Mr. Andrew Pringle, Lord Kaims, Mr. Walter Stewart, Lord Elibank, and Dr. Robertson. The Honourable Charles Townshend spoke once. David Hume and Adam Smith never opened their lips."[287] While this would seem to close the matter, other accounts from Carlyle's memoirs adjust the implications of this claim. In his autobiography, he further says of Hume and Smith: "Adam Smith, though perhaps only second to David in learning and ingenuity, was far inferior to him in conversational talents.

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284 NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1 4 December 1754.
285 David Hume to Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, 10 April 1749, HL, Letter 65; Warren McDougall, "Scottish Lawyers at the Press of Hamilton, Balfour and Neill," *Scottish Book Collector,* vol. 3 no. 2 (December 1991-1992), p. 11-12;
286 NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1. Debated on 18 December 1754, 19 February 1755, and 20 July 1757.
287 Carlyle, Appendix.

In that of public speaking they were equal – David never tried it, and I never heard Adam but once, which was at the first meeting of the Select Society, when he opened up the design of the meeting."[288] We know that the minute book shows Smith presiding over this meeting, suggesting that Carlyle must have meant Hume and Smith never joined debates but spoke at other times and still could have been active in the club's activities. That Carlyle contradicts himself here on whether Adam Smith opened his lips shows that he makes a distinction between different sorts of speaking: there is public speaking, and there is speaking at all, neither of which should be taken to mean the same thing as participating in the life of the Select Society. Moreover, members regularly met for suppers and other convivial events, holding discussions and forming bonds that were almost as important – if not more so – than their official business. As I will discuss later, this element of the Select Society's activities is crucial to understanding Hume's involvement – and, eventually, lack thereof.

A comparative analysis of the questions debated by the Society with Hume's contemporary works reveals the depth of correlations between the two.[289] The most immediately striking trend in the list of questions is toward philosophizing pertinent political matters in a manner similar to Hume's *Political Discourses* and politically-themed essays. To borrow his phrase from "Of the First

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288 Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 227.

289 Appendix I contains a list of questions debated by the Society in order of appearance and divided by year. Whenever there are ambiguities in the minutes over whether a question was actually debated, or for how many meetings, these are noted in the text. The minute book becomes unclear and disorganized from 1761 onward; I have recorded questions from this period as faithfully as possible, but the nature of the source renders it less than fully reliable. Appendix II contains the same questions divided by subject matter; namely, "political-economy," "political policy," "political philosophy," "letters/arts," and "history/philosophy." These subjects capture trends in the questions and are intended as an aid for understanding a large set of data rather than an effort at exact categorization. Appendix III contains a list of questions proposed but not debated by the Society.

Principles of Government," these questions "consider human affairs with a philosophical eye." Overtly political questions, ranging from the interests of local governance (question 26)[290] to broader issues of social structure (question 13) and international commerce (question 34), fill three of the subject categories in Appendix II and account for 41 out of 75 total questions. In all except a handful of instances, these display a marriage of practical subjects with philosophical inquiry; for example, question 18, which moves from Scottish banks to monetary policy and trade more generally. Nonpolitical questions concerning literature and arts were the least important, with only 11 falling under this category, while questions of political theory, usually entailing a historical or philosophical approach, comprise a formidable block of 20.

Themes from the *Political Discourses* are the most visible throughout the list. The rich and multifaceted discourse "Of Commerce," which spans subjects like agriculture, luxury, armies, arts, foreign trade, and climate, mirrors questions like 2, 3, 10, 36, 56, 66 and 70. The next discourse, "Of Luxury," relates to questions like 3, 44, 48, and 66, while "Of Money" clearly resembles 18, and "Of Interest" and "Of Taxes" relate most directly to 23 and 60. "Of the Balance of Trade" moves into a host of topics related to international and domestic commerce, touching on issues contained in questions 2, 18, 24, 58 and 60. The discussions of national debt and alcohol restrictions in "Of Public Credit" relate directly to questions 21 and 28, while the varied explorations of political structures in "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" appear in questions 40, 45, 51, 65, 67 and 74.

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290 In the interest of maintaining fluid prose, hereafter I refer to questions by the number I
   assigned them in Appendix I.

Unfortunately, the Society did not record the resolutions to their debates, so we can not do much more than observe these commonalities in subject matter. We can say there is a larger sense of shared purpose and style of inquiry between these questions and the *Political Discourses*. As in the Select Society, Hume applies his philosophical inquiries toward the ultimate end of improving Britain while making broader theoretical claims about its political and commercial structures. In the same way that the Society's questions move freely from topics like taxes to agriculture to ancient history, Hume's style of inquiry interweaves historical examples with regular appeals to the reader's common knowledge of their nation's history and of political affairs. Moreover, he frequently returns to questions of the progress of manufactures, manners, arts, and sciences, as if they were the central indicators of a society's strength, much in the same way these themes inform Society's questions as a whole.

On a broader level, the Society's questions relate closely to the topics Hume covered in *ETSS*. When compared with the question list, the essays in this collection might lack the same deep commonalities exhibited by the *Political Discourses*, but most individual essays bear a resemblance to at least once question. In some cases the resemblance could not be more direct, as with "Of the Liberty of the Press" and question 12, "Of Eloquence" and question 6, and "Of Polygamy and Divorces" and questions 54 and 61. Marriage was one of the most frequent topics debated by the Society, with the Marriage Act coming up four distinct times (question 7), and questions 39, 54 and 61 all relating to Hume's essay on the topic. Other essays with close parallels in the list are "Of the First Principles of Government" (51 and 67), "Whether the British Government

inclines more to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republic" (53 and 67), and "Of Tragedy" (5 and 46). More generally, the essay "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" informs numerous questions much in the same way as Hume's discussions of progress in the *Political Discourses*.

Specific records of Hume's involvement in the Select Society cease by early 1757. At this point his name disappears from the minutes, he gave up his positions as treasurer and as a member of the rules committee, and, in parallel, he left his position as Keeper of Advocates Library. There are no dramatic changes to the nature of questions after this point, but very importantly, the proportion of new questions introduced after that point is small. The Society had debated 52 distinct questions by the beginning of 1757 and would only add 24 more over the following four years. This might be symptomatic of the stagnation that took over the group in its later years; but more tangibly, this means the period when Hume and his circle were active in the Select Society was also the most formative for its intellectual orientation.

Even though many of these questions relate to Addisonian themes that would have been common topics of debate among Scotland's educated ranks, the substantial turn away from literary/arts topics and toward philosophical politics shows that the Select Society was aiming for something much higher than polite conversation while still avoiding metaphysical speculation. The former is apparent from reading the list of questions proposed but not debated (Appendix III) which generally lack the same rigour and practicality as the questions debated, and veer closer to the style of club discourse exhibited in *The Spectator*. As examined in Chapters 1 and 2, Hume had espoused the value working between polite and

abstruse forms of enquiry since the *Treatise,* and refined his position in "Of the Different Species of Philosophy" and across the publishing history of *ETSS.* Adam Smith took up Hume's challenge in his immensely popular Lectures on Rhetoric in Edinburgh between 1748-51 and Hugh Blair brought it into the academy in an official capacity when he became the first Regius Chair of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres at the University of Edinburgh in 1762.[291] While the Spectatorial or polite essay genre had long enjoyed popularity in Scotland and especially the metropolitan environment of Edinburgh, Hume was the first to refashion it into a vessel for rigorous philosophical inquiry that could engage readers and guide them toward a critical and constructive reexamination of their political and commercial institutions and of their political and religious dogmas.[292] At the time of the founding of the Society in 1754, Ramsay and Kames were the only two members who had written essays in the format of Hume's radical surgery of the Addisonian tradition. As I will show, following his involvement in establishing the *Select Society*, Hume served as a literary patron to his close friends and acquaintances and assist in the editing and publication of some of the most important works of the Scottish Enlightenment. Here he further exerted his influence over their style of writing, encouraging rigorous enquiry in polite but incisive language that could appeal to and affect the minds of a large readership.

Hume's apparent retreat from Select Society affairs from 1757 onward seems to have been caused by his disenchantment with the group's direction, as it

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291 Phillipson, *Adam Smith,* "Smith's Edinburgh Lectures: A Conjectural History," Paul G. Bator, "The Formation of the Regius Chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at the University of Edinburgh," in Quarterly Journal of Speech, 75:1, 40-64.

292 Nicholas Phillipson, "Politics, politeness and the Anglicisation of early eighteenth-century Scottish culture," in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815* (Edinburgh: J. Donald Publishers, 1987), and "The Scottish Enlightenment," *The Enlightenment in National Context.*

veered away from being a rigorous philosophical debating club. Starting in July of

1755, the Select Society initiated an effort to award annual prizes to the best-

manufactured goods, improvement schemes, and publications in Scotland. The

endeavour gained considerable attention and the prizes became prestigious and

widely sought after; a sister society, entitled the Edinburgh Society for

Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture awarded them

annually until 1764.[293] Hume reported on the matter in his 1755 letter to Allan

Ramsay, saying it was "what chiefly renders us considerable," and adding, with

more than a hint of disdain, "we have not neglected porter, strong ale, and

wrought ruffles, even down to linen rags."[294] Ramsay's response candidly reveals

both the direction of the Select Society at this point and the plans that he, Hume,

and the early members had for making it a serious philosophical debate club for

Edinburgh's most talented literati. While approving generally of the Edinburgh

Society's improvement efforts, he wrote that he was "afraid at the same time that

this scheme, by bringing in a new set of members of another species, will destroy

that which we have set on foot...Is not Truth more than meat, and Wisdom more

than raiment?"[295] However, Hume and Ramsay both took a keen interest in the

Society's awards for essays. Hume sat on the committee to judge the best essay in

the category of belles-lettres and criticism and conferred with Ramsay as he read

293 Brian Hillyard, "The Edinburgh Society's Silver Medals for Printing," in *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, third quarter, vol., 78 (1984), pp. 295-319. Also see *Resolutions of the Select Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures and Agriculture* (Edinburgh, 1755). The long list included the best discovery in the sciences, the best essay on taste, the best dissertation on vegetation and the principles of agriculture, the best printed and most correct book (of at least ten sheets), the best imitation of English blankets (not under six), the best hogshead of strong ale, the best hogs head of porter, etc. In the inaugural year, Hume sat on a committee judging essays in the category of belles-lettres and criticism. (NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1, 6 August 1755.)
294 Hume to Allan Ramsay, April of May 1755, HL, Letter 109.
295 Allan Ramsay to David Hume, 1755; qtd. in Smart, *Allan Ramsay,* pp. 113-114.

through entries.[296] The final winner was Alexander Gerard for his "Essay on Taste" - and Hume subsequently placed Gerard in contact with Millar, having the essay published in 1759.[297] According to membership records, by 1757 the Society had changed dramatically in scope and composition from its initial formation in the Summer of 1754. Now the group consisted of 120 members, indicating a disregard for the cap of 50 that the 15 founders established in their early meetings.[298] There was also a dramatic decline in attendance by this point, as shown by their creation on 11 January 1757 of a committee for "reviving the spirit of the Society."[299] One of the measures enacted after this meeting was the appointment of six presidents to take turns presiding over debates, thus ending the previous practice of rotating through all members, as the Society could not depend on the regular attendance and fulfillment of duties by its whole body. Among the eight members who served this function over the next four years, only two would later join the Poker Club (Lord Elibank and William Robertson), revealing a spitting off not only of Hume but also his circle starting in early-1757.[300] The group would have become less convivial after such a shift in its membership and would have clashed with Hume's preference for smaller, familiar gatherings. As John Ramsay observed, "So long as the society continued select, it flourished, but its celebrity proved its ruin, a seat in it being courted like a place or a pension."[301]

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296 NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1, 6 August 1755; Allan Ramsay to David Hume, 1755.
297 Hume to William Robertson, 29 May 1759, HL, 167. Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (London: Printed for A. Millar, A. Kincaid and J. Bell, 1759).
298 NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1, 12 June 1754.
299 NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1, 11 January 1757. The other committee members included Lord Elibank, John Gordon, George Morison, Alexander Maxwell, John MacGowan, and William Johnston.
300 Records of the presidents exist for 1757, 1758, 1759 and 1760. Six were elected each year, but a total of only eight members served in the role: James Burnett, William Robertson, David Dalrymple, Alexander Monro, Lord Elibank, Alexander Taitt, William Cullen, and Walter Stewart. NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1.
301 John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh and

It is unclear whether Hume's disenchantment resulted in full abstention from the Society or if he reduced his official involvement but continued attending meetings. In either case, he most certainly maintained his social ties with certain Select Society members and remained intellectually engaged with them in other spaces, the bedrock of these relationships being the smaller, more convivial supper or gathering. Carlyle makes a point of describing the Select Society's activities outside of its meetings, where a vibrant culture of conversation continued off of the debate floor. We can learn as much from his depiction of a member who, like Hume, avoided speaking in meetings but contributed heavily elsewhere:

Mr Robert Alexander, wine merchant, a very worthy man, but a bad speaker, entertained us all with warm suppers and excellent claret, as a recompense for the patient hearing of his ineffectual attempts, when I often thought he would have beat out his brains on account of their constipation. The conversation at those convivial meetings frequently improved the members more by free conversation than the speeches in the Society. It was those meetings in particular that rubbed off all corners, as we call it, by collision, and made the *literati* of Edinburgh less captious and pedantic than they were elsewhere.[302]

Like Alexander, Hume was known for his good temper and supreme sociability in more intimate settings, where he frequently entertained and conversed with members of the Select Society. Mossner called him one of the most "clubbable" men in Edinburgh.[303] The importance of these convivial gatherings cannot be overstated and it is unfortunate that by nature they are difficult to penetrate historically. How was it, for example, that a purported atheist twice denied a university position could gain the friendship and protection of the Moderate clergy? Another of Carlyle's anecdotes concerning Hume's sociability offers a

London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1888), vol. I, p. 318.
302 Carlyle, *Autobiography,* pp. 241-2.
303 Mossner, p. 272.

good place to begin:

...when Mr. Robert Adam, the celebrated architect, and his brother, lived in Edinburgh with their mother, an aunt of Dr. Robertson's, and a very respectable woman, she said to her son, "I shall be glad to see any of your companions to dinner, but I hope you will never bring the Atheist here to disturb my peace." But Robert soon fell on a method to reconcile her to him, for he introduced him under another name, or concealed it carefully from her. When the company parted she said to her son, "I must confess that you bring very agreeable companions about you, but the large jolly man who sat next to me is the most agreeable of them all." "This was the very Atheist," said he, "mother, that you was so much afraid of." "Well," says she, "you may bring him here as much as you please, for he's the most innocent, agreeable, facetious man I ever met with." This was truly the case with him; for though he had much learning and a fine taste, and was professedly a sceptic, though by no means an atheist, he had the greatest simplicity of mind and manners with the utmost facility and benevolence of temper of any man I ever knew. His conversation was truly irresistible, for while it was enlightened, it was naive almost to puerility.[304]

If Hume was a sceptic and infidel that even a mother could love, then it is not much of a leap to see how he could ingratiate himself with members of Edinburgh's literati, some of whom held vastly different beliefs from his. His sociability had the effect of reorienting conversations away from his allegedly dangerous private beliefs toward common ground – political, social and intellectual – shared among himself and his friends and closer acquaintances. "Atheism" and indeed "scepticism" were poisonous only insofar as they disrupted the moral behaviour of individuals acting in society; Hume's sociability removed this threat and placed him into a position where he could influence privately the minds of individuals whose public occupations allowed for no element of either.

Convivial gatherings also offered Hume a retreat from Edinburgh literati culture at large, to his closest acquaintances, friends, and intellectual companions. Carlyle recalls him holding dinners where he especially sought the company of

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304 Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p. 272.

the Moderate clergy because they "best understood his notions, and could furnish him with literary conversation." He was particularly fond of dinners with Hume, Smith, Adam Ferguson, Lord Elibank, Hugh Blair and John Jardine, which frequently took place either in taverns or Hume's house and extended until 1 o'clock in the morning. Here Hume provided "the most instructive and pleasing conversation," and provided attendees with excellent food and wine from his large collection.[305] For Lord Elibank, another of Edinburgh's most clubbable men and a powerful patron, the conversations at these dinners entirely stood in the place of literary output. John Ramsay recalled of Elibank that despite being "too lazy to be an author, few men were better qualified to co-operate with them," and that he formed a "literary triumvirate" with Kames and Hume.[306] Ramsay continued by lamenting, "What a pity that so much genius and knowledge should have evaporated chiefly in talk."[307] Reaffirming the value of Elibank's conversation, Samuel Johnson said he "never met [him] without going away a wiser man."[308] Capturing the combination of casual and rigorous discourse at these gatherings, Allan Ramsay wrote:

...by much drinking with David Hume and his associates, I have learnt to be very historical; and am nightly confirmed in the belief, that it is much easier to tell the How than the Why of any thing; and that it is moreover better suited to the state of man; who, we are all satisfied, from self-examination, is any thing rather than a rational animal.[309]

This also attests to the intellectual presence that Hume held in the group – these

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305 Carlyle, *Autobiography*, pp. 223-224.
306 Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen,* vol. I, pp. 318-319.
307 Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen,* vol. I, p. 320.
308 Boswell, *Life of Johnson,* ed. Chapman, p. 278.
309 Allan Ramsay to Elizabeth Montagu, Edinburgh, 11 September 1760. In Marcia Allentuck, "David Hume and Allan Ramsay: A New Letter," *Studies in Scottish Literature,* vol. 9 (1771-2), p. 265.

were not only dinners for socializing and friendly debate, but for instilling his philosophical system into the minds of the most influential literati of Edinburgh.

