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ROBERT PALTER

In a laudable effort to trace the roots of the racist ideas and practices that continue to plague our society, numerous scholars, during the past few decades, have undertaken to expose the racism and ethnocentrism of some of our most revered culture heroes. For American historians, favorite targets have been two of America's founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson;¹ for intellectual historians, favorite targets have been those two cynosures of the empiricist tradition, Locke and Hume.² Thus, for example, when the 250th anniversary of Jefferson's birth was commemorated at the University of Virginia in October 1992, one of the contributors, speaking on Jefferson and slavery, "brought a prosecutor's zeal to the conference...to the point where some scholars present wondered what he was hoping to accomplish."³ Similar zeal has been evident in some recent discussions of Hume's prejudices, with both Hume's philosophy and his moral character being vigorously—not to say, viciously—attacked. Thus, in John Immerwahr's discussion of Hume's racism we are told that Hume is "infamous as a proponent of philosophical racism" and that racism "seriously stains Hume[']s character."⁴ I take it that the phrase "philosophical racism" here should be read as the claim that at least some of Hume's central philosophical doctrines are logically implicated in his racism. Immerwahr never even attempts to sustain this claim, which few of Hume's detractors want to defend. Richard Popkin, for example, asserts that "I do not think that...Hume's racism...follows from his theory of knowledge."⁵ I shall say little more about

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this (to me) obviously fallacious claim. But Hume has also been accused of other forms of prejudice (ethnic and religious). What I intend doing is first to explore the context and character of Hume's racism and then to address the other charges against him; I shall also briefly explore Hume's analysis of prejudice as well as some of his personal experiences of prejudice in his own society. I write neither as advocate nor as prosecutor but to clarify the historical record, mostly by correcting some misstatements and by repairing some remarkable omissions and silences in the recent critiques by Hume's detractors.

Even someone quite familiar with Hume's major writings may be surprised, not that he held racist doctrines, but that he expressed any opinions about race at all. In Hume's voluminous writings there is apparently just a single passage which is definitely racist in its import; it consists of a long footnote in his essay, "Of National Characters." The essay itself first appeared in 1748 in two different editions of Hume's essays (*Three Essays* and *Essays Moral and Political* [3rd. ed.]); the two books were Hume's first publications under his own name. The footnote in question was added in a later edition of Hume's essays published in 1753. In the last edition of Hume's essays corrected in his lifetime (1776; posthumously published in 1777) there was a small but telling variant of the footnote.⁶ The two versions of the footnote differ only in the first two (out of seven) sentences:

I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation.

I am apt to suspect the negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation.⁷

It appears that, during the years between 1753 and 1776, Hume changed his mind about the relative capacities of the white and colored races. Recently, John Immerwahr has suggested that Hume's revision of the footnote may be plausibly interpreted as a response to criticism of his views on race by his fellow-Scotsman, James Beattie (1735–1803). This criticism occurs in the course of Beattie's self-styled "digression" on slavery in a book whose main aim is to refute the central doctrines of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*.⁸ In Beattie's rousing attack, Hume's philosophy is characterized as "supported...by sophistry so egregious, and often so puerile, that we can hardly conceive how even the author himself should be imposed upon by it."⁹ It was no doubt in response to this and similar remarks that Hume referred to Beattie as "a bigotted

silly Fellow."¹⁰ To which Immerwahr responds that "[A]t least on [race] Hume took Beattie quite seriously, and ironically it was Hume who was the bigot, not Beattie."¹¹ But the smartness of Immerwahr's riposte trades on an ambiguity in the term "bigotted," which was used in the eighteenth century primarily in religious or political contexts, and meant "obstinately and blindly attached to some creed, opinion, or party, and intolerant towards others";¹² the connotation of ethnic or racial prejudice seems to be quite recent (and perhaps peculiarly American?).¹³ Thus Beattie himself says "I glory in such bigotry," referring to his own belief in "those great and most essential articles of faith; the existence of a deity, infinitely wise, beneficent, and powerful; the certainty of a future state of retribution; and the divine authority of the gospel."¹⁴ Hume was certainly not bigoted in Beattie's sense!

