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HUME ON CURING SUPERSTITION

In the first volume of his masterful treatment of the Enlightenment Peter Gay says that "David Hume proclaimed philosophy the supreme, indeed the only, cure for superstition."¹ The context suggests that Hume had great "confidence" in this project and that he shared Diderot's view of the philosopher as the apostle of truth who would teach all mankind. Certainly Hume, in common with his philosophical compatriots, thought that superstition was a great evil. He may also have thought that philosophy was the best weapon with which to oppose superstition. But did he think that it was a "cure" and that the philosopher was a pathfinder for a new and glorious dawn of universal enlightenment? He seems rather to have held a somewhat more modest and circumspect view of what philosophy can accomplish by way of liberating humanity from superstition than did some of his more optimistic contemporaries -- a view worthy of closer examination.² The purpose of this paper is to explain just what he did think by examining those texts where he writes about the curative virtues of philosophy. So that any shifts in Hume's views may be more apparent, the relevant passages will be considered according to their chronological order.

In the conclusion to Book I of the Treatise (1738) Hume characterizes the results of his reasoning as a "forelorn solitude" in which he is separated, not only from the crowd, and from "metaphysicians, logicians, mathematicians, and even theologians," but also from philosophers, who, like all others, follow the inconsistent dictates of imagination in alternating between belief in the continual existence of sensible matter and the

reliability of causal reasoning, which teaches us that sensible objects are in us, rather than in external nature (T 265-6). His own philosophical reflections have led to the realization that even the causal "connexion, tie, or energy lies merely in themselves," as certainly as do sensed qualities. Thus the philosophical quest itself, which seeks a knowledge of "the ultimate and operating principle ... which resides in the external object," is revealed as a contradictory or meaningless enterprise. We are left with a "very dangerous dilemma, whichever way we answer it," whose horns are precisely superstition and philosophy. That is, we may either "assent to every trivial suggestion of the fancy ... often contrary to each other ... [which will] lead us into such errors, absurdities, and obscurities, that we must at last become ashamed of our credulity;" or we may "take a resolution to reject all the trivial suggestions of the fancy, and adhere to the understanding" which will lead us to the conclusion that there is "not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or common life" (T 266-8).

He believes that philosophy has come to an impasse which he does not know how to escape, and which we commonly deal with by simply ceasing to think about the problem, finding ourselves "absolutely and necessarily determined to live, and talk, and act like other people in the common affairs of life" (T 269). Observation of the actual effects of philosophy upon conduct warrants the conclusion that "refined reflections have little or no influence upon us," excepting, of course, for that brief time in which those reflections leave us quite agitated and confounded by our inability to provide answers to the questions which most trouble us.

Philosophy is here characterized, not as a cure for superstition, but as an equal and opposite mental disposition, whose reflections ultimately undermine its own rational credentials, so that they seem no more valid than those of superstition. He does indeed resort to the therapeutic metaphor, but only to make nature the physician which "cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium" by applying that "carelessness and inattention" which he earlier identified as that which "alone can afford us any remedy" for philosophical despair (T 218). So philosophy is itself in need of the cure afforded by amusement and the various "common affairs of life" with which gentlemen occupy themselves. When engaged in those pursuits, philosophy seems individually and socially useless, in effect "an abuse of time" (T 270). If one returns to it, as Hume does, it is notably not because philosophy is able to provide any answer to these "sentiments of ... spleen and indolence;" it is only that one's mood has changed and one now feels like doing philosophy, being in "a serious good-humour'd disposition." He characterizes the process -- and the emphasis is his -- as a movement from solitary "reverie" to being "inclin'd" to reflect on the principles underlying the various opinions encountered in reading and conversation, to experiencing an ambition to become famous for his contribution to learned discourse, so that "I feel I shou'd be a loser in point of pleasure" in attending to "any other business or diversion." The justification for doing philosophy is not logical but psychological: "if we are philosophers, it ought only to be upon sceptical principles, and from an inclination, which we feel to the employing ourselves after that manner" (T 271, 270).