In addition to being founding or early members of the Select Society, this circle formed the Poker Club in 1762.[310] The expressed purpose of the Poker Club was to advocate for a Scots Militia – a topic frequently debated in the Select Society – but it was also a space for broader, convivial conversation over supper and drinks. The minutes of the Poker Club only remain intact from 1774-84, and even then only contain records of the members in attendance and not the topics discussed, but it is still possible to piece together the nature of their meetings and the ways in which they differed from the Select Society.[311] Among the original founders were Carlyle, Adam Ferguson, and 15 original members chosen by nomination. Membership records do not indicate who exactly constituted this group, but the most prominent and active members were Hume, Smith, William Robertson, Lord Elibank, John Home, John Jardine, Joseph Black, John Gregory, Francis Home, Sir John Dalrymple, and Patrick Murray. Andrew Crosbie was named "assassin" for the club, a play on their advocacy of a Scots Militia, and Hume was named the "assessor" to the assassin, "without whose consent nothing should be done – so that between plus and minus there was likely to be no bloodshed."[312] From the time minutes pick up in 1774 until his death in 1776, they show that Hume was among the most frequent attendees, even as his health began to decline.[313] When James Boswell wrote of the Poker Club in his *London*

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310 For a list of members of the Poker Club, see Tytler, *Life of Kames*, vol. 3, appendix VIII, article II.
311 "Minutes of the Poker Club," UE MS Dc.1.126.
312 Carlyle, *Autobiography,* p. 420.
313 UE MS Dc.1.12, 27 January 1775 – 20 August 1776.

Journal, he defined them as "all that set who associate with David Hume and Robertson."[314]

Little is known about the specific contents of these conversations, except that it is likely they strayed far from the Scots militia issue in their long history and became a more general debating club. There is, however, much recorded of - and much to be learned from - their style of discourse. Meetings were held every Friday at Thomas Nicholson's tavern near the Mercant Cross; dinner was a shilling and lasted from approximately two o'clock until six, usually later during the summer, and the drinks of choice were claret and sherry.[315] Members valued informality and directness in their conversations, while the smaller size of meetings and more closely curated member list ensured a higher level of rigour and common intellectual ground than the Select Society. A year after its founding, Hume wrote to Adam Ferguson from Paris, "I really wish often for the plain roughness of the Poker, and particularly the sharpness of Dr. Jardine, to correct and qualify so much lusciousness."[316] Conversely, James Boswell saw this "plain roughness" as a fault, writing of the Poker Club's members, "They are doing all that they can to destroy politeness. They would abolish all respect due to rank and external circumstances, and they would live like a kind of literary barbarians."[317]

Hume's circle acted together in Edinburgh's public sphere at a number of crucial moments, solidifying themselves as a group who shared and acted on a basic set of beliefs predicated on toleration, reasoned discourse, and Scottish

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314 James Boswell, *Boswell's London Journal, 1762-1763,* ed. Frederick A. Pottle (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), Wednesday, 12 July 1763, p. 300.
315 "Poker Club (act. 1762-1784)," ODNB.
316 Hume to Adam Ferguson, 9 Nov. 1763.
317 Boswell, *Boswell's London Journal,* p. 300; "Poker Club (act. 1762-1784)," ODNB.

improvement. It is from these moments that we can gain the closest sense of their

intellectual orientation – not only in a private capacity, but as public actors,

bringing laws and institutions closer to what we might call enlightened. The

closest they came to a group publication was the *Edinburgh Review* project,

appearing on the heels of the Select Society's founding in two volumes between

1755 and 1756.[318] The *Edinburgh Review* was a periodical that aimed at reviewing

every book published in Scotland on a semi-annual basis. Its preface, written by

Alexander Wedderburn, placed the project within the context of Scottish

improvement, stating from the outset that, "The design of this work is to lay

before the public from time to time with a view of the progressive state of

learning in this country." Following the Union, it continued, Scotland had moved

into an unprecedented period of social and intellectual advancement: "The

communication of trade has awaked industry; the equal administration of laws

produced good manners; and the watchful care of the government, seconded by

the public spirit of some individuals, has excited, promoted and encouraged, a

disposition to every species of improvement in the minds of a people naturally

active and intelligent."[319] This is a clear echo of the discourse found among

Hume's circle in the Select Society and later the Poker Club. Despite its

anonymous publication, we know the *Edinburgh Review* was compiled and

written by John Jardine, William Robertson, Adam Smith, and Hugh Blair, in

addition to Wedderburn and other *members* of Hume's circle.[320] Even though they

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318 *The Edinburgh Review,* Edinburgh: Printed for G. Hamilton and J. Balfour. Two issues: August 1755 and March 1756.
319 *Edinburgh Review* (Edinburgh, Printed for G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1755-1756), "Preface," Volume I.
320 W. J. Couper, *The Edinburgh Periodical Press: Being a Bibliographical Account of the Newspapers, Journals, and Magazines issued in Edinburgh from the Earliest Times to 1800*

avoided public association with Hume, neglecting to review the first volume of the *History* for fear of controversy, he was a literary leader in the project and corrected a proof copy before it went to press.[321] Although the *Edinburgh Review* was intended to continue indefinitely, its second and final issue appeared in early 1756, partially due to the censure of those in the press who saw it as a mouthpiece for the Moderate Party, and partially because there simply were not enough major Scottish books to review.[322] In either case, this gives us some idea of Hume's interests just before the Select Society began moving away from his original vision. That he was joined by his intellectual companions shows a continuity in their efforts to affect public discourse with their style of enquiry.

Hume's literary patronage did not end with the folding of the *Edinburgh Review.* In addition to Gerard's *Essay on Taste,* discussed above, he was also instrumental in the editing and publishing of William Robertson's *History of Scotland*. As Robertson undertook preparations to publish the book, he spoke first with booksellers in Edinburgh, and was offered £500 for one edition by Gavin Hamilton – the bookseller who unsuccessfully marketed the first edition of Hume's *History*. Hume suggested that he speak with Millar instead, and Millar made a counteroffer to Robertson for £600.[323] Hume wrote to Millar following the transaction, "I am very glad that Mr Robertson is entering on Terms with you. It was indeed my Advice to him, when he set out for London, that he shoud think

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(Stirling: Eneas MacKay, 1908), vol. II, "The Edinburgh Review."
321 MS NLS Acc. 10860.
322 Edward Johnston, *A View of the Edinburgh Review, Pointing out the Spirit and Tendency of that Paper* (Edinburgh: W. Sands, Gray & Peter, 1756).
323 Warren McDougall, "Gavin Hamilton, Bookseller in Edinburgh," *The British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1978), 18-19.

of no other Body; and I ventur'd to assure him, that he woud find your way of dealing frank & open & generous."[324] Commenting further on the work itself, presumably in response to Millar asking whether Hume felt Robertson would infringe upon his literary territory, Hume wrote, "Some part of his Subject is common with mine; but as his Work is a History of Scotland, mine of England, we do not interfere; and it will rather be an Amusement to the Reader to compare our Method of treating the same Subject. I give you Thanks, however, for your Attention in asking my Opinion."[325] The book became one of the most successful histories in Scotland alongside Hume's, with 6,000 copies of its various volumes printed between 1759 and 1766.[326]

Hume and his circle met their biggest challenge – and their most important moment of solidification – in 1755 when Rev. George Anderson went before the General Assembly of The Kirk and called for the excommunication of Hume and Lord Kames for their supposed infidel writings. Citing *Essays and Treatises* and the first volume of the *History*, Anderson argued that Hume held the following beliefs:

> Prop 1. All distinction betwixt virtue and vice is merely imaginary.
> 2. Justice has no foundation further than it contributes to public advantage.
> 3. Adultery is very lawful, but sometimes not expedient.
> 4. Religion and its ministers are prejudicial to mankind, and will always be found either to run into the heights of superstition or enthusiasm.
> 5. Christianity has no evidence of its being a divine revelation.
> 6. Of all the modes of Christianity, Popery is the best, and the reformation from thence was only the work of madmen and enthusiasts.[327]

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324 Hume to Andrew Millar, 6 April 1758, HL, Letter 145.
325 Hume to Andrew Millar, 6 April 1758, HL, Letter 145.
326 BL Add. MS 48800, fols. 121, 133, 141, and 150. William Robertson, *The History of Scotland: during the reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI. Till his accession to the Crown of England* (London: Printed for A. Millar).
327 *Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1788)*, Vol II, 54-65.

In a pamphlet that appeared the following week, Hugh Blair argued that Hume's works were outside the jurisdiction of the Church and not subject to its censure. Regardless of any irreligious arguments, they were not dangerous unless they posed any physical threat to society rather than stirring up ideas. As he wrote, "The proper objects of censure and reproof are not freedom of thought, but licentiousness of action, - not erroneous speculations, but crimes pernicious to society." The accusations against Hume's works, he put forth, were "metaphysical disputes, which may perplex the understanding, but never can impair the morals of men."[328] This captured the Moderate Party's view of toleration and intellectual freedom, and it was the view that triumphed in the General Assembly's vote. Hume and Kames both escaped excommunication because of the protection of the Moderate clergy.

That this could happen to an individual widely known as an infidel, who was kept from the academy primarily on these grounds, speaks to the strength of his ties with the Moderate clergy and their differentiation between public and private morality. Hume was a rare case of a writer who was equal parts famous and infamous, philosophically revered and panned. Even his most eloquent detractors, like Thomas Reid, still appreciated his intelligence and understood that Hume's attack on common perceptions of morality, religion and politics was a force that philosophers had to confront. As he wrote to Hume, regarding the conversations of the Wise Club at Aberdeen:

Your Friendly adversaries Drs Campbell & Gerard as well as Dr Gregory return

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328 Hugh Blair, *Observations upon a Pamphlet intitled, An analysis of the moral and religious sentiments contained in the writings of Sopho and David Hume* (Edinburgh, 1755).

their compliments to you respectfully. A little Philosophical Society here of which all three are members, is much indebted to you for its entertainment. Your company would, although we are all good Christians, be more acceptable than that of Saint Athanasius. And since we cannot have you upon the bench, you are brought oftener than any other man to the bar, accused and defended with great zeal but without bitterness. If you write no more in morals politicks or metaphysics, I am affriad we shall be at a loss for subjects.[329]

It is through Hume's trial and his relationship with his peers, both detractors and supporters, that we see how such a controversial figure could survive and flourish in the Enlightenment Edinburgh.

Hume found himself on the other end of religious controversy, in a sense, when Rev. John Home, a Select Society member, inspired the ire of the Popular Party and large parts of the public with the release of his tragedy, *Douglas*, in the following year. Aside from the classical pagan nature of the tragedy, many members of the Church could not stand having one of its clergymen write for the stage. Alexander Carlyle was censured merely for attending its premiere. In the pamphlet war that ensued, the moderates stood against the evangelicals and launched arguments about the values of toleration, artistic freedom and appreciation of antiquity. Much in the way the moderates had defended him, Hume defended Home by writing a dedication that was attached to some editions of *Four Dissertations* 1757 and was subsequently reprinted in newspapers and magazines.[330] It read as a defence of free speech in artistic and intellectual spheres, calling for civility and respect over differing opinions, and used the

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329 Qtd. In Mossner, p. 273.
330 Entry 037. Hume removed the dedication after Home and his friends suggested it could hurt the Moderate Party. Hume to Andrew Millar, 20 January 1757, HL, Letter 126. In a letter to Adam Smith, Hume wrote, "The Dedication to John Hume you have probably seen: For I find it has been inserted in some of the weekly Papers, both here & in London." February or March, 1757, HL, Letter 130. Entry 040.

ancient world as the only example of a place that upheld these ideals. As he wrote, "[An] Instance of true Liberty, of which ancient Times can alone afford us an Example, is the Liberty of Thought, which engaged Men of Letters, however different in their abstract Opinions, to maintain a mutual Friendship and Regard; and never to quarrel about Principles, while they agreed in Inclinations and Manners. Science was often the Subject of Disputation, never Animosity..." Admitting to having had disputes with Home in the past, Hume continues, "These Differences of Opinion I have only found to enliven our Conversation; while our common passion for Science and Letters served as a Cement to our Friendship."[331] We can see, then, a common appeal to toleration and to openness in intellectual pursuits among Hume and his friends both inside and outside the Church. Home would not gain the same amnesty granted Hume, as Home was stripped of his position in the Church in 1758, though he went on to have a successful and happy career as a dramatist.

As stated at the outset of this chapter, though, these controversies did not keep the Moderate Party, inclusive of Hume's circle, from reaching the highest levels of power in Edinburgh and indeed in Britain as a whole. The greatest achievement of Hume's convivial life was to ally himself with this circle and retain an influential position among their ranks despite having been kept out professionally. Insofar as Hume's attacks on religious and political dogma in the *Treatise* were an attempt to affect the minds of the population on a large scale, reduce fanaticism, and move Britain closer to a rational kingdom, he achieved this in many significant ways by acting together with his circle of literati. While by no

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331 Entry 037.

means solely responsible for the values of his peers, he did hold great weight in their discourse, and in crucial cases like his excommunication and the *Douglas* controversy, was a key figure pushing them to rally around toleration and moderation. Convivial society offered Hume a new and vital avenue for living as a man of letters much in the way that the commercial print marketplace did for his books. In a crucial sense, though, his convivial life captured his enlightenment in action.

Appendix I: Questions debated by the Select Society arranged in chronological order

Numbers in parentheses indicate repetitions of a question up to that point out of the total number of occurrences. A question mark indicates ambiguity in the minutes over whether a question was actually debated at a given meeting. Sometimes debates extended over more than one meeting; these instances are not counted as separate repetitions but are noted in the text. Other notes occur as needed.

1754

1. Whether a general naturalization of Foreign Protestants would be Advantageous to Britain? (1/4)
2. Whether Bounties on the exportation of corn be advantageous to the Trade and Manufactures as well as to Agriculture? (unclear if actually debated at this meeting) (1?/3)
1. Whether a general naturalization of Foreign Protestants would be Advantageous to Britain? (2/4)
3. Whether Luxury be advantageous to any state?
4. Whether the Laws against Bribery should be repealed? (unclear if actually debated at this meeting) (1?/2)
5. Whether it be more difficult for a poet to excel in Tragedy or Comedy? (1/2)
6. Whether Eloquence be useful; and, if useful, for what purpose. (1/2)
2. Whether the Bounties on the exportation of Corn be advantageous to the Trade and manufactures as well as to Agriculture? (2/3)

4. Whether the laws against Bribery & Corruption ought to be repealed? (2/2)
7. Whether the provisions in the late Marriage Act are advantageous to a nation? (continued over next two meetings) (1/4)
8. Whether the common practice in Scotland of distributing Money to the Poor in their own houses, or the receiving of the poor into workhouses & hospitals, be most advantageous? (1/2)
7. Whether the Provisions in the late marriage Act are advantageous to the Public? (continued from two meetings ago)
9. Whether ought we to prefer ancient or modern manners with regards to the condition and treatment of Women? (1/3)
10. Whether the Difference of national Characters be chiefly owning to the nature of different climates or to moral and political causes? (1/3)
11. Whether the inspecting of the Enemys ships aught to be allowed in time of war?
12. Whether Printing has been of advantage to society? (1/2)
8. Whether the Common practice in Scotland of distributing money to the poor in their

own houses, or the receiving the poor into Workhouses and hospitals be most advantageous. (2/2)

1755

13. Whether are the Tenures of Land estates by Entail in perpetuity preferable for the good of families and the improvement of a Country, to the more unlimited Exercise of property & power of alienation? (if time) (1?/3)
8. Whether the Common practice in Scotland of distributing money to the poor in their own houses, or the receiving the poor into Workhouses and hospitals be most advantageous. (continued from two meetings ago)
14. Whether the stage ought to be permitted in a well regulated government. (continued through next meeting) (1/2)
15. Whether do we excell the ancients, or the ancients us, in knowledge of the arts?
16. Whether an University in a Metropolis, in in a remote town be most proper for the place of the education of youth?
17. Whether the Practice of the imitative arts be advantageous to a nation?
10. Whether the difference of National Characters be chiefly owing to the Nature of different Climates, or to moral & political causes? (2/3)
18. Whether the numbers of Banks now in Scotland be useful to the trade of this Country? And whether Paper credit be advantageous to this nation? (if time) (continued over next two meetings) (1/2)
19. Whether the nobles (police/policy) of France is consistent with the liberties of Britain?
20. Whether it is consistent with sound Politics to allow British Subjects to serve as mercenaries in foreign service?
21. Whether Whiskey ought not to be laid under such Restraints as to render the use of it less frequent (continued at next meeting) (1/2)
22. Whether an Union with Ireland would be advantageous to Great Britain? (if enough time) (resumed or taken up at next meeting)
23. Whether a general Excise is not the best method of levying the publick Revenue?
24. Whether the Repenting Stool ought to be taken away?
(25). Whether Brutus did well in killing Caesar? (if time)

26. Whether a foundling hospital erected at Edinburgh and supported chiefly by a tax upon Old Bachelors would tend to the prosperity of Scotland?
27. Whether a standing Army or a Militia properly regulated be most advantageous for Great Britain? (possibly not debated until two meetings later) (1/3)
28. Whether the paying off the National debt would be of advantage to Britain?
27. Whether a standing army, or a Militia properly regulated be most advantageous for Great Britain? (2/3)
29.Whether the Liberty of the Press ought to be restrained?
30. Whether the right of primogeniture ought still to tale place?
31. Whether Capital punishment be the most proper means for restraining theft?
(32). Can a body politick be virtuous as a politick Body? (if time)
30. Whether the right of primogeniture ought still to tale place? (continued from three meetings ago)
33. Whether the nation has received most advantage from those who have been engaged in an active, or those who have lived a restrained life?
34. Do the benefits which arise to this Nation from its Colonies exceed the detriment which the nation suffers by them?
35. Whether the succession of females be of advantage to the Publick? (1/3)
36. Doth the encrease of Trade and Manufactures naturally tend to promote the happiness of a nation? (continued at next meeting) (1/2)

1756

(37). Whether doth Poetry, Painting or Music produce the strongest effects on the Imagination? (if time) (1?/2)
38. Would nunneries without the vows be of advantage to Britain?
39. Whether can Marriage be happy when the Wife is of an Understanding superior to that of the husband?
(37). Whether doth poetry, painting or music produce the strongest effects on the imagination? (if time) (2?/2)
40. Whether ought the Swedish law which orders all debts of land holders to be registered, and the lands to be sold when they debts exceed two thirds of the estate, to be received into Britain?