In arguing against Hume's racism, Beattie singles out the high civilizations of Peru and Mexico as counterinstances to Hume's claim about the sparse accomplishments of colored peoples. As for Negro civilizations, Beattie stresses the paucity of reliable information in view of the fact that "[T]hese people write no histories."¹⁵ For Hume, of course, taking account of fresh evidence concerning the correlation between race and civilization would have been entirely in keeping with his empiricist philosophy. Furthermore, the substitution of "scarcely ever" for "never" in the later version of the footnote implies that Hume had come to allow that Negroes *might in fact have already created* "civilized nations." But Immerwahr will have none of this. For him, right from the start Hume's "real target was blacks rather than non-whites generally," and Beattie had in a way done Hume a favor by forcing him to express his racism in a more restricted and hence more defensible form: "Although Beattie's arguments did refute Hume's assertion of the inferiority of non-whites, they did not speak as directly against Hume's negative judgment of blacks."¹⁶

Immerwahr is so sure he knows Hume's mind on the issue of racism that he never even pauses to raise the question of why Hume chose to include a note on race in the later versions of his essay on national characters.¹⁷ The fullest account I know of the date and circumstances of composition of the essay is provided by Paul Chamley.¹⁸ Though Chamley's ultimate theme is how Hume's essay influenced Adam Smith's "classical universalism," he "begins with a detailed comparison of Montesquieu's and Hume's theories of national character. Briefly, Montesquieu sees national character as a function of *physical*—what we might today call "environmental"—causes (such as climate), while Hume insists on *moral*—what we today might call "socio-cultural"—causes (such as level of wealth or type of government). It is difficult to say exactly when Hume composed his essay, especially since the relevant correspondence has disappeared. Chamley argues that Hume probably wrote the essay in Turin sometime during the spring and summer of 1748 while on

a diplomatic mission to the continent. Since Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois* was first published in Geneva around the end of October 1748, Hume could not have read the book before he composed his own essay. On the other hand, "the theme of *L'Esprit des lois*, something of its contents, and its imminent publication, had been known in Turin for six months when Hume arrived there."¹⁹ Later, after Montesquieu had read Hume's "Of National Characters" (and sent Hume a copy of his own book), he wrote Hume, complimenting him on "a beautiful dissertation" (19 May 1749).²⁰ Hume replied, saying he had already read *L'Esprit des lois* in the autumn of 1748, which is highly unlikely, Chamley thinks, given the shortness of the time since the book's publication, Hume's diplomatic duties, the great length of the book, and the pooriness of Hume's French.²¹ Nevertheless, Chamley concludes that Hume's essay was "a *de facto* reply to *L'Esprit des lois*."²²

We must now look into the origin of Hume's footnote on race. The critical point seems to be that, after reading Montesquieu's book, "Hume may have been afraid of having come too close to Montesquieu's ideas on the continuity of the relationship between latitude and the behaviour of peoples," and hence took the opportunity, in the 1753 edition of his essays, "to point out a rift between the white race and the rest of mankind."²³ To spell this out: in the original text of "Of National Characters" Hume suggests that "there is some reason to think, that all the nations, which live beyond the polar circles or between the tropics, are inferior to the rest of the species, and are incapable of all the high attainments of the human mind."²⁴ (This implies, by the way—a point unaccountably missed by Hume's critics—that his racist footnote was no mere afterthought, but rather the further explication of a claim already present in the original text of his essay.) But such a claim puts Hume uncomfortably close to the theory of climatic determinism that he rejects, so he proceeds to cite the fact that the nations which occupy the more northerly and the more southerly reaches of the temperate zones do not appear to differ from one another in any systematic way attributable to climate (the characters of these nations are "very promiscuous," i.e., irregular or haphazard). It is this last assertion which Hume was eventually to annotate in order to furnish still further evidence that differences of climate do *not* produce moral (socio-cultural) differences (the alleged evidence being that these latter differences seem to persist "in so many countries and ages" and even when individuals move from non-temperate to temperate zones).²⁵

Summing up, then, I would say that Hume's discussion of human species must be recognized as scholarly in its motivation (he is not, for example, concerned to defend slavery).²⁶ The scholarship, though, is flawed, being based on what Hume himself should have recognized as some extremely weak inductions. Indeed, the first version of Hume's footnote (which holds all colored races to be inferior) seems contrary to the—admittedly, qualified—assertion in an earlier essay, of 1741, that "[I]n CHINA, there seems to be a

pretty considerable stock of politeness and science."²⁷ As for Negro "civilized nations," Hume must have taken for granted the absence of any convincing historical—especially written, documentary—evidence. On the other hand, Hume's critics have charged him with neglecting the evidence all around him concerning individual Negro achievement in his own society—which, if true, would certainly betray the presence of empirically baseless but somehow entrenched negative feelings about Negro capacity (not humanity). In empirical terms—though I am not at all confident these are the best terms for addressing issues of racial equality—it seems that really impressive instances of individual Negro intellectual achievement in England did not appear until the 1780s: "Ignatius Sancho, Ottobah Cugoano, and Olaudah Equiano...undoubtedly the three best-known Africans in eighteenth-century England" only became known as significant writers in the 1780s, with the publication of their respective books in 1782, 1787, and 1789; and furthermore, "there was no significant Black leadership or antislavery protest until the decade of the 1780s."²⁸ These conclusions tend to be confirmed by Peter Fryer's account of eighteenth-century Black intellectuals in Britain: apart from Phillis Wheatley (whose book of poems was published in London in 1773) and Sancho (who "was...taken up by London's fashionable literary and artistic circles" in the 1760s),²⁹ the main other individuals discussed by Fryer are Cugoano and Equiano. Hume, of course, died in 1776. There was, however, one accomplished Negro to whom Hume did refer—Francis Williams—though without naming him, in the last sentence of his racist footnote: "In JAMAICA, indeed, they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly."³⁰ Hume is not saying here (though it is all too easy to misread him) that Williams's (classical) learning amounted to mere parroting; on the other hand, the very introduction of a comparison with a parrot and perhaps even the deliberate withholding of a name he must have known are gratuitously insulting.³¹