If we adhere to the disease metaphor, Hume takes both superstition and philosophy to be chronic maladies, two different symptoms of a common pathogenic agent, namely that curiosity for uncovering springs and principles which makes it "almost impossible for the mind of man to rest, like those of beasts, in that narrow circle of objects, which are the subject of daily conversation and action" (T 271). True, he "does not scruple to give ... [philosophy] the preference to superstition of every kind or denomination;" but the reason for that preference is not that philosophy can eliminate the rival illness. It is more a matter of certain relative practical advantages than of any decisive victory of philosophical reasoning over superstitious beliefs. Superstition strays further from the consciousness of common life in that imagination is not restricted to inventing causes for phenomena (for Hume, superstition just is assent to our imaginations, unchecked by the criterion of their being reasonable explanations for common sensible experience). Doubtless here is an echo of Epicurus' diagnosis that many deleterious consequences for mental peace stem from gratuitous beliefs about the supernatural. Further, superstition "arises naturally and easily from the popular opinions of mankind" (T 271) and thus produces stronger convictions which are more likely to lead to changes in conduct. Philosophy requires more careful cultivation and its conclusions are less readily connected to our passions. Philosophy, if true, is only an explanation of our common experience, and so cannot possibly cause any strong "sentiments" which would disrupt our lives. Even false philosophy, because its specious hypotheses are relatively abstract and unexciting, does not normally "interrupt the course

of our natural propensities." Hume drives home his point with an often-quoted summation: "Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous" (T 272).

That philosophy is practically useless has often been a point of criticism against it; for the Hume of the Treatise that trait is its virtue.³ It cannot cure superstition, except in the trivial sense that one who philosophizes avoids superstition just to that extent, since both philosophy and superstition are alternative responses to the same permanent tendency in human nature to inquire imaginatively into the causes of things. Which one we practice, if either, is an accident of personal temperament.⁴ Philosophy's value is less a matter of what it does than of what it does not do. It disrupts our lives less than superstition, because its practice can be relatively disinterested, which is, in the long run, conducive to maximizing both social utility and personal pleasure. But the happiest state may be to be free of both ailments. Hume expresses his approval of the many honest English gentlemen who do not trouble their heads with either superstition or philosophy, thinking only of "those objects, which are every day expos'd to their senses."⁵ It is clear that Hume's preference, although it aims at making an important contribution to our understanding of human nature, is ultimately grounded, not on rational superiority nor on the idea of progress, but on an essentially Epicurean rationale.

But since superstitious persons need not accept the rationale, this defense of philosophy is circular. Pascal is witness that a case for commitment to supernatural goals can be made on the same commonsense ground of self-interest to which

Hume appeals. Disruption of the course of common life will be believed to be disadvantageous only by those who, like Hume, have either philosophically justified or uncritically assumed the primacy of that life over, say, eternal life hereafter. To recognize philosophy's non-interference with our natural propensities as a genuine advantage one must already be a philosopher, or at least an "honest gentleman" with some newly-awakened curiosity. The only conditions which determine an initial orientation towards either the philosophical or the superstitious mode of thought are temperament and "the popular opinions of mankind." If, in the end, true philosophy leads one to leave "all establish'd opinions" (T 265) the paradox is sharpened: philosophy may disrupt our lives less, but it fails to satisfy that curiosity about the causes of things which was the motive for its pursuit. It leads to doubt, whereas its competitor provides the satisfaction of conviction. There really is no sound philosophical case for doing philosophy which could reinforce an initial temperamental preference for it, so the sole motive to philosophize remains prejudice or accidental inclination towards such activity.

In contrast to the personal tone of the Treatise, Hume's essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm," (1741) displays a greater appreciation of the social dimensions of the problem of enlightenment. It also discusses the topic in terms which strongly suggest the possibility of a cure for superstition. Both superstition and enthusiasm are characterized as "corruptions of true religion" which arise only when "the mind of man" is subject to certain influences. When circumstances are such as to evoke hope, pride, warm imagination, and presumptuousness, the ignorant are apt to be carried

away by "raptures, transports, and surprising flights of fancy." When circumstances are such as to evoke fear, weakness, and melancholy, the ignorant imagine all sorts of terrible and unseen powers who must be appeased in a variety of "absurd or frivolous" practices "which either folly or knavery recommends to a blind and terrified credulity."⁶ As these consequences ensue only when people are in "such a state of mind," and as ignorance is the common prerequisite of both corruptions, they might be supposed to be abnormal conditions contingent upon certain cultural, even individual, accidents. If so, they should be avoidable or correctable by teaching or whatever techniques might promote some more cheerful and circumspect "taste and disposition." Would not philosophy seem the ideal means of achieving such results, especially to someone aware, not only of the benefits of the modern experimental philosophy, but also of the practical emphasis of the Hellenistic and Roman philosophical traditions?