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41. Whether is hunting an exercise proper for persons of liberal education? (if time) (1?/3)
42. Whether Soldiers and Sailors ought to be engaged for life, or for a certain number of years?
43. Whether ought games in imitation of the Olympic games to be instituted? (if time) (1?/2)
44. Whether a Nation once sunk in luxury and pleasure can be retrieved and brought back to any degree of worth and excellence? (1/2)
41. Whether is hunting an exercise proper for person of liberal education? (if time) (2?/3)
5. Whether it be more difficult for a Poet to excell in Tragedy or Comedy? (2/2)
45. Whether a nation formed for war, or a nation formed for peace be most happy?
46. Whether the place given to love and gallantry in modern tragedy be not unnatural?
47. Whether has modern honour improved the human character?
48. Whether is a nation in a state of Barbarity, or a nation of Liberty and refined manners the happiest? (2/2)
49. Whether is a (miser) or a prodigal of the greatest use to society?
41. Whether is hunting an exercise proper for persons of a liberal education? (3/3)
43. Whether ought games, in imitation of the olympian games to be instituted? (2/2)
50. Whether is the registering of sailors to be employed when necessary, a greater violation of freedom than than Press warrants are?
51. Whether a democratical form of government be not worse than any Despotism.
27. Whether a standing army, or a militia properly regulated, be most advantageous for Great Britain? (possibly not taken up until next meeting) (3/3)

1757

14. Whether the stage ought to be permitted in a well regulated government? (2/2)
52. Whether the institution of Slavery be advantageous to the free? (continued at next meeting)
12. Whether printing has been of advantage to society. (if time) (2?/2)
2. Whether Bounties on the Exportation of Corn be advantageous to Trade &

Manufactures as well as to agriculture. (continued at next meeting) (3/3)
13. Whether are the Tenures of Land estates by Entail in perpetuly preferable for the good of families and the improvement of a Country, to the more unlimited Exercise of property & power of alienation? (2/3)
1. Whether a general naturalization of a foreign protestants would be advantageous to Britain? (continued at next meeting) (3/4)
10. Whether the difference of national characters be chiefly owing to the nature of different climates, or to moral and political causes? (3/3)
48. Whether is a nation in a sate of Barbarity, or a nation of Luxury & refined manners the happiest? (2/2)
9. Whether ought we to prefer ancient or modern manners, with regard to the condition and treatment of women? (continued at next meeting) (2/2)
21. Whether Whiskie ought to be laid under such restraints, as to render the use of it less frequent? (continued at next meeting) (2/2)
53. Whether a despotic monarchy or a republick of nearly the same number of inhabitants can be most easily conquered?
7. Whether the Provisions in the late Marriage Act are advantageous to the Publick? (2/4)
54. Whether Divorces by mutual consent should be allowed?
55. Whether the present Institution of Parochial Schools in Scotland is advantageous to the Publick? (continued over next two meetings) (2/2)

1758

35. Whether is the succession of females of advantage to the publick? (2/3)
11. Whether the inspecting of Enemies ships ought to be allowed in time of war? (2/2)
35. Whether is the succession of females of advantage to the Publick? (3/3)
36. Doth the increase of Trade and Manufactures naturally tend to promote the happiness of a nation? (continued through next meeting) (2/2)
56. Whether the modern method of improvement by making large farms be not ruinous to the Country? (1/2)
57. Whether or not the Practice of duelling be

advantageous? (1/3)

58. Whether importation of cattle from Ireland is advantageous to Britain? (1/2)

57. Whether or not the practice of duelling be advantageous? (2?/3) (if time)

59. Whether greater National Evils will be produced by the Tyrrany of a Prince, or the factions of a Republick?

57. Whether or not the practice of duelling be advantageous? (2?/3) (if time)

9. Whether ought we to prefer ancient or modern manners with regards to the condition and treatment of Women? (3/3)

60. Whether land taxes are not more beneficial to the Publick than Taxes on Commodities?

61. Whether permitting the rich men in any state to have more than one wife would tend to its populousness?

62. Whether the study of the sciences and fine arts ought to be encouraged in a well regulated society?

63. Whether Milton be not a better Poet than Virgil?

28. Whether the paying off the National Debt would be of advantage to Britain? (2/2)

64. Whether the laws against Treason, whereby the father forfeits not only for himself, but his children, be agreeable to equity & useful to society? (continued at next meeting, in following year)

1759

65. Whether the manner of Trial by Juries in Civil, as well as criminal cases would be of advantage to a country? (continued at next meeting)

66. Whether a Commercial & military spirit can subsist together in the same nation. (1/2)

58. Whether the importation of cattle from ireland is advantageous to Britain? (continued) (2/2)

67. Of the great members of the Constitution of Great Britain, the aristocratical and the democratical, which would be the most threatening to subvert its frame, was most power thrown into its scale?

68. Would it hurt the Country to have the extraordinary Lords of Session removed?

7. Whether the Provisions in the late Marriage Act are advantageous to the Publick? (3/4)

55. Whether the present institution of parochial schools be advantageous to the publick? (2/2)

56. Whether the modern method of improvement by making large farmers be not ruinous the Country? (2/2)

13. Whether are the tenures of Land Estates by Entail in perpetuity, preferable for the good of families and the improvement of the Country, to the more unlimited exercise of property & power of alienation? (continued at next meeting) (3?/3)

18. Whether the numbers of banks now in Scotland be useful to the Trade of that Country? And whether paper credit be advantageous to a nation? (2/2)

1. Whether a general Naturalization of foreign protestants would be advantageous to Britain? (4/4)

7. Whether the Provisions in the late Marriage act are advantageous to the publick? (4/4)

69. Whether in the present state of Europe, a nation might subsist without a standing army? (continued at next meeting)

70. Whether in the present circumstances of this country, it be most advantageous to encrease tillage or grass?

71. Whether the Revival of the ancient Custom of Adoption be advantageous or disadvantageous to Society?

44. Whether a nation once sunk in luxery & pleasure can be retrieved and brought back to any degree of worth & excellence? (2/2)

1760

72. Whether severe or moderate punishment have the greatest effect in preventing the commission of crimes?

57. Whether the practice of duelling be advantageous? (3/3)

73. Whether in the ancient times of every nation the people were not stronger of body, healthier and longer lived than in late times?

6. Whether eloquence be useful? And, if useful, for what purpose? (2/2)

74. Whether the popular form of government be not of all forms the worst?

75. Whether it would be of advantage to society that the Women held places of trust & profit in the state? (1/2)

66. Whether a commercial and military spirit can subsist together in the same nation? (2/2)

75. Whether it would be of advantage to society that the Women held places of trust & profit in

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the state? (2/2)

1761 (minute book becomes disorganized)

76. Whether is a landed interest or a commercial interest most favourable to the publick liberty?

52. Whether the institution of slavery be advantageous?

1762-1764

77. Whether it would be advantageous for Great Britain to conclude a peace at this present juncture?

78. Whether doth the strength and duration of a state depend most on the situation & manners of the inhabitatns or upon the form of government?

79. Whether doth a landed or a Commercial interest contribute most to the tranquility and stability of a state?

80. Whether in a free country, any part of the Powers of Magistrates ought to be left undefined?

81. Whether a law, prohibiting the Inhabitants of a country from leaving it, would be conductive to the populousness of that nation?

82. Whether the Laws against Treason, whereby the Father forfeits not only for himself but his Children, be agreeable to equity, and useful to Society?

83. Whether the Union of all our Colonies on the Continent of America would be of advantage to Britain and those colonies?

84. Whether discretionary powers ought to be allowed to Judges?

85. Whether the pursuit of Industry and Trade would produce good or bad effects upon the morals of a Nation?

86. Whether our sending troops to the assistance of Portugal be expedient?

Appendix II: Questions debated by the Select Society divided according to subject category

The gap in each list divides questions introduced before 1757 from those introduced in 1757 and after. These subjects capture trends in the questions and are intended as an aid for understanding a large set of data rather than an effort at exact categorization.

Political-economy

2. Whether Bounties on the exportation of corn be advantageous to the Trade and Manufactures as well as to Agriculture?

3. Whether Luxury be advantageous to any state?

18. Whether the numbers of Banks now in Scotland be useful to the trade of this Country? And whether Paper credit be advantageous to this nation?

23. Whether a general Excise is not the best method of levying the publick Revenue?

28. Whether the paying off the National debt would be of advantage to Britain?

34. Do the benefits which arise to this Nation from its Colonies exceed the detriment which the nation suffers by them?

36. Doth the encrease of Trade and Manufactures naturally tend to promote the happiness of a nation?

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56. Whether the modern method of improvement by making large farms be not ruinous to the Country?

58. Whether importation of cattle from Ireland is advantageous to Britain?

60. Whether land taxes are not more beneficial to the Publick than Taxes on Commodities?

70. Whether in the present circumstances of this country, it be most advantageous to encrease tillage or grass?

Political policy

4. Whether the Laws against Bribery should be repealed?

7. Whether the provisions in the late Marriage Act are advantageous to a nation?

8. Whether the common practice in Scotland of distributing Money to the Poor in their own houses, or the receiving of the poor into workhouses & hospitals, be most advantageous?

11. Whether the inspecting of the Enemys ships aught to be allowed in time of war?

21. Whether Whiskey ought not to be laid under such Restraints as to render the use of it less frequent?

24. Whether the Repenting Stool ought to be taken away?

26. Whether a foundling hospital erected at Edinburgh and supported chiefly by a tax upon Old Bachelors would tend to the prosperity of Scotland?

43. Whether ought games, in imitation of the

olympian games to be instituted?

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64. Whether the laws against Treason, whereby the father forfeits not only for himself, but his children, be agreeable to equity & useful to society?

Political philosophy

1. Whether a general naturalization of Foreign Protestants would be Advantageous to Britain?
13. Whether are the Tenures of Land estates by Entail in perpetuity preferable for the good of families and the improvement of a Country, to the more unlimited Exercise of property & power of alienation?
14. Whether the stage ought to be permitted in a well regulated government.
19. Whether the nobles (police/policy) of France is consistent with the liberties of Britain?
20. Whether it is consistent with sound Politics to allow British Subjects to serve as mercenaries in foreign service?
27. Whether a standing Army or a Militia properly regulated be most advantageous for Great Britain?
30. Whether the right of primogeniture ought still to take place?
31. Whether Capital punishment be the most proper means for restraining theft?
(32). Can a body politick be virtuous as a politick Body?
38. Would nunneries without the vows be of advantage to Britain?
40. Whether ought the Swedish law which orders all debts of land holders to be registered, and the lands to be sold when they debts exceed two thirds of the estate, to be received into Britain?
50. Whether is the registering of sailors to be employed when necessary, a greater violation of freedom than than Press warrants are?

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52. Whether the institution of Slavery be advantageous to the free?
54. Whether Divorces by mutual consent should be allowed?
57. Whether or not the Practice of duelling be advantageous?
61. Whether permitting the rich men in any state to have more than one wife would tend to its populousness?

65. Whether the manner of Trial by Juries in Civil, as well as criminal cases would be of advantage to a country?
68. Would it hurt the Country to have the extraordinary Lords of Session removed?
69. Whether in the present state of Europe, a nation might subsist without a standing army?
72. Whether severe or moderate punishment have the greatest effect in preventing the commission of crimes?
75. Whether it would be of advantage to society that the Women held places of trust & profit in the state?

Literary/Arts

5. Whether it be more difficult for a poet to excel in Tragedy or Comedy?
6. Whether Eloquence be useful; and, if useful, for what purpose.
17. Whether the Practice of the imitative arts be advantageous to a nation?
16. Whether an University in a Metropolis, in in a remote town be most proper for the place of the education of youth?
(25). Whether Brutus did well in killing Caesar?
(37). Whether doth Poetry, Painting or Music produce the strongest effects on the Imagination
41. Whether is hunting an exercise proper for persons of liberal education?
46. Whether the place given to love and gallantry in modern tragedy be not unnatural?

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55. Whether the present Institution of Parochial Schools in Scotland is advantageous to the Publick?
62. Whether the study of the sciences and fine arts ought to be encouraged in a well regulated society?
63. Whether Milton be not a better Poet than Virgil?

Historical/Philosophical

9. Whether ought we to prefer ancient or modern manners with regards to the condition and treatment of Women?
10. Whether the Difference of national Characters be chiefly owning to the nature of different climates or to moral and political causes?
12. Whether Printing has been of advantage to society?

15. Whether do we excell the ancients, or the ancients us, in knowledge of the arts?

29. Whether the Liberty of the Press ought to be restrained?

35. Whether is the succession of females of advantage to the publick?

33. Whether the nation has received most advantage from those who have been engaged in an active, or those who have lived a restrained life?

39. Whether can Marriage be happy when the Wife is of an Understanding superior to that of the husband?

45. Whether a nation formed for war, or a nation formed for peace be most happy?

47. Whether has modern honour improved the human character?

48. Whether is a nation in a state of Barbarity, or a nation of Liberty and refined manners the happiest?

49. Whether is a (miser) or a prodigal of the greatest use to society?

51. Whether a democratical form of government be not worse than any Despotism.

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53. Whether a despotic monarchy or a republick of nearly the same number of inhabitants can be most easily conquered?

59. Whether greater National Evils will be produced by the Tyrrany of a Prince, or the factions of a Republick?

66. Whether a Commercial & military spirit can subsist together in the same nation.

67. Of the great members of the Constitution of Great Britain, the aristocratical and the democratical, which would be the most threatening to subvert its frame, was most power thrown into its scale?

71. Whether the Revival of the ancient Custom of Adoption be advantageous or disadvantageous to Society?

73. Whether in the ancient times of every nation the people were not stronger of body, healthier and longer lived than in late times?

74. Whether the popular form of government be not of all forms the worst?

Appendix III: Questions proposed but not debated by the Select Society

1. Whether Corporations, and exclusive Companies for trade are advantageous to the Members of these corporations and companies?

2. Whether the great Expence of lawsuits is of general advantage?

3. Whether Lotteries ought to be encouraged?

4. Whether the Bounty should be continued on the Exportation of low-priced Linens made in Scotland?

5. Whether in the present Circumstances may the Progress of Intemperence, that usually becomes so remarkable (particularly among the vulgar) upon the increase of wealth, be retarded by the care of superiors?

6. May a Lawier of ordinary parts become eminent in his profession?

7. Whether it be advantageous to a Nation that the law of private property be should be reduced to an Art?

8. Whether is an Epic Poem, or a Tragedy the most difficult and most perfect Composition?

9. Whether have the moderns done well in laying aside the use of a chorus in Tragedy?

10. Whether an Academy for painting set up in Scotland would deserve the encouragement of the publick?

11. Whether an Aristocracy most naturally changes into a Monarchy or a popular government?

12. Can a Body Politick be virtuous as a Collective body?

13. Whether are the greatest efforts of genious made at the revival of letters after an age of Barbarism?

14. Whether any state had a Right to deny civil protection to the marriage of minors (made) without consent of their parents or guardians?

15. Whether the Courts of Law ought to be allowed to judge in matters concerning

the Election of Members of Parliament?

16. Whether Presentations by Patrons, or Election, is the best method of settling Ministers?

17. Whether the decay of language of a people be not a mark of the decay of arts & Sciences among that people?

18. Whether without any knowledge of the Grammatical Art, and with the use of speaking only, but not the Science, a man may not make very great progress in Metaphysics and every branch of Philosophy?

19. Whether without the study of the ancients, and by the strength of our own genius, with the assistance of modern authors, we may not arrive at the greatest degree of excellence in written composition?

20. (Whether Milton be not a better Poet than Virgil?)

21. Do the Laws of Scotland relating to Colliers and Salters promote the interest of this country?

22. Doth the growing power of a neighbouring nation authorize the committing of hostilities?

23. Would the Extripation of the African Corsairs be of advantage to Europe?

24. Whether is the Government of the City by a Court of Aldermen and Common Council, where all the magistrates continue during Life, preferable to one Annual or Trinial Election of Magistrates?

25. Whether was the ancient method of war more destructive to humane kind, than the modern?

26. Whether ought virtue to be (always) Rewarded in Plays?

27. Whether doth an author feel more pleasure or pain?

28. Whether doth a Jealous husband feel most pleasure or pain?

29. Whether ought merchants to be prohibited from Trading to an Extent Exceeding a certain proportion to their Stock?

30. Whether hath mankind decreased in stature, strength and virtue during 3000 years?

31. Whether have reasonings on abstract subjects been of most advantage to mankind?

32. Whether a despotic Monarchy or a republick of nearly the same number of inhabitants can be most easily conquered?

33. Whether the laws with regard to game ought to be repealed?

34. Whether Ridicule is a proper Test of Truth?

35. Whether the modern improvements in mechanics, and the multiplying mechanical machines doth not tend to the depeopling of the World?

36. Whether the strict principles of Virtue and Morality can be made consistent with commerce, or can be long preserved in a Commercial State?

37. Whether the confessed superiority of the ancients over the moderns is not a necessary consequence of our admiration of the ancients?

38. Whether form speculative principles, or from the nature and genius of a people the preference of one political system to another ought to be determined?

39. Whether Tragedy or Comedy have the Greatest & best effects upon the Morals and Manners of Mankind?

40. Whether the study of Moral or Natural Philosophy is more usefull?

41. Whether a fine Taste is the Gift of Nature or the result of Experience, and may be acquired?

42. Whether Courage is natural to man?

43. Whether Labourers of the Ground or Manufactures make the best soldiers?

44. Whether the number of people in Great Britain has for these last twenty years been on the encrease or decline?

45. Whether Paper Credit tho' it circulate only at home does not hinder the encrease of money from abroad?

46. Whether the practice of the Ladies in painting their faces ought not to be prohibited by every wise government?

47. Whether the abolishing of hereditary jurisdictions in Scotland be advantageous to the kingdom?

48. Whether there is any such thing as taste?

49. Whether would the mass of People of Europe gain or lose more from universal Monarchy spring from the domain of the sea, than from that arising from the conquest of land?

50. Of the two great members of the Constitution of G. Britain, the aristocratical and the democratical, which would be the most threatening to

subvert its frame, was most power thrown into its frame?

51. Should the old laws for taxing the freeholders for the support of their Representatives during their attendance of Parliament be revived?