To complete the picture of Hume's attitudes toward Blacks it must be noted that he opposed slavery. In recent discussions of Hume's racism, to my knowledge, only the latest (by Immerwahr) even mentions this fact; his comment, however, that "Hume's cruel remarks on race could perhaps be mitigated by his passionate opposition to slavery"³² seems to be introduced only to reject it. But at least Immerwahr cites (though without quotation or discussion) the relevant essay by Hume. In fact, Hume's views on slavery are, once again, found in just a single essay, "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations" (1752), the main thesis of which—rather shocking in the eighteenth century—is that population was smaller in antiquity than in modern times.³³ Slavery comes up because Hume's adversaries claimed that slavery led to

population growth.³⁴ Here is part of what Hume says about slavery:

The remains which are found of domestic slavery, in the AMERICAN colonies, and among some EUROPEAN nations, would never surely create a desire of rendering it more universal. The little humanity, commonly observed in persons, accustomed, from their infancy, to exercise so great authority over their fellow-creatures, and to trample upon human nature, were sufficient alone to disgust us with that unbounded dominion.³⁵

For Hume, I think we can safely assume, no conceivable type of behavior can be morally worse than that which tramples on (the slaves') "human nature";³⁶ but, for good measure, he also argues that slavery diminishes the humanity of the masters. Indeed, it is the latter claim which is more prominent, perhaps because Hume was adjusting his rhetoric to the likely prejudices of his readers.

To place Hume's views on slavery into proper historical perspective, it must be recalled that some eighteenth century anti-racist British thinkers either did not oppose slavery at all or did not propose to abolish it outright. (What Hume thought about the timing of abolition I have been unable to determine.) Consider Bishop Berkeley, for example, who is singled out by Bracken as a British philosopher who, unlike Hume, rejected racism, though he supported slavery.³⁷ (Bracken is partial to the philosophy of Berkeley—the "Irish Cartesian"—over the allegedly pernicious empiricism of Locke and Hume because only the latter, Bracken maintains, provides a conceptual basis for racist classifications of human beings.) There seem to be just a couple of statements by Berkeley on race and slavery. In a sermon of 1732 Berkeley castigates those who, owing to "an irrational Contempt of the Blacks, as Creatures of another Species," deny them "the Right to be instructed or admitted to the Sacraments."³⁸ From the context it is clear that Berkeley's principal concern is to convert Blacks to (his own variety of) Christianity. As for slavery, in "A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations" (1725), Berkeley argues that the planters' slaves "would only become better Slaves by being Christians," without so much as a hint that there is anything wrong with slavery. (Incidentally, Berkeley had three slaves of his own, whom he converted in Newport, Rhode Island).³⁹

As for Beattie, he goes out of his way to deny that he advocates the immediate freeing of all slaves. Rather, referring to the institution of slavery, Beattie suggests that "both to [the slave proprietors] and to the whole British empire, it might be so dangerous, as to be politically impossible, to overturn, all at once, an establishment so widely diffused, and of so long standing."⁴⁰ Another Scots critic of Hume's racism, James Ramsay (1733–1789), had first-

hand experience of slavery in the West Indies. As an Anglican clergyman, Ramsay hoped to educate and convert slaves; his efforts were bitterly opposed by the planter-masters in his parish. Ramsay had domestic slaves of his own, about whom he has this to say:

...in eighteen years, though they had been gradually increasing by births and purchase from ten to twenty in number, not one had died in his family, except infants during the period of nursing. In other respects he cannot boast greatly of his success.