Indeed, Hume does here write that there is "nothing but philosophy able entirely to conquer ... [the] unaccountable terrors" which motivate superstitious persons. He also writes of Judaism and Roman Catholicism that they are "the most barbarous and absurd Superstitions that have yet been known in the World...;" and in the 1748 and later editions "most unphilosophical" is substituted for "the most barbarous" of the first three editions. Surely this -- which I suspect is the primary evidence for Gay's pronouncement -- strongly suggests that philosophy is an efficacious treatment for superstition. A closer look at the context of this reference to philosophy's ability to conquer unaccountable terrors does not support so sanguine an outlook. His point is that superstition is an accepted social institution just

because there is nothing but philosophy which can conquer the mind's propensity to believe in terrifying invisible powers. The presumption is that philosophy is a possibility only for a few and that its effects are felt only within those few philosophizing individuals. The mass of society therefore cannot avoid the fears to which imagination gives birth and will continue to deal with them in familiar ways, including direct appeals to the presumed supernatural agents. Consequently, almost all religions have priests, whose essential function is intercession with the frightening powers. Hume takes their prevalence as an index of superstition. If so, it must equally be a sign of philosophy's social impotence.

In a companion essay entitled "The Sceptic," by far the longest of a set of verbal tableaux on the various Hellenistic schools of philosophy, and no doubt the one with which Hume most sympathizes, the general uselessness of philosophy is stressed even more. "The generality of men ... are actuated by their natural propensities ... [and] effectually excluded from all pretensions to philosophy" (EMPL #3, 221). 'Philosophical devotion' is said to be "like the enthusiasm of a poet, ... the transitory effect of high spirits, great leisure, a fine genius, and a habit of study and contemplation." Further, even granted all these conditions, the authority of philosophy in the lives of the philosophers themselves is "very weak and limited." Philosophy's apparent successes are just those cases where it coincides with natural inclination, for the "reflections of philosophy are too subtile and distant to take place in common life, or eradicate any affection" (EMPL 224-5). Entirely conceptual philosophical objects, such as the purified concept

of God presented by natural religion, "cannot long actuate the mind, or be of any moment in life." Hume's sceptic insists that

To render the passion of continuance, we must find some method of affecting the senses and imagination, and must embrace some historical, as well as philosophical account of the divinity. Popular superstitions and observances are even found to be of use in this particular (EMPL 220).

Evidently Hume's position is that philosophical critique can banish superstitious belief only in those rare individuals who enjoy the opportunity and disposition to philosophizing, and then only episodically. Although he now seems more cognizant of the problems of how a permanent disposition to philosophize might be acquired and how a cultural climate favorable to philosophy might be established, philosophy per se remains an individualistic phenomenon. It can affect the broader culture only by incorporating itself into some important tradition of popular religious belief. Such a bargain doubtless seems to be selling one's philosophical soul to the Devil; but, given Hume's view of philosophy's practical effect, it is perhaps the only option. His predicament seems identical to that of Plato, for whom philosophy struggles against rhetoric and the popular arts as, for Hume, it struggles against superstition. Plato nevertheless finds various rhetorical devices, including the telling of "noble lies," requisite for the dissemination and maintenance of correct moral sentiments, even among the intellectual and physical elite of society. Similarly, for Hume, philosophy can have general influence on a society's dominant system of beliefs only by making use of unphilosophical

techniques, including superstitious beliefs and rituals.