52. Whether a nation may subsist without Public Spirit?

53. Whether the true interest of Britain requires that we should always remain in amity with Holland?

54. Whether the institution of Convents and Nunneries is prejudicial to the population of a country?

55. Whether active or speculative life affords the most solid happiness?

56. Whether honours ought to be saleable?

57. Whether can an ambitious man be happy?

58. Wether would a perfect equality in the external condition of men be desirable?

59. Whether Peerages ought to be territorial?

60. Whether Quackery is not more useful for obtaining success in some of the liberal Professions than real merit?

61. Whether the delays and expence of attending judicial proceedings are not both necessary and useful to Society?

62. Whether ought the youngest or the eldest child to inherit the estate of their fathers?

Chapter IV: Hume's Self-Fashioning of his Legacy Upon Death

As Hume approached the end of his life, the question his purpose as a man of letters became most pressing. He had solidified his status as a central figure in Edinburgh's literati sphere, served as an official for the British government, achieved celebrity in Great Britain and beyond, and become an unusually wealthy man from copy money. However, despite all of this, his philosophical revolution had never taken place: party and faction persisted, superstition and religion prevailed, and his critics like Reid and Beattie grew in popularity. By his standards, even his major successes were mitigated ones: *ETSS* had sold vastly more copies than the *Treatise*, but it was dwarfed by the *History*; the *History* introduced a mass readership to his philosophical principles, but insofar as readers were inspired to learn more in *ETSS*, they did not appear inclined to understand nor assent to his more complex and undogmatic points; he had exerted vast influence over the outpouring of works in Edinburgh's Enlightenment, but his closest friends and acquaintances would not advocate his atheism – at least in public. Hume's final effort to effect his philosophical revolution came with his death, as he made various efforts to shape his posthumous reputation and establish himself as a philosopher transcending historical ages who might be appreciated more in the future than he was in his own life.

He exerted a rare amount of control over the event, both in the sense of

fashioning the event itself and shaping the presentation of his lifeworks through

print and other artefacts. First by preparing a string of texts for posthumous

publication, including his short autobiography, "My Own Life" (1777), final

editions of *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (1777) and *The History of*

England (1778), and *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779), then by

dying an explicitly non-Christian death, Hume attempted to take control over the

discourse surrounding his death and his memory, and more broadly, the appraisal

of his works and ideas.[332] This chapter follows the events surrounding his death to

show how exactly this self-fashioning took place and its effects. It will provide a

chronological study of the process beginning with Hume's death itself and moving

to posthumous responses to the event; for the latter, it will focus primarily on

contemporary newspapers and periodicals, starting with the first notices of his

death and ending with reviews of *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. As it

will show, Hume's orchestration of his works' posthumous publication had a

tangible effect on his image after death, most significantly through the publication

of his autobiography and Adam Smith's accompanying letter to William Strahan

together as *The Life of David Hume, Esq*. This extremely popular work, widely

read and reprinted, established an official account of Hume's career in letters, his

values, and his death, which set the terms by which subsequent responders praised

or criticized him. Whereas he had spent his life repressing, or delivering, his very

critical feelings toward religion in covert ways, here he moved religion to the

centre and poised himself as a great man of letters who lived virtuously without

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332 Entries 051, 059, 060, and David Hume, *The history of England, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the revolution in 1688. In eight volumes. A new edition, with the author's last corrections and improvements. To which is prefixed, a short account of his life, written by himself* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1788), eight volumes octavo.

Christianity. Hume's self-fashioning both added to his fame and forced his own public, as well as subsequent generations, to confront his critique of religion and consider whether he was right; in this way, his death was his final and boldest publication. This chapter will finish by drawing comparisons with earlier literary figures, such as Hobbes, Pope, and John Toland, to show how Hume drew on established traditions of the "philosopher's death" and the pursuit of a literary afterlife through fame, while introducing the idea of treating death and posthumous publication together as a medium for expressing an intricately composed and powerful message to the public. In doing so, he drew upon a set cultural phenomena in an unprecedented way: the increasingly open, uncensored, and profit-driven book market; the rise of fame-based authorial credibility; Enlightenment Edinburgh's intellectual and aesthetic reverence for the classical past; and growing religious toleration, which crucially included the intellectual orientation of the Moderate Party of The Kirk. He treated matters of religion, identity, and authority as cultural categories, to be embraced or rejected freely, and engaged in a modern moulding of his death and afterlife.

In the final months before his death, on 26 August, 1776, Hume took actions to bolster his posthumous reputation by approaching his fate with stoic virtue, while simultaneously editing his works and issuing instructions for their publication. Hume's health had begun declining in Spring of 1775 as a result of a tumour in his liver. He started the process of preparing for his demise by composing his will in January of 1776. Here he bequeathed his manuscripts to Adam Smith with the request to publish his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, which he had started writing in 1751 but repressed at the advice of

several of his friends, and to destroy the remainder of the papers. Otherwise his will directed the distribution of his property and fortune (totalling about £20,000) to various members of his family, his friends, and his servants. In April he amended his will with instructions for his funerary monument: he was to be buried on Calton Hill, in a plot he had recently purchased on the south side. A monument was to be built at an expense not exceeding a hundred pounds, with an inscription containing only his name and the dates of his birth and death, "leaving it to posterity to add the rest."[333]

It was also in April that Hume wrote "My Own Life," and subsequently entered into renewed discussions about the future publication of his manuscripts. In addition to issuing instructions for the publication of this text, he had to address the problem that Smith expressed discomfort with being responsible for the publication of the *Dialogues*, which Smith felt was best kept to a small group of acquaintances. In May, Hume wrote to Smith with new instructions: he could publish the *Dialogues* at his discretion, due to its controversial nature, but regarding the "very inoffensive Piece" that was "My Own Life," Smith was to send it Hume's printer and bookseller, William Strahan and Thomas Cadell, respectively, to be prefixed to any future edition of his philosophical works (which referred to the collection, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*).[334] This, however, still did not quell Hume's anxieties about the future of the *Dialogues.* He became increasingly worried they would never see publication at all if left to Smith, and accordingly drafted a codicil to his will bequeathing his manuscripts to Strahan. "It is an idle thing in us," he wrote, "to be concerned

333 NLS MSS 23159 and 23123.
334 Hume to Adam Smith, 3 May 1776, HL, Letter 522.

about any thing that shall happen after our Death; yet this is natural to all Men, and I often regretted that a Piece, for which I had a particular Partiality, should run any hazard of being suppressed after my Decease."[335] Hume then wrote a third letter to his nephew, David Home, asking him to publish the *Dialogues* if Strahan abstained from doing so within two years of his death, thereby establishing an elaborate failsafe plan to ensure they would eventually be released to the public.[336] In the meantime, Hume was also busy editing final editions of his philosophical works and his *History*, carrying on extensive correspondence with Strahan about new changes and submitting detailed revisions up to a fortnight before his death.[337] In this way, Hume employed rigorous strategies to ensure that his executors carried out his wishes concerning his posthumous publications and did all he could in his final days to ensure that his literary afterlife would take the shape he intended.

This literary afterlife rested nearly as much in the manner of his death as the printed matter he left behind. He sought to die in accordance with the values by which he lived his life, and which were key to his philosophy – scepticism toward religious and intellectual dogmas, good humour, and an interest in acting well in the world. He stalwartly refused conversion, as famously exemplified by James Boswell's visit to his deathbed in July of 1776, when he paid his final respects and tried convincing Hume to embrace Christianity before it was too late. As Boswell recalled in his diary, "I asked him if the thought of annihilation never

335 Hume to William Strahan, 12 June 1776, HL, Letter 527.
336 Qtd. by Adam Smith in a letter to William Strahan, unknown date [c. October 1776], NLS MS 23158 f. 41.
337 In his final letter to Strahan, dated, 12 August 1776, Hume corrects the wording of two sentences in his philosophical works.

gave him any uneasiness. He said not the least; no more than the thought that he

had not been, as Lucretius observes. 'Well,' said I, 'Mr Hume, I hope to triumph

over you when I meet you in a future state; and remember you are not to pretend

that you was joking with all this infidelity.' 'No, no,' said he. 'But I shall have

been so long there before you come that it will be nothing new.' In this style of

good humour and levity did I conduct the conversation."[338] Hume's level of fame

ensured that his death would attract considerable public interest and that his final

thoughts and temperament would be publicized beyond the private realm of his

deathbed. The two main figures who facilitated this process were his close friends,

John Home and Adam Smith, each of whom spent considerable time with him as

he approached death.

In April, Home accompanied Hume on a trip to Bath and observed his

wavering health, improving one day and declining the next, but never taking away

from his cheerfulness and humour, nor his propensity for discussing philosophy,

politics, and world affairs. In July Hume returned to Edinburgh and held a

farewell supper for his friends at his house.[339] Home kept a diary of this

expedition that he used as the grounding for a series of anonymous eulogy letters

he wrote to newspapers shortly after Hume's death. After Strahan rejected his

offer to publish a longer biography in 1784, Home kept it in his papers, which

would see final publication in 1822.[340] Despite his failed attempt to publish more

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338 James Boswell, "An Account of my Last Interview with David Hume, Esq.," dated 7 July 1776. This account was discovered in the early 20th century and published in Private Papers of James Boswell (1928-1934).
339 Hume to Hug Blair, 27 June 1776, Greig, Letter 529.
340 John Home, "Diary of a Journey with Hume from Morpeth to Bath, April 23, 1776," in Henry Mackenzie, *An Account of the life and writings of John Home, Esq*. Edinburgh: Printed for A. Constable and Co., Edinburgh, and Hurst, Robinson, and Co., London, 1822, vii, 184 p.

of his diary, Home's letters to newspapers were essential in shaping the early discourse surrounding Hume's death.

The last recorded account of Hume on his deathbed came from Adam Smith in the form of a letter to Alexander Wedderburn, written on 15 August, eleven days before his death. More than any other, this encounter would come to shape public perception of Hume's temperament in his final days. Smith recounted, "Poor David Hume is dying very fast, but with great cheerfulness and good humour and with more real resignation to the necessary course of things, than any Whining Christian ever dyed with pretended resignation to the will of God." He recalled a conversation with Hume about his deathbed reading – Lucan's *Dialogues of the Dead* – in which Hume placed himself in the book's scene when recently deceased ghosts plea with Charon, the ferryman who takes the dead to Hades, for a bit longer to live so that they might complete certain worldly deeds. One ghost wishes to find a husband for his daughter, another to complete a house he had started building, a third to provide an inheritance for his young children. Hume wondered what excuse he might give Charon. After spending some time on the question, since he felt mostly content with his life, he surmised, "I thought I might say, Good Charon, I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the people; have a little patience only till I have the pleasure of seeing the churches shut up, and the Clergy sent about their business." During this exchange, Hume had editions of his works close by, which he continued editing once Smith left.[341] In the final correspondence between the two men, Smith asked

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341 Adam Smith to Alexander Wedderburn, 14 August 1776, *Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith,* Letter 163.

whether he could append an account of this encounter to "My Own Life," along with commentary on Hume's good temperament in his final days.[342] Hume graciously approved. By doing so, he was supporting the publication of a crucial aspect of his legacy that he could not capture in "My Own Life," which to say, an account of the manner of his death.

In these ways, Hume died a non-Christian death that strove for virtue and good humour, in the model of pagan writers like Lucretius and Lucan, while placing great value on achieving an afterlife through good worldly deeds and careful tailoring of his literary legacy. What remains is to understand how these efforts played out in the subsequent period and how successfully they shaped his public perception according to his intentions. I suggest that the discourse surrounding Hume's death passed through three main phases. The first came in the five months immediately following the event, when a wide variety of different voices offered terms for remembering Hume's life and assessing his character and works. The second phase began with the publication of "My Own Life" together with Smith's "Letter to William Strahan" in February of 1777, which was reprinted widely in newspapers and periodicals and sold extremely well as a pamphlet.[343] This offered a canonical account of Hume's life, replacing biographical efforts from the first phase, and shifting public discourse toward his pursuit of literary fame and the moral and religious implications of his temperament before death. This gradually gave way to a third phase, marked

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342 Hume to Smith, 23 August 1776, HL, Letter 540. Hume's exact response was, "You are too good in thinking any trifles that concern me are so much worth your attention, but I give you entire liberty to make what Additions you please to the account of my Life." This must have been an ironic understatement, as Hume was most meticulous about destroying or banning from publication any works or writings that he genuinely felt were trifling.
343 Entries 051-057.

roughly by the building of his funerary monument in 1778 and publication of his

Dialogues in 1779, when there emerged a more fixed notion of Hume as a great

man of letters who lived and died as an infidel.

The earliest notices of Hume's death were one-sentence news snippets

from the end of August. The first sustained piece – and first attempt at a biography

– appeared in the *Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement* on August 29.

Clearly a rush job, it drew most of its contents form Carlo Denina's section on

Hume in his *Essays on the Revolutions of Literature* from 1771. As would become

common in assessments of Hume, it praised his intellectual abilities and

celebrated his fame while criticizing his irreligious and sceptical tendencies.

"Scepticism is naturally cold and barren," Denina wrote, "and in works of

literature passion is generally preferable to indifference." But these shortcomings

"serve as but foils to his excellencies."[344] The editor finished by adding a recount

of Hume's state service – another feature that would become very common in

early notices and biographical accounts. The second substantial death notice, to

that end, was a paragraph in the *London Chronicle* devoted to this topic alone,

making no mention of Hume's career in letters.[345] In the next issue of the *London*

Chronicle, a fuller character assessment appeared in the form of a letter from a

correspondent in Aberdeen. The author offered his letter as a supplement to the

work of a "learned foreigner," or Denina, adding an account of Hume's transition

from metaphysical to historical writings (including the remark "his reputation as

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344 Notice of Hume's Death, *Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement*, 29 August 1776, Vol. 22, p. 320. Several times longer than usual obituary; quotes Carlo Denina's *Essays on the Revolutions of Literature* (1771).
345 Notice of Hume's Death, *London Chronicle* (August 31-September 2, 1776), Vol. 40, No. 3080, p. 219.

an Historian, almost eclipses that of the philosopher"), and giving a curious

defence of his more controversial beliefs. Hume embodied, "The virtues of

humanity, unshaken by the most absolute scepticism; The moral duties of *this life*

flourishing under a total disregard of another; and even the graces and temper of a

Christian, in an avowed enemy of the Christian Faith."[346] Three months later, the

London Chronicle published a response to this claim – from an Edinburgh

correspondent – criticizing the Aberdeen correspondent's praise for Hume's

scepticism and harshly mocking the claim that Hume embodied Christian

temperament.

The most thorough biography from this phase appeared as a three-part

letter to the *London Chronicle* between September 10 and 21; the author identified

himself as "A Friend to Merit," but manuscript comparisons show that it was

probably written by John Home. In general, it showed the trajectory of Hume's

literary career, from the failure of his first work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*,

through his gradual rise to fame with his essays and *History of England*. Home

inserted digressions about Hume's clash with the under-keeper of the Advocates

Library, his appetite for women, and his failed candidacy for the Chair of Moral

Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. He also attributed incorrect dates to

the latter event, and was rebuked for this, and his account of the event, in a letter

to the *London Chronicle* the following November.[347] Such was the varying and

somewhat chaotic nature of early discourse over Hume's death: it focused on

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346 Notice of Hume's Death, with letter from Aberdeen correspondent, *London Chronicle*, Sept. 3-5, 1776, Vol. 40, No. 3081, p. 432.

347 Letter on Hume's 1745 candidacy, *London Chronicle* (November 23-25, 1776), vol. 40, no. 3116, p. 509. For a note on manuscript comparisons, see See James Fieser's introduction to the letter in *Early Responses to Hume's Life and Reputation* (Thoemmes Continuum, 2003).

disparate aspects of his life, lacked any clear assessment of his works, and was not always factual. Hume's great achievement was to give this discourse a firm framework and set of terms.

This topic withered from newspapers across the Fall and Winter of 1776, after which, from February onward, it was renewed with greater vigour by the publication of *The Life of David Hume, Esq.,* containing "My Own Life" and Smith's "Letter to William Strahan."[348] Before the official book appeared, *Scots Magazine* printed a pirated copy of the text in their January 1777 issue (appearing in February). William Strahan printed 2,000 copies in February then sent "some of them to distribute among your Friends" to John Home via a ship to Leith, some of whom must have been the editors of the magazine.[349] The official 62-page octavo pamphlet appeared in March, priced at 1s. 6d.[350] Strahan's ledgers show that he printed 2,000 copies in February and another 1,000 in April, indicating that it sold very well and quickly. By comparison, Strahan printed 3,000 copies of William Robertson's extremely successful *History of America* in the following month.[351] This was in addition to at least seven reprints in six distinct British newspapers and periodicals, which would have brought it to a far larger audience of intangible size.[352]

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348 Entry 051.

349 BL MS 48815 fol. 21. William Strahan to John Home, 12 February 1777, NLS MS 23158 fol. 236.

350 *London Chronicle* (15 February 1777); *London Evening Post* (11-13 March 1777); *Public Advertiser* (12 March 1777); *Gazetteer and Daily Advertiser* (14 March 1777); *Public Advertiser* (15 March 1777). "With a head of the author" in smaller advertisements from 12 March onward.

351 BL Add. MS 48800 fol. 21.

352 *London Chronicle,* March 11-13, 1777, Vol. 41, No. 3162, p. 244-245; *Critical Review*, March 1777, Vol. 43, p. 222-227 (third-person paraphrase); *Gentleman's Magazine,* March 1777, Vol. 47, p. 120-121 (third-person paraphrase); *London Review*, March 1777, Vol. 5, p. 198-205; *Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement*, March 13, 1777, Vol. 35, p. 353-357. Entries 052 - 056.

The text itself provided a narrative and certain terms that would become commonplace in subsequent discussions of Hume's career, works, and death. The main thrust of the autobiography was to recount the order of Hume's writings and track his progression from initial failure to immense success. His *Treatise of Human Nature* had fallen "dead-born from the press," his *Essays, Moral and Political* had made him "entirely forget [his] former Disappointment," his *Political Discourses* were the only work of his that "was successful on the first publication," and his *History of England* rendered him "not only independent, but opulent." Even when he reflected on his upbringing and state service, it was still with a mind to providing context to his career in letters. He notably left out certain other details of his life – there was no mention of his religious beliefs and the controversies they ignited, nor of his prominent critics, nor his infamous quarrel with Rousseau.[353]

The second part of the text, Smith's letter to Strahan, was a revision of his letter to Wedderburn recounting Hume's behaviour in his last days: visiting with friends, editing his works, carrying conversation, etc. For example, Smith said: "His cheerfulness was so great, and his conversation and amusements run so much in their usual strain, that, notwithstanding all bad symptoms, many people could not believe he was dying." He also recalled the exchange discussed earlier, regarding Charon, but dulled its irreligious implications by changing Hume's statement to: "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.'"[354]

353 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶1-21.
354 Adam Smith, "Letter to William Strahan," in *The Life of David Hume, Esq* (1777). Entry 051.

These were the primary terms that came to dominate the second phase of discourse over Hume's death. While previously the editors of newspapers and periodicals had to pull together whatever sources they had available on the details of Hume's life, and letter writers had the freedom of adding their own substantial contributions to his memory, now there was a single text that everyone was obliged to use or criticize. Its authority was represented by the way in which it appeared in print – most newspapers and periodicals reprinted it in its entirety, sometimes with commentary, while others appropriated the text by switching Hume's voice to the third person and presenting it as a biography rather than autobiography. In both cases, the authority of Hume's text was unquestioned, even if the editors presented its contents in a critical manner.

The editorial comments appended to reprints generally presented both Hume's life and death as a statement of his philosophical system and especially as an affirmation of his religious scepticism. The *Monthly Reviewer*, for example, prefaced the text as such:

When men of such PARTS, and such PRINCIPLES, as those which distinguished the character and writings of Mr. Hume, come to face the immediate terrors of death, the world is always curious to learn in what manner they support the trying conflict: whether the near approach of that awful change of situation which they are about to experience, (in an hour wherein one would think, the boldest mortal would not dare either to DISSEMBLE or to TRIFLE) has produced any change in their *minds*.[355]

Readers would indeed learn that, no, Hume had not changed his mind about Christianity upon death. As the *London Review* put it, he "appears to have been as much a practical as he was a theoretical philosopher."[356] Hume's death

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355 Entry 056.
356 Entry 054.

remained a regular feature in the news press through the end of 1777, far longer

than usual for even the most famous literary figures, and in a couple moments

provided a formidable challenge to the American Revolution for print space. The

timing of the publication of *The Life of David Hume, Esq.* several months after the

initial event was largely responsible for this phenomenon, as was the controversial

nature of both "My Own Life" and (very importantly) Smith's "Letter," both of

which elicited fervent responses. Smith would comment years later that he

received more criticism for this one short letter than for his attack upon the entire

commercial system of Great Britain, referring to the *Wealth of Nations*.[357] At

Hume's request, "My Own Life" was subsequently attached to posthumous

editions of *ETSS* and the *History*.[358]

By 1778, after these debates disappeared from the press, we begin to see

signs of a fixed identity for Hume defined and discussed in the terms set by his

self-fashioning – as a great man of letters, who achieved fame through a certain

market process, and died a pagan death. This language pervades responses to the

Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, which arrived finally in 1779 after

Strahan and Smith both decided to leave its publication to David Home.[359] The

Dialogues, even with its arguments cloaked in the voices of fictional figures, were

rightfully perceived as expressing Hume's critique of religion and disdain for

Christian dogma and institutions. The *Monthly Review* began by observing that

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357 Smith to Andreas Holt, 26 October 1780, *Correspondence.*

358 Entry 059 and Dvid Hume, *The history of England, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the revolution in 1688. In eight volumes. A new edition, with the author's last corrections and improvements. To which is prefixed, a short account of his life, written by himself* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1788), eight volumes octavo.

359 *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Edinburgh: 1779). Followed closely by a London edition of the same year. Neither listed the printer or bookseller.

the *Dialogues* put forth nothing new, but rather threw together "the most exceptionable parts of his philosophical works into a new form, and [presented] them in a different dress."[360] When placing the *Dialogues* contextually within the canon of Hume's works, most reviewers referenced the narrative that Hume provided in "My Own Life" for the success and failure of his various publications and the slow process by which he achieved success. Continuing to reference this text, the *Critical Review* asserted that Hume's "inordinate pursuit of literary fame" compelled him to publish the *Dialogues*, and that his distasteful choice was difficult to reconcile with Hume's life as a "good citizen, and a friend to mankind."[361] Joseph Priestly used the same phrase in a less generous critique, writing, "according to his own very frank confession, his object was mere *literary reputation*. It was not the *pursuit of truth*, or the advancement of virtue and happiness; and it was much more easy to make a figure by disturbing the systems of others, than by erecting any of his own." Imagining Hume facing annihilation, he charged, "How poor a consolation...must have been his *literary fame* with such gloomy prospects as these!"[362] And yet, most responses, even if otherwise critical, gave credence to Hume's genius, virtue, sociability, and contributions to society. His status as a great man of letters was unquestionable; what Hume achieved here, then, was to make a large audience take his very controversial ideas seriously.

This was all the more underlined by the building of his funerary monument, completed in 1778, which stands as a grand physical manifestation of the principles by which he lived and died. Situated at the edge of the burial ground

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360 *Monthly Review* (November, 1789), vol. 61, pp. 343-355.

361 *Critical Review*, September 1779, vol. 48, pp. 161-172.

362 Joseph Priestly, *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever* (Birmingham: Printed by Pearson and Rollason, For J. Johnson, 1780).

on Calton Hill, Hume's monument is a towering mausoleum designed by Scottish neoclassical architect Robert Adam. As per Hume's request in his will, the original inscription contained only his name and the dates of his birth and death. By purchasing a burial plot where he did, Hume achieved two things: one was that he found the most secular resting place possible, as Calton Hill was not attached to any church; the other was that he secured a spot that would be visible to a large part of Edinburgh, especially at a time when there were fewer buildings and trees blocking the site than today.[363] Adam Smith would later remark that it was the "greatest piece of vanity I ever saw in my friend Hume."[364] The implications of Hume having a pagan monument and burial place were not lost on his contemporaries – upon visiting the monument, Sir Adolphus Oughton, Commander-in-Chief in North Britain, wrote a poem ironically comparing Hume's mausoleum to a lighthouse for Christianity in a sea of atheism.[365] We do, however, have to be careful analyzing the monument, as there is no clear evidence that Hume had any say in its actual design or even of the selection of Robert Adam as the architect (though he was close with Adam and his family). Given that the monument was overseen by some of Hume's closest companions (David Home and John Home bore the responsibility of commissioning Adam and supplying funds), who were very familiar with his character, I suggest we can at least read it as an interpretation of Hume that was intended to uphold his core values and work within the terms he set for remembering his life and death.

Individual elements of Hume's death had precedents even if his broader

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363 Iain Gordon Brown, "David Hume's Tomb: a Roman mausoleum by Robert Adam," *Societies of Antiquaries of Scotland* 121 (1991), pp. 394-396.
364 J. Y. T. Greig, *David Hume* (London: J. Cape, 1931), p. 410.
365 Qtd. In Brown, "David Hume's Tomb," p. 412.

actions were unique. This was not the first time that a controversial philosopher composed an autobiography when approaching death with hopes that time would bring vindication. Thomas Hobbes, for example, wrote a long Latin poem about his upbringing, life and literary career as he approached death, and John Toland wrote a short epigram as he lay on his deathbed, expressing hope that future generations would receive him better than his own. In neither case, however, did the authors make plans to publish their autobiographies widely in an effort to represent themselves in the afterlife. Hobbes's was published both in Latin and in English translation, but against his will, as he tried unsuccessfully to destroy the manuscript before he died.[366] Even so, Hume was also not the first author to strive for a positive posthumous reputation, achieving secular immortality through fame, in a manner that Jacob Burckhardt claimed was a key value of Renaissance intellectual life.[367] More recently, in the early 1700s, Pope and his circle had led an effort to erect monuments for great English literary figures in Westminster Abbey (including one for the long-deceased Shakespeare).[368] It was not exceptional at all for a figure like Hume to seek a secular afterlife through these means.

However, he pushed against all of these traditions by placing his rejection of Christianity at the centre of his final days, instead embracing the dormant tradition of the philosopher's death. On one hand was the virtuous resignation of Socrates facing inevitable execution due to worldly circumstances outside of his

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366 "The Autobiographies of Thomas Hobbes," *Mind* vol. 48, no. 191 (July, 1939), pp. 403-405. Pierre Desmaizeau, *A Collection of several pieces of Mr. John Toland now first published from his original manuscripts: with some memoirs of his life and writings* (London: J. Peele, 1726).
367 Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), pp. 200-207.
368 Philip Connell, "Death and the Author: Westminster Abbey and the Meanings of the Literary Monument," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol. 38, no. 4 (Summer 2005), pp. 557-585.

control – in his case, the law; in Hume's, illness. On the other, the good-humoured indifference of Lucretius, understanding the place of the temporary material body in a much larger universe. Hume was to embrace these mentalities and use them as the grounding for a potent expression of his philosophical dispositions that he completed using a combination of cultural symbols. Hume's fame, the controversial nature of his philosophy, and his critique of religion meant that his death would naturally spark widespread public interest, as well as debate over the value of his ideas. Hume seemed very aware of this; and moreover, he seemed very aware of the conventions in print and other media that would allow him to use this phenomenon to his advantage. In writing and publishing his autobiography, he was self consciously creating a text that would be very widely read and would help to persuade readers to conceptualize his career using his terms. He also knew that the circumstances of his death would move beyond the private realm – and indeed, one of his final acts was consenting to their publication – and that he could set an example to the ages of how to die a virtuous non-Christian death. This required a print market with a sense of the "author" and the "text" as entities in their own right, existing beyond the physical author, and moving in a space that allowed manipulation of these symbols. Hume knew too well from the failure of the *Treatise* that the reception of ideas "proceeded more from the manner than the matter," which is to say, from quality of expression rather than quality of argument[369]. His death was a well-calculated expression of irreligion meant to expose successive generations to his ideas and maybe – hopefully – inspire the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition.

369 "My Own Life," ¶8.

Conclusion

Hume's philosophical publishing life is largely a story of a man of letters with the highest ambitions trying – often struggling – to attain a position of cultural influence after the traditional means available to someone of his background became unavailable. Unable to teach in a university, and very much unwilling to enter the law or clergy, he turned to the print marketplace as the primary means for building his career. This did not have a clear precedent. Among his modern philosophical idols, Locke had worked under patronage and Hutcheson published only occasionally as a supplement to his teaching. There was no set of terms or established course of action for an academical philosopher with intentions of improving his society as a whole while living by his pen. The popular political and moral journalism of Addison and Bolingbroke appeared at first as the best medium for his work, but his philosophy was not meant to be read quickly, perhaps discussed, and set aside in anticipation of the next issue. Across the two *Enquiries, Political Discourses, Four Dissertations,* and ultimately *ETSS,* he found a marketable material format that could hold his unique combination of polite and rigorous works of philosophy. Together with Strahan, Millar, Kincaid, and Donaldson, he expanded the possibilities of writing philosophy for a nonacademic market, raised the expectations of profits and payments for publishers and writers alike, and forged a book trade connection between Edinburgh and London that benefitted many of Hume's fellow literati and ultimately helped in the dissemination of Scottish Enlightenment texts.

However, it would be an overstatement to say that Hume lived by his pen and gained intellectual authority and literary fame solely through his printed works. At many points in his career he benefitted from family wealth or some form of patronage; though not exceedingly well off, and certainly not opulent, he never spoke of being in a position where he had to write in order to make a basic living. This separated him from a figure like Samuel Johnson, whose early journalistic work in particular was more out of necessity than literary intentionality.[370] Hume was able to use journalistic formats without the imperative to produce large and endless amount of material, rendering him able to think more critically about his style and the scope of his work. Hume additionally worked under the patronage and acceptance of Edinburgh's literati, from his earliest mentor, Lord Kames, to his powerful and respected friends like Adam Smith, William Robertson, John Home, and Hugh Blair. His candidacy for the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, even though it failed, shows how he was recognized by important members of Scottish society as an extraordinary talent from a young age. While Hume's largest source of income was through print, and his fame was overwhelmingly won on the book market, it is important to keep in mind that other social factors helped to enable his life as a man of letters.

The comparative success of *ETSS* with the *History* offers the most difficult challenge to understanding the place of Hume's philosophy in his publishing life. In one sense, it is anachronistic to apply modern disciplinary divisions to an eighteenth-century author who worked comfortably in a variety of

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370 See E.A. Bloom, *Samuel Johnson in Grub Street* (Provincetown: Brown University Press, 1957).

genres. However, some separation is called for in this case because Hume himself

so frequently referred to his "essays" or "philosophical works" apart from his

History and took an unwavering interest in editing *ETSS* and preparing it for new

editions – even pushing Millar to issue the work more frequently when it did not

sell out. As someone who valued rigorous philosophy and thought of himself

ultimately as a philosopher, *ETSS* represented the grounding for the *History* – the

place where readers could go to learn more fully about his critique of organized

religion and the British constitution, about the principles of morals and human

understanding. As much as Hume valued the common language and critique of

popular historical myths in the *History*, he always reserved a special place for

more rigorous writing, where the philosophical principles grounding the *History*

were laid out more directly and succinctly. The latter came with great difficulty to

most readers but it was still a necessary challenge if one were to understand

Hume's complex and novel philosophy.

Hume's "frequent disappointments" over the success of his works led him

to a nuanced critique of the public's interaction with philosophical writing,

especially any that was rigorous and questioned readers' inherited dogmas.[371] This

critique is substantial enough to offer an alternative to the central tenets of the

Habermasian Public Sphere as it pertains to eighteenth-century Britain. Habermas

saw British culture in the mid-seventeenth through mid-eighteenth centuries as

crucial in the development of a public sphere grounded in free and reasoned

discourse. The assertion of liberty over authority during the British revolutionary

period and final limiting of monarchical power in the Glorious Revolution

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371 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶21.

established the political grounding for a "bourgeois public sphere," which imbued private individuals with political power. This entailed and necessitated reasonable public action and discourse for the purpose of creating and maintaining just political institutions. This discourse played out primarily in a "literary public sphere," consisting of newspapers, books of a political nature, and moralistic and critical journals, where a variety of voices debated over political authority and the most reasonable arguments won.[372]

The failure of the *Treatise* demonstrated to Hume that reason alone was insufficient for gaining philosophical assent. Had the work's detractors offered a sound counterargument against its claims then Hume might have felt differently; but instead, his work was widely misunderstood if read at all, and inspired his rejection from two university posts, an excommunication attempt, and numerous attacks from his adversaries. To him, the public was more likely to act according to custom and inherited dogma than reason. This did not mean that the public was backwards or thick. Since individuals formed their beliefs from their experiences, one could not expect the public to reject omnipresent myths about religion and politics very easily. Hume's obsessive attention to style and format following the *Treatise's* failure was an attempt to appropriate and manipulate widespread reading customs – or, more simply, to speak to the public on their own terms.

He turned to the polite essay format, and later to history, because it was an instance of popular learning that had made its way into the hands of readers across

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372 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 1-26; Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," *New German Critique,* no. 3 (Autumn, 1974), pp. 51-52.

society. Consumers of the *Spectator* and *Craftsman* came to those texts with the intention to cultivate themselves intellectually, to improve their moral actions, to refine their taste, and to render their political beliefs more just. Habermas saw these types of publications as the most important medium for the literary public sphere. "In the *Tatler,* the *Spectator,* and the *Guardian,"* he claims, "the public held up a mirror to itself...[Addison] worked toward the spread of tolerance, the emancipation of civic morality from moral theology and of practical wisdom from the philosophy of the scholars. The public that read and debated this sort of thing read and debated about itself."[373] The founding of *The Craftsman,* and soon after the *Gentleman's Magazine,* represented the most crucial moment in facilitating a reasoned discourse that critiqued presiding political authority. At that point, "the press was for the first time established as a genuinely critical organ of a public engaged in critical political debate: as the fourth estate."[374]

Quite to the contrary, Hume felt that these publications served to reaffirm their readers' beliefs and give them a false feeling of satisfaction in their philosophical, moral, and political beliefs. *The Spectator* promised philosophical learning and moral improvement but instead recast common ideas in more beautiful language. As I have noted throughout my study, Hume repeatedly called Addison's writing "trifling" and too given to "idle coffee-house conversation." Its danger was that it gave readers the satisfaction of intellectual cultivation without the work; by extension, it served to close off readers to more difficult and true works of philosophy by conveying the sense that learning and improvement need not be challenging or impolite. *The Craftsman* professed to uphold political

373 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 42-43.
374 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* p. 60.

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moderation and justness while propagating myths of the British constitution, the Revolutionary Settlement, and the court and country parties. These gave readers a dangerous sense of moral-correctness, making them feel they were on the right side of a debate upon which the strength of their society rested. Far from a harmless misunderstanding, this was apt to breeding dogmatism, faction, and fanaticism. In short, where Habermas sees a culture of reason, Hume saw a culture dangerously assured by the myth that it acted reasonably. Accordingly, the public Hume identified was more akin to that which Habermas claims exists in today's mass media culture: a body manipulated by political authority for validation and dominated by advertising rather than reasoned discourse.[375]

Hume's appropriation of the polite essay and historical genres, his tailoring of his authorial image, his obsession with the presentation of his works in print, and his attention to symbols of his legacy upon death, were all attempts to manipulate a public that would not easily engage in rigorous learning nor consider (much less assent to) ideas counter to their common experiences. This was by no means manipulation in a pejorative sense; his goal was the moral improvement of society, and these were the means he deemed most useful for that end. He was aware that his philosophy existed in a marketplace of ideas where the winner was not necessarily the most reasonable, and believed that Common Sense philosophers like Thomas Reid and James Beattie were more likely to gain assent because they appealed to the existing dogmas of their readers. By pulling together the sections of Hume's works that address reading and understanding, and his paratexts, we find far more than a strategic author with high ambitions – or one

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375 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* pp. 181-196.

whose "ruling passion" was "literary fame," as he claimed in his autobiography.[376]

Instead, we find a thorough and nuanced enquiry into the nature of philosophical

writing for a large readership in an open and relatively uncensored book market.

This enquiry problematizes any reading of The Enlightenment as "man's

emergence from his self-imposed immaturity" on a large cultural scale.[377]

However, it is precisely Hume's critique of the literary public sphere that

offers reasons for why we cannot dismiss *ETSS* for having a limited effect on

society as a whole. Even as he experienced growing literary success, he never put

aside his pessimism about reaching the minds of a large audience and avoiding the

religious scandal that marred the *Treatise's* reception. While his rise in fame might

have satisfied him if literary fame had indeed been his goal, his desire to bring

about a philosophical revolution would only be fulfilled when society as a whole

actually became more enlightened. This was all but impossible in Hume's lifetime

– and possibly ever. Accordingly, as he approached death, he became more

interested in positioning his philosophy (which entailed manipulating his

posthumous reputation) so that it might be appreciated by future generations.