Perhaps the danger inherent in this alliance is what leads Hume to reconsider the doctrine of the innocuousness of philosophy. In any event, philosophy is depicted as a more potent force in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding (1748), which mentions both harmful and beneficial social consequences. In Section XI, "Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State," the "I" character in the dialogue entertains the idea that a cultural climate hostile to philosophy ("the inclemency of the seasons, and those harsh winds of calumny and persecution") might be "her offspring, who, after allying with superstition, separates himself entirely from the interest of his parent, and becomes her most inveterate enemy and persecutor" (E 133). His dramatic Epicurean-sympathizing "friend" responds that the real causes are "passion and prejudice," although it is not clear how this gets philosophy off the hook, unless one presupposes not only the doctrine of the Treatise that philosophy does not arouse strong feelings, but also that philosophy cannot even provoke them. The "friend" proceeds to represent Epicurus in a speech designed to "satisfy, not the mob of Athens, ... but the more philosophical part of his audience" that speculative philosophy is "entirely indifferent to the peace of society and security of government" (E 135). The situation is highly ironical, whether intentionally so or not. His argument is that, since we reason from effects to causes, we are not entitled to attribute to God any attribute not justified by observation. However, were his auditors to adopt this principle, it clearly would have considerable effect on their lives. The "I," who eventually espouses the still more radical

thesis that causes cannot be known just from their effects at all, sees the inconsistency and responds,

You conclude, that religious⁷ doctrines and reasonings can have no influence on life because they ought to have no influence; never considering, that men reason not in the same manner you do, but draw many consequences from the belief of a divine Existence, and suppose that the Deity will inflict punishments on vice, and bestow rewards on virtue, beyond what appear in the ordinary course of nature. Whether this reasoning of theirs be just or not, is no matter. Its influence on their life and conduct must still be the same. And, those, who attempt to disabuse them of such prejudices, may, for aught I know, be good reasoners, but I cannot allow them to be good citizens and politicians; since they free men from one restraint upon their passions, and make the infringement of the laws of society, in one respect, more easy and secure (E 147).

The rather clear implication is that a superstitious belief in a providential deity may be advantageous for "the peace of civil society." It is equally implied that, although philosophy might to some degree cure superstition among those capable of comprehending the arguments, this would be an unwise thing to do. Nevertheless, the "I" as well as the "friend" defends toleration of all philosophical discussion, but its ineffectiveness is only one, and not the major, emphasis. Three grounds are cited: (1) "there is no enthusiasm among philosophers," so they won't themselves be troublesome, (2) "their doctrines are not very alluring to the people," so they will not provoke much trouble, and (3) proscription of philosophical work could lead to censoring scientific and other types of activity in

which "the generality of mankind are more deeply interested and concerned" (loc. cit.).

There is a prima facie contradiction between ground (2), the weakened ineffectiveness claim, and the suggestion that philosophical doctrines would have untoward social effects, at least in a society where the people do not always reason justly. Is philosophy harmless and its proscription disadvantageous, or is philosophy potentially subversive of morality by removing supernatural moral sanctions? The inconsistency can be removed if we understand Hume to be presupposing an aristocratic notion of philosophy. The elite few who are sufficiently rational and self-controlled that they can handle philosophy without being morally damaged can safely be permitted its free exercise. What is to be guarded against is popularization of philosophy, any speeches by Epicurus to the Athenian people, who might then, mistakenly, try to apply philosophy to conventional beliefs, only to find that the cure is worse than the disease. If the masses are intellectually incapable of discovering sound prudential reasons for being law-abiding, a philosophical critique which undermines superstitious belief in, say, divine retribution, may endanger the common welfare just because it liberates the citizens from anxiety. This seems to assume that destructive critique is more readily popularized than is constructive explanation. If true, as seems likely, philosophy may be, like some medicines, a dangerous remedy, to be used with utmost caution.

Other sections of the Enquiry manifest still further re-thinking of the issue, notably in more sharply discriminating the domain within which philosophy is directly effective. Section I, "Of the Different Species of Philosophy," argues that

philosophy, "if carefully cultivated by several," would eventually influence the whole society by promoting "a similar correctness" in other endeavors.⁸ This influence is indirect, however; and philosophy, or at least the investigation of the nature of the human understanding, is presented less as an alternative to superstition than as a struggle to liberate ourselves from "deceitful philosophy," i.e. prejudiced reasoning which is the handmaiden of some superstition rather than a sincere quest for truth. (A psychological explanation of Hume's change of emphasis, such as the supposition that it is occasioned by his desire to respond to philosophical critics who have attacked him, does nothing to alter the content of the new position.) He writes,

Accurate and just reasoning is the only catholic remedy, fitted for all persons and all dispositions; and is alone able to subvert that abstruse philosophy and metaphysical jargon, which, being mixed up with popular superstition, renders it in a manner impenetrable to careless reasoners, and gives it the air of science and wisdom (E 12).