Where some social histories of the Scottish Enlightenment identify Hume

as a strange outlier whose life and works were not indicative of his culture, my

study reasserts him as a central figure.[378] To be sure, Hume disagreed with his

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376 Hume, "My Own Life," ¶21.
377 Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?," *Berlinische Monatsschrift*
    (December, 1784).
378 See Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate
    Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985); Mark Towsey,
    "'Philosophical playing the Devil': recovering readers' responses to David Hume and the
    Scottish Enlightenment," *Historical Research*, vol. 83, no. 220 (May2010); Roger Emerson,
    Professors, Patronage and Politics: the Aberdeen Universities in the 18th Century (Aberdeen:
    University of Aberdeen Press, 1992); *The Glasgow Enlightenment*, eds. Andrew Hook and
    Richard Sher (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1995).

friends in the Moderate Party on many fundamental points and was the main target of the Common Sense philosophers. However, the vitality of his role in Edinburgh literati culture is not captured solely by the similarities and differences of his works from those of his peers. As a central figure in clubs, societies, and suppers, he exerted considerable influence over the Moderate clergy, making them reconsider the dangers of atheism in light of his jovial and moral character. Hume also assisted in their literary careers, showing the potential of writing rigorous work for a large audience, setting an example as a commercially successful author, and often helping them to contact and arrange publishing contracts with Millar. Despite differences in religious persuasion, Hume and his fellow literati shared a common goal of improving the moral and political behaviour of all British society. At all times he carried on his philosophical publishing life with this end in mind.

A Critical Bibliography of David Hume's Philosophical Works

The following is a bibliography of David Hume's philosophical works between the publication of his first book, *A Treatise of Human Nature,* in 1739 and his final posthumous works, *The Life of David Hume, Esq* in 1777 and *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* in 1789. The intention is to catalogue his philosophical publications over which he retained some element of control or influence. In the introduction to this study, I provide a detailed explanation of how it adds to existing bibliographies of Hume's writings and where I have drawn limits to its coverage.

Each entry contains as much information as was available; omitted categories for individual entries indicate that nothing could be found. Publication dates are as precise as possible. In the vast majority of entries, I give the month of publication, either because available advertisements do not specify the day or because there are advertisements for multiple days containing the term "this day is published." More generally, Hume and his publishers discussed publication dates in terms of months and seasons and never placed any emphasis on particular days. Most information on publication dates and prices comes from advertisements; in the interest of reducing redundant citations, a single citation of an advertisement or advertisements applies to all data above in a given entry. In the interest of keeping entries as concise as possible, I have only included information that is used in this study; most notably, I have provided a page length for each book

when available, but not detailed page and sheet collations. Except where noted, production information comes from the "Ledgers and Business Papers of William Strahan."[379] There are no known surviving ledgers for Hume's other printers.

<u>**January, 1739**</u>

Entry: 001

Title: A / TREATISE / OF / Human Nature: / BEING / An Attempt to introduce the ex- / perimental Method of Reasoning / INTO / MORAL SUBJECTS. / Vol. I. / OF THE UNDERSTANDING

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for John Noon, at the White-Hart, near / Mercer's-Chapel, in Cheapside. / MDCCXXXIX

Format: 8vo, 21 cm, 475pp

Epigram: Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire, que velis; & que ?/ sentias, dicere licet. Tacit.

Contents: Advertisement; Introduction; Part I, Of Ideas, Their Origin, Composition, Conexion, Abstraction, &c.; Part II, Of the Ideas of Space and Time; Part III, Of Knowledge and Probability; Part IV, Of the Sceptical and Other Systems of Philosophy

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379 BL Add. MS 48800.

Price: 10s for vols. I & II together[380]

Production: 1000 copies:[381]

Notes: Most advertisements prominently featured Hume's epigram.[382] Noon removed the *Treatise* from top billing in advertisement from April 1739 onward.[383]

Entry: 002

Title: A / TREATISE / OF / Human Nature: / BEING / An Attempt to introduce the ex- / perimental Method of Reasoning / INTO / MORAL SUBJECTS. / Vol. II. / OF THE / PASSIONS

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for John Noon, at the White-Hart, near / Mercer's-Chapel, in Cheapside. / MDCCXXXIX

Format: 8vo, 21 cm, 318pp

Epigram: Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire, que velis; & que / sentias, dicere licet. Tacit.

Contents: Part I, Of Pride and Humility; Part II, Of Love and Hatred; Part III, Of the Will and Direct Passions

Price: 10s for vols. I & II together

Production: 1000 copies[384]

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380 David Fate Norton, "An Historical Account," sect. 6.
381 "David Hume's contact with John Noon for *A Treatise of Human Nature,*" NLS MS 23159, fol. 5.
382 *London Evening Post* (25-27 January 1739); *Gentleman's Magazine* (January 1739); *Scots Magazine* (January 1739); *London Evening Post, and General Advertiser* (20-23 February); *Country Journal: or, the Craftsman* (3, 10, and 17 March 1739); *London Daily Post* (2-4 April 1739); *London Evening Post*
383 Starting in *London Daily Post* (2-4 April 1739); *London Evening Post* (10-12 April 1739).
384 NLS MS 23159, fol. 5.

Entry: 003

Title: AN / ABSTRACT / OF / A BOOK lately Published; / ENTITULED, / A / TREATISE / OF / Human Nature, &c. / WHEREIN / The CHIEF ARGUMENT of that BOOK is farther ILLUSTRATED and EXPLAINED.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: Printed for C. Borbet, at Addison's Head, / over-against St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet- / street. 1740. / [Price six Pence]

Format: 8vo, 32p.

Price: 6p

Notes: Advertisement in the *Daily Advertiser* appends to tile, "which has met with such opposition, and had been represented in so terrifying a light, is further illustrated and explain'd."[385]

Entry: 004

Title: A / TREATISE / OF / Human Nature: / BEING / An Attempt to introduce the ex- / perimental Method of Reasoning / INTO / MORAL SUBJECTS. / Vol. III. / OF / MORALS.
WITH AN / APPENDIX. / Wherein some Passages of the foregoing / Volumes are illustrated and explain'd.

Printer and Seller: LONDON, / Printed for THOMAS LONGMAN, at the Ship

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[385] *Daily Advertiser* (11 March 1740).

in / Pater-noster-Row, MDCCXL.

Epigram: Durae semper amator, / Quare quid est virtus, et posce exemplar

bonesti. / LUCAN.

Format: 8vo, 21 cm, 310pp

Contents: Advertisement; Part I, Of Virtue and Vice in General; Part II, Of

Justice and Injustice; Part III, Of the Other Virtues and Vices; Appendix.

Price: not indicated in book or in advertisements

Production: 1000 copies[386]

<u>**June – October, 1741**</u>

Entry: 005

Title: ESSAYS, / MORAL / AND / POLITICAL.

Printer and Seller: EDINBURGH, / Printed by R. Fleming and A. Alison, / for

A. Kincaid Bookseller, and Sold / at his Shop above the Cross. MDCCXLI.

Additional Sellers: J and P. Knapton, C Hirsh, and Andrew Millar.

Format: 8vo, 16cm, 187pp.

Epigram: Tros Rutulusve fuat, nullo discrimine habeo. / Virg.

Contents: Advertisement; (1) Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion; (2) Of the

Liberty of the Press; (3) Of Impudence and Modesty; (4) That Politics may be

reduced to a Science; (5) Of the first Principles of Government; (6) Of Love and

Marriage; (7) Of the Study of History; (8) Of the Independency of Parliament; (9)

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386 Hume to Hutcheson, 4 March 1740, HL, Letter 15.

Whether the British Government inclines more to absolute monarchy, or to a Republic; (10) Of Parties in general; (11) Of the Parties of Great Britain; (12) Of Superstition and Enthusiasm; (13) Of Avarice; (14) Of the Dignity of Human Nature; (15) Of Liberty and Despotism

Price: 2s 6d[387]

Notes: Notice in Scots Magazine, June 1741, for "Essays on various subjects. 2S 6d," could refer to this publication.[388] Was published first in Edinburgh by Alexander Kincaid and subsequently sold in London by J and P. Knapton, C Hirsh, and Andrew Millar.[389] The sale by London booksellers followed wide reprints of "Whether the British Government inclines more to absolute Monarchy, or to a Republick," below. Advertised "Beautifully printed in a neat Pocket Volume," with epigram.

<u>**October, 1741**</u>

Entry: 006

Title: Whether the British Government inclines more to absolute Monarchy, or to a Republick

Format: Reprint in a periodical.

Publication: The Craftsman, 10 October 1741.

Notes: Appears on first page as a letter to Caleb D'Anvers, Esq., in just over three

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387 See advertisements below.
388 "New Books" section of *Scots Magazine* (June 1741), vol. 3, p. 280.
389 *Daily Post* (2-4 March 1742); *Daily Advertiser* (1 Mach 1742); *London Evening Post* (2-4 March1742); *Gentleman's Magazine* (March 1742), vol. 12, p. 168.

columns. Signed "P. T."

Entry: 007

Title: Whether the British Government inclines more to absolute Monarchy, or to a Republick.

Format: Reprint in magazine

Publication: The Gentleman's Magazine, October 1741, p. 536.

Notes: Appears in the "Weekly Essays" section as an excerpt from The Craftsman of October. 10, 1741. Just over two pages in length. Signed "P. T." with the postscript, "[The above judicious Essay is given without Alteration or Abridgement.]"

Entry: 008

Title: Whether the British Government inclines more to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republick.

Format: Reprint in magazine

Publication: The London Magazine, October 1741.

Notes: Appears in the "Weekly Essays" section as an excerpt from The Craftsman of October 10, 1741. Spread over three pages in two columns. Signed "P.T."

Entry: 009

Title: Whether the British government inclines more to absolute monarchy, or to a

republick.

Format: Reprint in magazine

Publication: The Scots Magazine, October 1741.

Notes: Appears as first selection in the "Weekly Essays" section as excerpt from The Craftsman of October 10, 1741. Signed "P.T."

January, 1742[390]

Entry: 010

Title: ESSAYS, / MORAL / AND / POLITICAL. / Volume II.

Printer and Seller: EDINBURGH, / Printed for A. Kincaid, near the Cross, / by R. Fleming and A. Alison. / M.DCC.XLII.

Format: 8vo., 16cm, 208pp.

Contents: Advertisement; (1) Of Essay-Writing; (2) Of Eloquence; (3) Of Moral Prejudices; (4) Of the Middle Station of Life; (5) Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences; (6) The Epicurian; (7) The Stoic; (8) The Platonist; (9) The Sceptic; (10) Of Polygamy and Divorces; (11) Of Simplicity and Refinement; (12) A Character of Sir Robert Walpole.

Price: Unknown as single volume.

Entry: 011

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390 The only indication of a publishing date is in reprints of "A Character of Sir Robert Walpole," starting with *Scots Magazine*, which introduces the essay thusly: " Taken from the Essays moral and political, vol. 2. lately published at Edinburgh." (See notes to Entry 011) Advertisements for vols. I and II together as set begin in May 1742.

Title: A Character of Sir Robert Walpole

Format: Reprint in magazine

Publication: Scots Magazine, January 1742.

Notes: Preceded by, "Taken from the Essays moral and political, vol. 2. lately published at Edinburgh." Postscript: "But in the preface the author has the following mitigation." Followed by preface to the second volume of *Essays, Moral and Political*. Appears after letters section and takes up just over one full column over two pages.

February, 1742

Entry: 012

Title: A Character of Sir R-- W--.

Format: Reprint in newspaper

Publication: London Evening Post, 2 – 4 February 1742.

Notes: Front page, middle column. Preceded by text, "SCOTLAND. Edinburgh, Jan 28. The following is taken from a Volume of Essays late publish'd here."

Entry: 013

Title: A Character of Sir R-- W--.

Format: Reprint in newspaper

Publication: Daily Post (London), 4 February 1742.

Notes: Front page. News section. Column and a half. "SCOTLAND. Edinburgh,

Jan 28. The following is taken from a Volume of Essays late publish'd here."

Entry: 014

Title: A Character of Sir R-- W--.

Format: Reprint in newspaper

Publication: Monthly Chronologer, 17 February 1742.

Notes: Appears on front page below news items, taking up better part of a page in two columns. Prefaced by, "Edinburgh, Jan 28. The following is taken from a Volume of Essays lately publish'd here."

March, 1742

Entry: 015

Title: Queries and Answers relating to Sir Robert Walpole's Character.

Format: Article in magazine

Publication: Scots Magazine, March 1742, vol. 4, pp. 119-120.

Notes: Preceded by text, "THE character of Sir Robert Walpole, in our Magazine for January last, p. 38. was inserted in most of the newspapers of G. Britain: And in the Newcastle paper, the following queries were proposed to the consideration of the author; who having favoured us with his answers, we shall insert them, each under the query to which it belongs. One column over a page and a half. Followed by "The genuine Speech of Sir R-- W-- to his Electors at Lynn, Aug. 31. 1713."

Entry: 016

Title: ESSAYS, / MORAL / AND / POLITICAL. / The Second Edition,

Corrected.

Printer and Seller: EDINBURGH, / Printed for A. Kincaid, near the Cross. /

MDCCXLI.

Additional Sellers: J and P. Knapton, C. Hirsh, Andrew Millar.

Epigram: Tros Rutulusve fuat, nullo discrimine habeo. / Virg.

Format: 8vo, 16cm, 189pp.

Contents: Same as first edition.

Price: 5s bound for both volumes together.

Notes: Appeared together with Volume II of *Essays, Moral and Political* as a two-

volume set. Advertisements were large, nicely aligned, and listed the names

essays by volume. Sold "Beautifully printed in Two neat Pocket Volumes."[391]

Entry: 017

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[391]*Universal Spectator* (11 May 1742); *London Evening Post* (22 May 1742); *London Evening Post* (15 and 27 July 1742).

Title: A Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh: Containing Some Observations on a Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality, said to be maintain'd in a Book lately publish'd, intituled, A Treatise of Human Nature &c.

Printer: Edinburgh, Printed by L. Lumisden and J. Robertson MDCCXLV

Format: Pamphlet, 34pp.[392]

<div align="center">

January, 1748

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Entry: 018

Title: A TRUE / ACCOUNT / OF THE / Behaviour and Conduct / OF / Archibald Stewart, Esq. / LATE Lord provost of Edinburgh / In a Letter to a Friend.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for M. Cooper, in Pater-noster / Row. MDCCXLVIII.

Format: 12mo, 51pp. / 4to., 34 pp.

Epigram: Non potait mea mens, quin effet, grata, teneri. Sit, precor, offico non gravis ira pio. Ovid.

Price: 1s[393]

Notes: Appeared in both 12mo and 4to formats. Some versions do not have preface due to political concerns.[394]

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392 Title page indicates "[Price One Shilling]". See reprint and introduction in James Fieser, ed., *Early Responses to Hume's Metaphysical and Epistemological Writings* (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2000).

393 *General Advertiser* (21 December 1747)

394 James Fieser, *A Bibliography of Hume's Writing and Early Responses* (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004).

Entry: 019

Title: PHILOSOPHICAL / ESSAYS / CONCERNING / Human Understanding. / By the Author of the / Essays Moral and Political

Printer and Seller: LONDON: Printed for A. Millar, opposite Katharine-Street, / in the Strand. MDCCXLVIII.

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 256pp.

Contents: (1) Of the Different Species of Philosophy; (2) Of the Origin of Ideas; (3) Of the Connexion of Ideas; (4) Sceptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding; (5) Sceptical Solutions of these Doubts; (6) Of Probability; (7) Of the Idea of Power or Necessary Connection; (8) Of Liberty and Necessity; (9) Of the Reason of Animals; (10) of Miracles; (11) Of the Practical Consequences of Natural Religion; (12) Of the Sceptical or Academical Philosophy.

Price: 3s bound[395]

Production: 750 copies; 11 sheets @ £1.8 for £15.8 total (Apr. 1748).[396]

Notes: Advertisements list the book as "Beautifully printed in a Neat Pocket Volume," written "By the Author of Essays, Moral and Political," and indicate that *Essays, Moral and Political* is available at Andrew Millar's shop "In Two neat Pocket Volumes, Price bound 5s."[397]

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395 See advertisements below.
396 "The Ledgers and Business Papers of William Strahan," BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 78.
397 *Jacobites Journal* (16 April 1748); *General Evening Post* (16-19 April); *General Advertiser*

Entry: 020

Title: THREE ESSAYS, / MORAL / AND / POLITICAL: / Never before published. / Which compleats the former Edition, in two / Volumes, Octavo. / By DAVID HUME, Esq;

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, over against Catharine / Street in the Strand; and A. Kincaid in / Edinburgh. / M.DC.XLVIII.

Format: 8vo, 16cm, 62pp.

Contents: Essay (1) Of National Characters; (2) Of the Original Contract; (3) Of Passive Obedience.

Price: 1s sewed[398]

Notes: Not sold as a separate book, but as a supplement to the 1741-2 editions of *Essays, Moral and Political* that owners could have bound into their copies. Advertised together with the 1748 edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* as available at Andrew Millar's shop, "Where may be had the three additional Essays." These are the first advertisements to list "David Hume, Esq." as an author, rather than keeping Hume's name anonymous.[399]

(20-22 April 1748); *London Evening Post* (23-26 April 1748); *Gentleman's Magazine* (April 1748), vol. 18, p. 192.

398 See advertisements below.

399 *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (17-19 November); *General Evening Post* (19-22 November 1748).

Entry: 021

Title: ESSAYS, / MORAL / AND / POLITICAL. / By DAVID HUME, Esq. / The Third Edition, Corrected, with Additions.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, over against Catharine Street / in the Strand; and A. Kincaid in Edinburgh. / M.DCC.XLVIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 319pp.