Here philosophy does not attempt directly to conquer the unaccountable terrors of superstition but rather attacks the false philosophy which provides aid and comfort to superstition. Since every art must discriminate between sound practice and malpractice, it is hardly surprising that philosophy is able to expose philosophical malpractice. Unfortunately, false philosophical claims are probably more often due to valid reasoning from false assumptions than to faulty argumentation.

But Hume's new confidence extends beyond the philosophical housecleaning of exposing bad arguments to the possibility of real progress in determining true principles. He optimistically expresses the

hope that "philosophy, if cultivated with care, and encouraged by the attention of the public, may carry its researches still farther and discover, at least in some degree, the secret springs and principles, by which the human mind is actuated in its operations," at least if the enterprise is conducted -- echoing the "carelessness and inattention" phrase of the Treatise -- "with thorough care and attention" (E 14,15). The discovery of such true principles would expose the alleged principles of apologetic dogmatism as unwarranted assumptions, destroying its pretense to be 'science and wisdom.' If philosophy could, as Hume now predicts it could, "undermine the foundations of an abstruse philosophy, which seems to have hitherto served only as a shelter to superstition" (E 16), would superstition then die of exposure?

Alas, apparently not, or at least that is the view propounded in the Natural History of Religion (1757), in which superstition is said to arise naturally from the unavoidable circumstances of human existence. "There is a universal tendency among mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object, those qualities, with which they are familiarly acquainted," writes Hume (N 17). Couple this tendency with our ignorance about the true causes of the course of events which frighten or delight us, and imagining personal powers behind those events are inevitable. Reasoning may lead to replacing polytheism by theism, but as that is established only by involved arguments which the masses cannot appreciate, and since the causes of events remain unknown, the imagination shall ever substitute powers of the kinds experienced in ordinary life for any more abstract conception. As the representations of these gods are elaborated into

"grosser and more vulgar" conceptions, polytheism again provokes the critical thinking which leads to theism. "But so great is the propensity, in this alternate revolution of human sentiments, to return back to idolatry, that the utmost precaution is not able effectively to prevent it" (N 56). These two extremes are dialectically wedded in an eternal recurrence powered by the limitations of human understanding, the uncertainty of life, and the fertility of our imagination.

Because no superstition or religious belief is ever as firm as "that solid belief and persuasion, which governs us in the common affairs of life" (N 83), no particular theology can ever achieve an enduring niche in human consciousness.⁹ However, given the omnipresence of the conditions which provoke it, no philosophical reasoning, either epistemological or moral, will ever supplant superstition. The strongest condemnation philosophy can bring against a belief is that it is contradictory or against a practice that it is pointless and devoid of merit. As Hume sees it, these supposed defects are principle attractions of theological belief and of religious practice. The philosopher may show that a belief is absurd, but "all popular theology, especially the scholastic, has a kind of appetite for absurdity and contradiction" (N 70). The philosopher may show that a practice is "odious and burthensome," useless, even immoral; but the superstitious person embraces just that practice which "serves to no purpose in life, or offers the strongest violence to his natural inclinations," since he feels he must do something special or mysterious to appease God, and actions based on common morality are just what "he was bound to perform, and what many would have performed, were

there no god in the universe" (N 108). Of course, beliefs and practices do change, so that present believers find past practices absurd, but they have been replaced with others equally absurd. Indeed, were there to be a popular religion which preached only morality, "so inveterate are the people's prejudices, that for want of some other superstition, they would make the very attendance on these sermons the essentials of religion, rather than place them in virtue and good morals" (N 104-5).