Contents: (1) Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion; (2) Of the Liberty of the Press; (3) Of Impudence and Modesty; (4) That Politics may be reduced to a Science; (5) Of the first Principles of Government; (6) Of Love and Marriage; (7) Of the Study of History; (8) Of the Independency of Parliament; (9) Whether the British Government inclines more to absolute monarchy, or to a Republic; (10) Of Parties in general; (11) Of the Parties of Great Britain; (12) Of Superstition and Enthusiasm; (13) Of Avarice; (14) Of the Dignity of Human Nature; (15) Of Liberty and Despotism; (16) Of Eloquence; (17) Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences; (18) The Epicurian; (19) The Stoic; (20) The Platonist; (21) The Sceptic; (22) Of Polygamy and Divorces; (23) Of Simplicity and Refinement (24) Of National Characters; (25) Of the Original Contract; (26) Of Passive Obedience

Price: 3s bound[400]

Notes: "Advertisement," "Of Essay Writing," "Of Moral Prejudices," and "Of the Middle Station of Life" removed. "A Character of Sir Robert Walpole" retained as

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[400]*Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (17-19 November); *General Evening Post* (19-22 November 1748).

a footnote to the essay, "That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science." Edition in

McGill Hume Library bound as "Lock's [sic.] Human Understanding."

<div align="right">**April, 1750**[401]</div>

Entry: 022

Title: PHILOSOPHICAL / ESSAYS / CONCERNING / Human Understanding. /

By DAVID HUME, Esq; / The SECOND EDITION. / With Additions and

Corrections

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, opposite Katharine- /

Street, in the Strand. MDCCL.

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 259pp.

Contents: Same as first edition

Price: 3s bound[402]

Production: 1,250 copies; 11 sheets @ £1.12s.7d each for £17.17s.6d total

(October 1749).[403]

Notes: First instance of Hume's name appearing on the title page of this work.

Millar delayed publication due to earthquakes.[404]

<div align="right">**January, 1751**</div>

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401 Tom Beauchamp, "Introduction: A History of The Enquiry Concerning Human
  Understanding," in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: A Critical Edition*
  (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. xxxvi-ii.
402 Beauchamp, "Introduction."
403 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 84.
404 Hume to John Clephane, 18 April 1750, HL, Letter 66.

Entry: 023

Title: The petition of the Brave and venerable Bellmen (or Sextons) of the Church of Scotland, to the Hon. House of Commons.

Printer: Ninewells, Berwickshire

Format: Broadside[405]

June, 1751

Entry: 024

Title: PHILOSOPHICAL / ESSAYS / CONCERNING / Human Understanding. / By Mr. Hume, / Author of the Essays Moral and Poltical. / The Second Edition. / With Additions and Corrections.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for M. Cooper, at the Globe in / Pater-Noster Row. MDCCLI.

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 259pp.

Contents: Same as first two editions

Price: 3s

Production: 1000 copies [new title pages only]; 15s total including paper.[406]

Notes: Advertised as "Twelve Essays Concerning Human Understanding," with individual essay names listed in two columns. Advertisements also name Hume

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405 This is a two-page satirical piece that saw very small circulation. For a reprint of the text with introduction, see M. A. Stwart, "Hume's 'Bellmen's Petition': The Original Text," *Hume Studies*, no. 1 (April 1997).

406 BL Add. MS 48800 fol. 91.

and describe him as "Author of the Essays, Moral and Political."[407] William

Strahan printed 1000 title pages in March of 1751 to indicate the change in

bookseller from Millar to Cooper. The work returned to Millar's name after this

edition.

November, 1751

Entry: 025

Title: AN / ENQUIRY / CONCERNING THE / PRINCIPLES / OF / MORALS. /

By DAVID HUME, esq.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, over against Catherine-

street / in the Strand. 1751.

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 253pp.

Contents: (1) Of the General Principles of Morals; (2) Of Benevolence; (3) Of

Justice; (4) Of Political Society; (5) Why Utility Pleases; (6) Of Useful Qualities

to Ourselves; (7) Of Qualities Immediately Agreeable to Ourselves; (9) Of

Qualities Immediately Agreeable to Others; (9) Conclusion; (10) Appendix 1; (11)

Appendix 2; (12) A Dialogue.

Price: 3s bound

Production: 1500 copies; 11 sheets @ £1.15s for £19.5s total (July 1751).[408]

Notes: First advertisements for any of Hume's books after the *Treatise* that do not

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407 *General Advertiser* (6, 22 June 1751); *London Evening Post* (18-29 June 1751).
408 BL Add. MS 48800

make reference to *Essays, Moral and Political*.[409]

March, 1752

Entry: 026

Title: POLITICAL / DISCOURSES. / BY / DAVID HUME ESQ.

Printer and Seller: EDINBURGH, / Printed by R. Fleming, / For A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson. / M.DCC.LII.

Additional Sellers: Hirch and Hawes, Langman, Knapton, A. Millar, Rivington, J. Nourse, D. Wilcox. (London Evening Post, March 3-5 1752)

Format: 8vo, 19cm, 304pp.

Contents: Scotticisms; (1) Of Commerce; (2) Of Luxury; (3) Of Money; (4) Of Interest; (5) Of the Balance of Trade; (6) Of the Balance of Power; (7) Of Taxes; (8) Of Public Credit; (9) Of Some Remarkable Customs; (10) Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations; (11) Of the Protestant Succession; (12) Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth.

Notes: First book since the *Treatise* to be printed in octavo (or any format larger than duodecimo). Advertisements list individual discourses.[410]

May, 1752

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409 *Whitehall Evening Post* (19-30 November, 1751); *London Evening Post* (14-28 November, 1751); *General Advertiser* (26-30 November, 1751); *General Evening Post* (21-28 November, 1751); *Scots Magazine* (November 1751), p. 552; *Gentleman's Magazine* (December 1751), p. 574; *London Magazine* (November 1751), p. 528.

410 *Caledonian Mercury* (14 January, 1752); London *Evening Post* (3-5 March 1752); *Gentleman's* Magazine (February 1752), p. 94.

Entry: 027

Title: POLITICAL / DISCOURSES. / BY / DAVID HUME ESQ. / THE

SECOND EDITION.

Printer and Seller: EDINBURGH, / Printed by R. Fleming, / For A. Kincaid and

A. Donaldson. / M.DCC.LII.

Additional Sellers: Hirch and Hawes, Langman, Knapton, Millar, Rivington,

Nourse, Wilson and Durham, in London. (London Evening Post, May 12-14

1752)

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 304pp.

Contents: Same as first edition, with "Scotticisms" at end.

Price: 3s bound

Notes: Advertised as "a neat pocket volume."[411]

April, 1753

From April of 1753 onward, Hume's philosophical works appeared in a collection

entitled *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects.* The collection was published

variously as single-volume, two-volume, four-volume and five-volume sets.

Hume's printers and booksellers also combined editions of his previously

published works to from *ETSS* collections – usually with cancel title pages

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[411] *General Advertiser* (12 May 1752); *London Evening Post* (12-14 May 1752).

changing the name of each individual work to a volume of *ETSS*.

Retitled volumes of *ETSS*:[412]

Entry: 028

Title: ESSYAS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By DAVID HUME, Esq; / IN FOUR VOLUMES. / VOL. I. / CONTAINING / Essays, Moral and Political. / The Fourth Edition corrected, with Additions.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; / AND / A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, in Edinburgh. / MDCCLIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 319pp.

Contents: Same as third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* (1748)

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Production: Leftover stock of the third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political*;

500 new title pages were printed for all four volumes at £ 1 total.[413]

Notes: Is the third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* with a cancel title page. Contains both title pages.

Entry: 029

Title: ESSYAS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By

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412 Advertisements appeared in *Public Advertiser* (18-21, 23-6 April 1753). They listed the four volumes and said "Either Volumes to be had separate to complete Gentlemens Sets." Further advertisements for the period between 1753 and 1758 include *Public Advertiser* (11 December 1754); *Whitehall Evening Post Or London Intelligencer* (12-14 December 1754).

413 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 97

DAVID HUME, Esq; / IN FOUR VOLUMES. / VOL. II. / CONTAINING /

Philosophical Essays concerning / Human Understanding. / The Second Edition,

with Additions and / Corrections.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand / MDCCLIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 259pp.

Contents: Same as second edition of *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human*

Understanding (1751)

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Production: Leftover stock of the third edition of *Philosophical Essays*

Concerning Human Understanding; 500 new title pages were printed for all four

volumes.

Notes: Is the second edition of *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human*

Understanding with a cancel title page. Contains both title pages.

Entry: 030

Title: ESSYAS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By

DAVID HUME, Esq; / IN FOUR VOLUMES. / VOL. III. / CONTAINING / An

Enquiry concerning the Principles of / Morals. / The Second Edition.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand / MDCCLIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 275pp.

Contents: Same as the first edition

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Production: Leftover stock of first edition; 500 new title pages were printed for

all four volumes.

Entry: 031

Title: ESSYAS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By

DAVID HUME, Esq; / VOL. IV. / CONTAINING / POLITICAL

DISCOURSES. / The Second Edition.

Printer and Seller: EDINBURGH: / Printed for A. Kincaid, and A. Donaldson /

MDCCLIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 310pp.

Contents: Same as second edition (1751)

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Production: Leftover from second edition; 500 new title pages were printed for

all four volumes.

Notes: Is the second edition with cancel title page. Contains both title pages.

Newly-printed volumes of *ETSS*

Entry: 032

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By DAVID

HUME, Esq; / IN FOUR VOLUMES. / VOL. I. / CONTAINING / Essays, Moral

and Political. / The Fourth Edition corrected, with Additions.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; / AND / A.

Kincaid and A. Donaldson, in Edinburgh. / MDCCLIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 335pp.

Contents: Same as third edition of *Essays, Moral and Political* (1748)

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Production: 1000 copies; 14 sheets @ £ 1.10 each for £ 21 total. (April 1753)

Entry: 033

Title: ESSYAS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By

DAVID HUME, Esq; / VOL. IV. / CONTAINING / POLITICAL

DISCOURSES. / The Second Edition.

Printer and Seller: EDINBURGH: / Printed for A. Kincaid, and A. Donaldson /

MDCCLIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 270pp.

Contents: Same as second edition (1751)

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Notes: Newly-printed reset second edition.

August, 1753

Entry: 034

Title: ESSYAS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By

DAVID HUME, Esq; / IN FOUR VOLUMES. / VOL. III. / CONTAINING / An

Enquiry concerning the Principles of / Morals. / The Second Edition.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand / MDCCLIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 275pp.

Contents: Same as the first edition

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Production: 1000 copies; 11 sheets @ £ 1.10s each for £ 16.10s. total. (August 1753)[414]

September, 1754

Entry: 035

Title: ESSYAS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By DAVID HUME, Esq; / VOL. IV. / CONTAINING / POLITICAL DISCOURSES. / The Third Edition, with Additions and / Corrections.

Printer: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; / AND / A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, in Edinburgh. / MDCCLIV.

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 274pp.

Contents: Same as first and second editions.

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Notes: Title page and table of contents set differently from reset second edition (1753); text is set identically to reset second edition.

Early 1756

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414 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 97.

Entry: 036

Title: ESSYAS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By

DAVID HUME, Esq; / VOL. II. / CONTAINING / Philosophical Essays

concerning / Human Understanding. / The Second Edition, with Additions and /

Corrections.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand / MDCCLVI.

Additional sellers:

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 247pp.

Contents: Same as second edition of *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human*

Understanding (1751)

Price: 12s bound for four-volume set

Production: 750 copies; 11 sheets @ £ 1.8s. (Sept. 1755)

Notes: New edition.

February, 1757

Entry: 037

Title: FOUR / DISSERTATIONS. / I. THE NATURAL HISTORY OF

RELIGION. / II. OF THE PASSIONS. / III. OF TRAGEDY. / IV. OF THE

STANDARD OF TASTE. / BY / DAVID HUME, Esq.

Printer and Seller: LONDON, / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand. / MDCCLVII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 248pp.

Contents: (1) The Natural History of Religion; (2) Of the Passions; (3) Of Tragedy; (4) Of the Standard of Taste. Some copies contain a dedication to John Home praising his tragedy, *Douglas*.[415]

Price: 3s bound[416]

Notes: Though the printer is unlisted on the title page, Hume's correspondence reveals it was William Bowyer.[417] Originally contained five dissertations: "The Natural History of Religion," Of the Passions," "Of Tragedy," "Of Suicide," and "Of the Immortality of the Soul." Strahan sent proof copies of *Five Dissertations* to Hume for correction in 1755.[418] Hume subsequently removed "Of Suicide" and "of the Immortality of the Soul" for fear of controversy and added "Of the Standard of Taste" to form *Four Dissertations*.[419]

Entry: 038

Title: [As Volume V of *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*; see "Notes" below] FOUR / DISSERTATIONS. / I. THE NATURAL HISTORY OF RELIGION. / II. OF THE PASSIONS. / III. OF TRAGEDY. / IV. OF THE STANDARD OF TASTE. / BY / DAVID HUME, Esq.

Printer and Seller: LONDON, / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand. /

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415 Hume removed the dedication after Home and his friends suggested it could hurt the Moderate Party. Hume to Andrew Millar, 20 January 1757, HL, Letter 126.
416 *London Evening Post* (27 January 1757); *Daily Advertiser* (7 February 1757); *Gentleman's Magazine* (February 1757), p. 94; *Public Advertiser* (14 November 1757).
417 Hume to William Strahan, 1 February 1757, HL, Letter 127.
418 The National Library of Scotland holds proof sheets for "Of Suicide" and "Of the Immortality of the Soul" with Hume's manuscript corrections. NLS MS 509.
419 Hume to William Strahan, 25 January 1772, HL, Letter 465.

MDCCLVII

Format: 12mo, 17cm, 248pp.

Contents: Same as first edition

Price: 15s bound for five-volume set

Notes: Alternatively bound as "Volume V" of *ETSS* and was advertised in late-1757 and 1758 as an alternative to the 1758 quarto edition.[420]

Entry: 039

Title: A Dissertation on Tragedy. By David Hume, Esq.

Format: Reprint in magazine

Publication: Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure, Feb. 1757, vol. 20, no. 136, pp. 68-72.

Printer and Seller: London, Published for J. Hinton

June, 1757

Entry: 040

Title: Characters, &c. Of Douglas, a tragedy. Mr Hume's dedication of his Four Dissertations, which were published, at London, in the beginning of February.

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420 The private collection of William Zachs contains *ETSS* in five volumes duodecimo. The individual volumes are I. *Essays, Moral and Political,* third edition; II. *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding,* second edition; III. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* first edition; IV. *Political Discourses,* second edition; and V. *Four Dissertations,* first and only edition. Advertisements offering *ETSS* in five volumes duodecimo for 15s (with each volume available separately "to complete gentlemen's sets") include *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (25 March 1757); *London Evening Post* (8-11 April 17578); *Whitehall Evening Post* (15-22 April 1758).

Format: Reprint in a magazine[421]

Publication: Scots Magazine, June 1757, vol. 19, pp. 293-294.

Notes: Originally published in some copies of *Four Dissertations*.[422] Prefaced by "To the Rev. Mr Home, author of Douglas, a tragedy," and followed by "Edin. Jan. 3. 1757. David Hume."

<u>**January, 1758**</u>

Entry: 041

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / BY / DAVID HUME, Esq. / A NEW EDITION.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; / AND / A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, at Edinburgh, / M.DCC.LVIII.

Format: 4to, 27cm, 554pp.

Contents:

Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary. Part I: Essay (1) Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion; (2) Of the Liberty of the press; (3) Of Impudence and Modesty; (4) That Politics may be reduced to a Science; (5) Of the Principles of Government; (6) Of Love and Marriage; (7) Of the Study of History; (8) Of the Independency

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421 In a letter to Adam Smith, Hume wrote, "The Dedication to John Hume you have probably seen: For I find it has been inserted in some of the weekly Papers, both here & in London." February or March, 1757, HL, Letter 130.
422 Hume to Andrew Millar, 20 January 1757, HL, Letter 126.

of Parliament; (9) Whether the British Government inclines more to absolute Monarchy or a Republic; (10) Of Parties in general; (11) Of the Parties of Great Britain; (12) Of Superstition and Enthusiasm; (13) Of Avarice; (14) Of the Dignity and Meanness of Human Nature; (15) Of Civil Liberty; (16) Of Eloquence; (17) Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences; (18) The Epicurean; (19) The Stoic; (20) The Platonist; (21) The Sceptic; (22) Of Polygamy and Divorces; (23) Of Simplicity and Refinement in Writing; (24) Of national Characters; (25) Of Tragedy; (26) Of the Standard of Taste

Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary. Part II: (1) Of Commerce; (2) Of Luxury; (3) Of Money; (4) Of Interest; (5) Of the Ballance of Trade; (6) Of the Ballance of Power; (7) Of Taxes; (8) Of public Credit; (9) Of some remarkable Customs; (10) Of the Populousness of antient Nations; (11) Of the Original Contract; (12) Of passive Obedience; (13) Of the protestant succession; (14) Idea of a perfect Commonwealth

An ENQUIRY concerning HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. Same as First edition of *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* but with "Essays" renamed "Sections."

A Dissertation on the Passions

An ENQUIRY concerning the PRINCIPLES of Morals. Same as first edition.

A Natural History of Religion. Introduction; Section (1) That Polytheism was the primitive Religion of Men; (2) Origin of Polytheism; (3) The same Subject continued; (4) Deities not considred as Creators or Formers of the World; (5) Various Forms of Polytheism, Allegory, Hero-Worship; (6) Origin of Theism and

Polytheism; (7) Confirmation of this Doctrine; (8) Flux and Reflux of Polytheism and Theism; (9) Comparison of these Religions with regard to Persecution and Toleration; (10) With regard to Courage or Abasement; (11) With regard to Reason and Absurdity; (12) With regard to Doubt or Conviction; (13) Impious Conceptions of the divine Nature in popular Religion; (14) Band Influence of popular Religions on Morality; (15) General Corollary from the Whole.

Price: 15s bound[423]

Production: 750 copies; 68 1/2 sheets @ £1.6s for £71.18s.6d. (Oct. 1757)[424]

Notes: First printing of *ETSS* as a single volume. *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* retitled *An Enquiry* &c. "Of Tragedy" and "Of the Standard of Taste," from *Four Dissertations*, moved to *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Part I.* "Of Liberty and Despotism" retitled "Of Civil Liberty." "Of the Original Contract" and "Of Passive Obedience," from *Three Essays* and Essay*, Moral and Political*, moved to *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary Part II*, containing the contents of *Political Discourses*. Some copies contain two more essays, "Of Jealousy of Trade" and "Of the Coalition of Parties," which Strahan printed in 1760 and appended to remaining copies of this edition.[425]

Entry: 042

423 *Whitehall Evening Post* (23-25 March 1758), (13-29 April 1758), (4 May 1758); *Public Advertiser* (13-17 April 1758); *London Evening Post* (23-30 March 1758); *Scots Magazine* (April 1758), p. 222; *Edinurgh Magazine* (May 1758), p. 84.
424 BL Add. MS, fol. 113.
425 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 121.

Title: Advertisement

Format: Introduction to book, pp. 2-5.

Publication: A Short Essay on the Corn Trade, and the Corn Laws, Containing A General Relation to the present Method of carrying on the Corn Trade, and the Purport of the Laws relating thereto in this Kingdom (Edinburgh, 1758).[426]

April, 1760

Entry: 043

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By DAVID HUME, Esq. / IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I., / CONTAINING / Essays, Moral, Political, and / Literary. Part I. / A NEW EDITION

Contents: Same as Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Part I, in the 1758 edition of *ETSS*.

VOL. II. / Containing Essays, Moral, Political, / and Literary. Part II. / A NEW EDITION.

Contents: (1) Of Commerce; (2) Of Refinements in the Arts; (3) Of Money; (4) Of Interest; (5) Of the Ballance of Trade; (6) Of the Jealousy of Trade; (7) Of the

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426 Based on a manuscript of the Advertisement found by David Raynor. See Raynor, *The Times Literary Supplement* (14 August 1998), p. 22.

Ballance of Power; (8) Of Taxes; (9) Of public Credit; (10) Of some remarkable Customs; (11) Of the Populousness of antient Nations; (12) Of the Original Contract; (13) Of passive Obedience; (14) Of the Coalition of Parties; (15) Of the protestant Succession; (16) Idea of a perfect Commonwealth.

VOL. III. / Containing an ENQUIRY concerning / Human Understanding. / A NEW EDITION.

Contents: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding; A Dissertation on the Passions.

VOL. IV. / Containing an ENQUIRY concerning / the Principles of Morals. / A NEW EDITION.

Contents: An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals; The Natural History of religion.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; / AND / A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, in Edinburgh. / MDCCLIII

Format: 12mo, 17cm. Vol. 1: 387pp; Vol. 2, 379pp; Vol. 3: 299pp; Vol. 4, 352pp.

Price: 12s bound

Production: 1000 copies; 61 sheets @ £1.10s each for £91.10s. (March 1760)[427]

Notes: Advertisements state, "These four Volumes contain all his Esays, formerly printed in five Volumes, 12mo, together with two Essays never before printed."[428]

Vol. II: "Of Jealousy of Trade" and "Of the Coalition of Parties" added; "Of

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[427] BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 121.
[428] *Whitehall Evening Post* (1-29 April 1760), (1-3 May 1760); *London Evening Post* (22-29 April 1760), *London Chronicle* (17-19 April 1760), p. 384.

Luxury" changed to "Of Refinement in the Arts." Vol. III: "A Dissertation on the

Passions" added.

<center>**May, 1764**</center>

Entry: 044

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / In TWO

VOLUMES. / By DAVID HUME, Esq.

VOL. I. / CONTAINING / Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary. / A NEW

EDITION

Contents: Same as 1758 edition, with (3) Of Impudence and Modesty, (6) Of

Love and Marriage, and (7) Of the Study of History removed.

VOL. II. / CONTAINING / An ENQUIRY concerning HUMAN /

UNDERSTANDING. / An ENQUIRY concerning the PRINCIPLES of /

MORALS. / AND / THE NATURAL HISTORY of RELIGION. / A NEW

EDITION

Contents: Same as 1758 edition. Index for both volumes, pp. 487-503..

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; / AND / A.

Kincaid and A. Donaldson, in Edinburgh. / MDCCLXIV

Format: 8vo, 21cm. Vol. 1: 556pp; Vol. 2: 503pp.

Price: 12s bound[429]

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429 *London Chronicle* (24-31 May 1764), (2-5 June 1764); *Edinburgh Advertiser* (5-8 June 1764);
    Public Advtertiser (30 May 1764), (5-7 June 1764).

Production: 1000 copies; 68 sheets @ £1.10s each for £102. (May 1764)[430]

Notes: Announced in advertisements for the 1764 octavo edition of *A History of England*.[431] "Of Impudence and Modesty," "Of Love and Marriage," and "Of the Study of History" withdrawn from Vol. 1.

January, 1767

Entry: 045

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / In TWO VOLUMES. / By DAVID HUME, Esq.

VOL. 1 / Containing / Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary. / A NEW EDITION

VOL. II. / CONTAINING / An ENQUIRY concerning HUMAN / UNDERSTANDING. / An ENQUIRY concerning the PRINCIPLES of / MORALS. / AND / THE NATURAL HISTORY of RELIGION. / A NEW EDITION

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; / AND / A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, in Edinburgh. / MDCCLXVII.

Format: 8vo, 21cm; Vol. 1: 556pp; Vol. 2: 503pp.

Contents: Same as 1764 edition. Index for both volumes, Vol. II, pp. 487-503.

Price: 12s bound

Production: 1000 copies; 67 sheets @ £1.10s each for £100.10s. (Sept.

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430 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 141.
431 *London Evening Post* (3-31 May 1764), (3-5 June 1764).

1766)[432]

Notes: Announced in advertisements for *A History of England* in eight volumes

octavo.[433]

<div align="center">

Early, 1768[434]

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Entry: 046

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / IN TWO

VOLUMES. / By DAVID HUME, Esq.

VOL. 1 / Containing / ESSAYS, MORAL, POLTICAL, and LITERARY. / A

NEW EDITION.

VOL. II. / CONTAINING / An ENQUIRY concerning HUMAN /

UNDERSTANDING. / An ENQUIRY concerning the PRINCIPLES of /

MORALS. / AND / THE NATURAL HISTORY of RELIGION. / A NEW

EDITION.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for A. Millar, / A. Kincaid, J. Bell, and

A. Donaldson, in Edinburgh. / And sold by T. Cadell, in the Strand. /

MDCCLXVIII

Format: 4to, 30cm, Vol. 1, 582pp.,Vol. II, 524pp.

Contents: Same as 1764 edition. Contains engraving of Hume by Simon François

Ravenet based on drawing by John Donaldson. Index for both volumes, Vol. II,

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432 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 150.
433 Advertised together with his *History* in *London Evenig Post* (24-7 January 1767), (30 April –
    2 May 1767).
434 There are no known devoted advertisements for this edition. Having been printed in January
    of 1768, it likely appeared by the following Spring.

pp. 509-524.

Price: £ 1.16s bound[435]

Production: 500 copies; 139 1/2 sheets @ 15s for £ 104.12s.6d total. (Jan. 1768)[436]

Notes: Deluxe quarto printed on royal paper. Hume was unhappy with Millar for printing such an expensive and ostentatious edition, writing to Strahan, "I wish Millar had savd the Expence of this Magnificent Quarto Edition, which can serve to no purpose but to discredit the Octavo; and make the sale, if possible, still more slow."[437]

May, 1771

Entry: 047

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / By DAVID HUME, Esq; / IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I., / CONTAINING / ESSAYS, MORAL, POLITICAL, and LITERARY. / A NEW EDITION

Contents: Same as Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Part I, in the 1764 edition, with (13) Of Avarice removed.

VOL. II. / CONTAINING / ESSAYS, MORAL, POLITICAL, and LITERARY. /

435 *London Evening Post* (27 February – 1 March 1770); *General Evening Post* (3-6 March 1770); *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (5 March 1770).
436 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 151.
437 Hume to William Strahan, 5 June 1770, HL, Letter 445.

A NEW EDITION

Contents: Same as Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Part II, in the 1764 edition.

VOL. III. / CONTAINING / An ENQUIRY concerning HUMAN / UNDERSTANDING. / AND / A DISSERTATION on the PASSIONS. / A NEW EDITION.

Contents: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding; A Dissertation on the Passions.

VOL. IV. / CONTAINING / An ENQUIRY concerning the PRINCIPLES / of MORALS; / AND / The NATURAL HISTORY of RELIGION. / A NEW EDITION.

Contents: An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals; The Natural History of religion; Index to all four volumes, pp. 355-373.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for T. Cadell (Successor to Mr. Millar) / in the Strand; and / A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, at Edinburgh. / MDCCLXX

Format: 12mo, 17cm. Vol. 1: 329pp; Vol. 2, 376pp; Vol. 3: 298pp; Vol. 4, 373pp.

Price: 14s bound[438]

Production: 1000 copies; 87 1/2 sheets @ £1.3s for £100 total. (October 1770)

Notes: "Of Avarice" removed from Vol. I First edition published by T. Cadell alone after the death of Andrew Millar on 8 June 1768. First duodecimo edition to name *A Dissertation on the Passions* on the title page.

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438 *Gazeteer and New Daily Advertiser* (9 May 1771).

Entry: 048

Title: On Impudence and Modesty, On Love and Marriage, and On Avarice

Format: Reprints in book

Publication: The Beauties of the Magazines, and other Periodical Works, Selected for a Series of Years: Consisting of Essays, Moral Tales, Characters, and other Fugitive Pieces, in Prose; By the most eminent Hands; viz. Colman, Goldsmith, Murphy, Smollett, Thornton, &c. Also Some Essays by D. Hume, Esq; Not inserted in the late Editions of his Works: With many other miscellaneous Productions of equal Merit. None of these Pieces are to be found in the Works that pass under the Names of the abover Authors. In two volumes. (London: Printed for Richardson and Urquhart, Under the Royal Exchange, MDCCLXXII).

Notes: Preceded by "The Three following essays are written by David Hume, Esq; but not inserted in the late Edition of his Works." These essays were printed in the first two volumes of *Essays, Moral and Political* but later withdrawn.

May, 1772[440]

Entry: 049

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / In TWO

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439 Reviews appeared in the *Monthly Review* (April 1772), p. 462 and the *Critical Review* (May 1772), p. 414.
440 Hume to Thomas Cadell, 3 June 1772, HL, Letter 262.

VOLUMES. / By DAVID HUME, Esq;

VOL. 1. / Containing / ESSAYS, MORAL, POLTICAL, and LITERARY. / A
NEW EDITION.

VOL. II. / CONTAINING / An ENQUIRY concerning HUMAN /
UNDERSTANDING; / A DISSERTATION on the PASSIONS; / An ENQUIRY
concerning the PRINCIPLES / of MORALS; / AND / THE NATURAL
HISTORY of RELIGION. / A NEW EDITION.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand: and / A.
Kincaid, and A. Donaldson, at Edinburgh. / MDCCLXXII.

Format: 8vo, 21cm, Vol. 1, 563pp.,Vol. II, 533pp.

Contents: Same as 1771 edition. Index for both volumes, Vol. II, pp. 517-533.

Price: 12s[441]

Production: 1,000 copies; 69 1/2 sheets @ £1.10s for £104.5s total.
(November 1771)

Notes: First octavo edition to name *A Dissertation on the Passions* on the title
page.

<u>**January, 1777**</u>

Entry: 050

Title: The Life of David Hume, Esq.; Written by himself

Format: Presented as reprint in magazine

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[441] *London Chronicle* (25-27 February 1773); *General Evening Post* (30 March – 1 April 1773).

Publication: Scots Magazine, January 1777, Vol. 39, p. 1-7

Contents: Both parts of *The Life of David Hume, Esq.*: "My own Life" and Adam Smith's "Letter to William Strahan."

Notes: While presented as a reprint, this is the first appearance of *The Life of David Hume*, *Esq.* William Strahan printed 2,000 copies in February of 1777 then sent "some of them to distribute among your Friends" to John Home via a ship to Leith.[442] The text appears to have reached the editors of Scots Magazine and been printed before official publication.

March, 1777

Entry: 051

Title: THE / LIFE / OF / DAVID HUME, Esq. / WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / PRINTED FOR W. STRAHAN; and / T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND. / MDCCLXXVII.

Format: 8vo, 16cm, 62pp.

Contents: Strahan's address to readers; My Own Life; Letter from Adam Smith, LL.D. to William Strahan, Esq.

Price: 1s. 6d.

Production: 2,000 copies; 4 1/2 sheets @ £ 1.8s for £ 6.6s total. (February 1777)[443]

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442 BL MS 48815 fol. 21. William Strahan to John Home, 12 February 1777, NLS MS 23158 fol. 236.
443 BL MS Add. 48800, fol. 21.

Notes: Available "adorned with a medallion of the author, elegantly engraved."[444]

Entry: 052

Title: My Own Life

Format: Reprint in newspaper

Publication: London Chronicle, March 11-13, 1777, Vol. 41, No. 3162, p. 244-245

Notes: Reprint of first half of text with opening comment.

Entry: 053

Title: My Own Life

Format: Third-person paraphrase in magazine

Publication: Critical Review, March 1777, Vol. 43, p. 222-227

Contents: Includes extended quotations and some commentary.

Entry: 054

Title: My Own Life

Format: Reprint in magazine

Publication: London Review, March 1777, Vol. 5, p. 198-205

Contents: Includes all of "My Own Life" except first paragraph; includes extensive commentary.

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444 *London Chronicle* (15 February 1777); *London Evening Post* (11-13 March 1777); *Public Advertiser* (12 March 1777); *Gazetteer and Daily Advertiser* (14 March 1777); *Public Advertiser* (15 March 1777). "With a head of the author" in smaller advertisements from 12 March onward.

Entry: 055

Title: My Own Life

Format: Reprint in magazine

Publication: Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement, March 13, 1777, Vol. 35, p. 353-357

Notes: Without first paragraph

Entry: 056

Title: My Own Life

Format: Third-person paraphrase in magazine

Publication: Monthly Review, March 1777, Vol. 56, p. 206-213

Contents: Includes extended quotations and extensive commentary.

Notes: Heavy editorialized – features serenity of death and remark about Christians.

<u>May, 1777</u>

Entry: 057

Title: THE / LIFE / OF / DAVID HUME, Esq. / WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / PRINTED FOR W. STRAHAN; and / T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND. / MDCCLXXVII.

Format: 8vo, 16cm, 62pp.

Contents: Strahan's address to readers; My Own Life; Letter from Adam Smith,

LL.D. to William Strahan, Esq.

Price: 1s. 6d.

Production: 1,000 (April 1777)

Notes: As with the first edition, available "adorned with a medallion of the

author" in larger advertisements or "a head of the author" in smaller

advertisements.[445]

Unknown, 1777

Entry: 058

Title: TWO / ESSAYS.

Printer and Seller: LONDON. / MDCCLXXVII

Format: 8vo, 16cm, 41pp.

Contents: Of Suicide; Of the Immortality of the Soul.

Price: 5s[446]

Notes: Two essays originally printed in 1756 for inclusion in *Five Dissertations*

but repressed before publication. Text contains many errors.

February, 1778

445 *London Chronicle* (13 May 1777); *General Evening Post* (15 May 1777).
446Specified on the book's title page.

Entry: 059

Title: ESSAYS / AND / TREATISES / ON / SEVERAL SUBJECTS. / In TWO VOLUMES. / By DAVID HUME, Esq;

VOL. 1. / Containing / ESSAYS, MORAL, POLTICAL, and LITERARY. / A NEW EDITION.

Contents: Same as 1771 edition, with (5) Of the Origin of Government added.

VOL. II. / CONTAINING / An ENQUIRY concerning HUMAN / UNDERSTANDING; / A DISSERTATION on the PASSIONS; / An ENQUIRY concerning the PRINCIPLES / of MORALS; / AND / THE NATURAL HISTORY of RELIGION. / A NEW EDITION.

Contents: Same as 1771 edition, with "Advertisement" added and "Of Self-Love" moved to an Appendix at the conclusion of an *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Index for both volumes, pp. 511-527.

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / Printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand: and / A. Donaldson, and W. Creech, at Edinburgh. / MDCCLXXVII.

Format: 8vo, 22cm, Vol. 1, 571pp.,Vol. II, 527pp.

Price: 12s[447]

Production: 1,000 copies; 69 1/2 sheets @ £1.10s each for £104.5s total. (September 1777)[448]

Notes: Reflects Hume's final revisions. "Of the Origin of Government" added to

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447 *Public Advertiser* (5 February 1778) *Edinburgh Advertiser* (3-7 April 1778).
448 BL Add. MS 48800, fol. 21.

Vol. 1. "Advertisement" added to Vol. II. "Of Self-love" moved to an Appendix following *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals.*

<div align="right">**[Mid-] 1779**</div>

Entry: 060

Title: DIALOGUES / CONCERNING / NATURAL RELIGION. / BY / DAVID HUME, Esq.

Printer and Seller: Anonymous; Commissioned by David Hume, nephew.

Format: 8vo, 23cm, 152pp.

Notes: First edition with small circulation. Closely reflected Hume's original manuscript.

<div align="right">**July, 1779**</div>

Entry: 061

Title: DIALOGUES / CONCERNING / NATURAL RELIGION. / BY / DAVID HUME, Esq. / THE SECOND EDITION

Printer and Seller: LONDON: / MDCCLXXIX

Format: 8vo, 23cm, 264pp.

Price: 4s sewed[449]

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449 *London Evening Post* (17 - 24 July 1779).

General Bibliography

Manuscripts

David Hume. A codicil to the Final Will of David Hume. NLS 23123.

———. Corrections to the *Edinburgh Review* (1755-6). NLS MS Acc. 10860.

———. A Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion. NLS MS 23162.

———. The Final Will of David Hume. NLS MS 23159.

———. Proof sheets for *Five Dissertations*. NLS MS 509.

Minutes of the Literary Society in Glasgow College. UG MS Murray 505.

Minutes of the Poker Club. UE MS Dc. 5. 126.

Minutes of the Select Society. NLS Adv. MS 23.1.1

Adam Smith. Letter to William Strahan, c. October 1776. NLS MS 23158, f. 41.

William Strahan, et al. The Ledgers and Business Papers of William Strahan. BL
  Add. MS 48800

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