This is certainly not an optimistic outlook. The Treatise view of philosophy and superstition as permanent alternative responses to human curiosity about the causes of events, between which individuals choose on the basis of sentiment rather than reason, seems to be retained in Hume's latest philosophical work. It is as if Hume were his own person exemplifying his claim that philosophy seldom escapes bondage to nature and habit, for this view looks very much like a variation on the Presbyterian predestinarianism which surrounded him. Those who heed the call of philosophy are precisely those who are dispositionally foreordained to do so. Whoever is truly of a superstitious bent of mind has his heart permanently hardened against philosophy so that every reason marshalled against his course of life makes it that much more meritorious -- credo quia absurdum est. The Enquiry does indeed proclaim that the philosopher may, with some modest hope of success, attack that false philosophy which defends superstitious belief. General enlightenment will remain unachievable nevertheless, since no amount of good reasoning can eliminate the natural conditions from which superstition will spring anew. Those famous lines with which Hume closes The Natural History of Religion -- "the whole is a riddle, an

aenigma, an inexplicable mystery" --, are to be read as the sentiments of one whose predisposition to philosophize makes it possible for him to escape into those "calm, though obscure, regions of philosophy." We must not suppose that he expects to persuade anyone not of his own temperament to accompany him.

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1. Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, Vol. I, The Rise of Modern Paganism (New York, 1966), p. 129. References to Hume's works in this paper will use the following abbreviations and be to the following editions:
 - T A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1888)
 - EMPL Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, ed. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose (New York, 1898)
 - E An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, Third Ed., rev. by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975).
 - N The Natural History of Religion, in Four Dissertations (London, 1757). Facsimile edition (New York, 1970).
2. Even the most enthusiastic evangelists of progress sometimes qualified their optimism. Arthur M. Wilson (Diderot [New York, 1972], p. 576) calls attention to a letter to M^{me} de Maux in which Diderot expresses doubt that their generation is better than that of their forefathers, despite its incontestably greater knowledge. Renée Waldinger has documented Condorcet's doubts about the inevitability of progress, which apparently extended even to wondering whether the institution of the priesthood, so inimical to enlightenment, might not be an unavoidable consequence of something in human nature ("Condorcet: the Problematic Nature of Progress," in Leonora Cohen Rosenfield, ed., Condorcet Studies I (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1984), 117-129). Nevertheless, their concept of

philosophy seems significantly more democratic than Hume's and they regard universal enlightenment as a real possibility, while Hume does not.

3. Wade Robison claims that "'true philosophy' recognizes that we can change neither the world nor the essential features of ourselves, and its insight, what makes it the true philosophy rather than the false, is that, having recognized that, it accepts the consequence: there is nothing philosophers can do" ("David Hume: Naturalist and Meta-sceptic," in Donald W. Livingston & James T. King, eds., Hume: A Re-evaluation [New York, 1976], p. 44). I rather see what Robison gives as a characterization of true philosophy as a characterization of philosophy generally, which separates it from superstition. At least this is true of the Treatise, although a somewhat different attitude towards false philosophy is found in the Enquiry.
4. A comparison to Plato is irresistible. Philosophy or dialectic is opposed to the more popular arts of poetry and rhetoric, although they alike rest on the common foundation of human linguistic ability. Philosophy is constrained because it restricts itself to those objects which satisfy reason, while its competitors can embroider freely on the materials of sensory experience. However, unlike Hume in the Treatise, Plato thinks philosophy would have revolutionary effects on conduct, because he believes that much of the established conduct which Hume accepts as inherent in human nature is actually an artifice of a pernicious culture.
5. In Part IV, Section III, treating of the ancient variety of false philosophy, Hume expresses similar sentiments about the ultimate consequences of their teaching: "By this means these philosophers set themselves at ease, and arrive at last, by an illusion, at the same indifference, which the people attain by their stupidity, and true philosophers by their moderate scepticism." All roads lead to the same goal, but some routes are more agreeable than others.
6. Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Essay X.
7. The "friend" speaking for Epicurus has just identified all religion as a species of philosophy.

8. E 10. The claim is that it will "bestow a similar correctness on every art and calling;" but probably this is not to be taken literally but in terms of an aristocratic prejudice for the arts and callings of gentlemen. The only examples Hume gives are politics, law, government, and the military.
9. As previously noted, Hume affirms this same condition of philosophy. Should he not then draw the same conclusion for philosophy as he does for theology? Perhaps so, but I am not aware of any passage where he does.