...he possessed not a single slave on whom he could place dependence. And, had it not been for a white woman, whose employment was to watch them, and whose care he used, as others do correction, to keep them from dishonesty, he would have been at a loss how to have carried on house-keeping, without a degree of severity abhorrent to his temper.⁴¹

Ramsay makes some wise and humane remarks about the reasons for his failure at educating his slaves, but he was deeply disappointed. He eventually returned to England, and one can only guess at what happened to his slaves. Incidentally, Ramsay believed that enslavement was an appropriate punishment for "thieves and vagabond beggars."⁴² None of these details concerning Beattie and Ramsay are even hinted at by Hume's recent critics, perhaps because that would spoil the sharp contrast they wish to draw between a racist Hume and some of his anti-racist fellow-Scotsmen. Needless to say, I have no intention of disparaging in any way either Beattie's or Ramsay's admirable stance on racism; rather, I wish to convey a sense of some of the complexities historians face in studying racism and slavery in the eighteenth century.

I turn to the question of the influence of Hume's racism, which means, of course, the influence of the footnote in "Of National Characters." According to several historians, this influence was massive, with Hume's racist view cited over and over again by racists and anti-racists alike. Thus, Popkin writes that "Hume's racial views...had an enormous influence on racist and anti-racist thinkers for the next half-century"; Gates writes that "Hume's opinion on the subject [of racism], as we might expect, became prescriptive"; and Immerwahr writes that "[T]hroughout the early part of the nineteenth century, Hume's comment on race was widely quoted by racists and defenders of slavery and widely attacked by anti-racists."⁴³ I find it difficult to assess with any precision the degree of influence of Hume's racist footnote. One thing we can do is to count: from the researches of Jordan, Popkin, and Gates, I find eleven authors citing Hume's footnote, with six opposing and five supporting his opinion of Negroes. Here are the authors' names, with publication dates

of their books: opposing Hume—James Beattie (1770), James Ramsay (1784), Charles Crawford (1784), James McHenry (1791), Noah Webster (1793), Henri Grégoire (1808); supporting Hume—Immanuel Kant (1764), Samuel Estwick (1772), Anon (1773), Richard Nisbet (1773), Edward Long (1774). Eleven authors do not exactly amount to massive influence, given the flood of writings at the time on the subjects of race and slavery. For what it is worth, however, Popkin also cites Grégoire, presumably very knowledgeable in this regard, as asserting that “Hume and Jefferson [were] the leading spokesmen for the view that Negroes are intellectually and culturally inferior.”⁴⁴

There are several historical questions I would like to raise concerning the influence of Hume’s racist footnote. How, I cannot help wondering, was Hume’s notoriety as a skeptic and infidel related to the influence of what was, after all, a single, isolated racist pronouncement? David Brion Davis’s remark that “Hume had helped to make a defense of the African a defense of religion itself”⁴⁵ suggests the tantalizing conclusion that Hume’s racism might have had the effect of encouraging anti-racist views in the religiously committed! Also, I cannot help wondering if Hume’s views on slavery were ever cited. It is true that Hume’s expressed opposition to slavery takes up just a few paragraphs in a very long essay (by far Hume’s longest), but those paragraphs occur very close to the beginning of the essay.⁴⁶ Popkin points out that “Hume’s name is significantly missing in [Grégoire’s] list of over a hundred luminaries of the eighteenth century [who opposed slavery].”⁴⁷ But what exactly is the significance of Hume’s name not being on Grégoire’s list, given that Hume *did* oppose slavery? One gets the impression that some of Hume’s recent detractors are chiefly concerned to transform his image from *le bon David* to that of a thoroughgoing scoundrel.⁴⁸ I want to examine some of these further accusations against Hume.

Bracken, among others, has insisted on Hume’s deep involvement in British colonialism; Hume, he writes, “was a one-time British Under-Secretary of State, in effect for Colonial Affairs,” and again, Hume “was a senior administrator...involved in colonial affairs (as Under-Secretary of State).”⁴⁹ Bracken provides no documentation, and the (easily ascertainable) facts do not bear out his assertions. At the time of Hume’s employment as Under-Secretary of State—for just eleven months in 1767—there were two Secretaries of State, one for the Northern Department (dealing with Scottish affairs and, among foreign nations, with Germany, Holland, Scandinavia, Poland, and Russia), and one for the Southern Department (dealing with English and Irish affairs and, among foreign nations, with France, Switzerland, Italy, the Iberian peninsula, Turkey, and America). (It was only in 1768 that a separate Secretaryship for American affairs was established.) Hume was Under-Secretary in the Northern department, so that he had nothing to do with the American colonies; he had some acquaintances in the East India Company but his principal concerns seem to have centered on doing favors for his friends (in-

cluding churchmen) in Scotland. Hume was essentially a glorified clerk, his not very onerous duties consisting mainly of opening the mail and routing letters to the appropriate ministers. Occasionally, he drafted letters in which, however, he served "primarily as a subordinate carrying out the directions of his chief."⁵⁰ But not only was Hume no architect or administrator of British colonialism, he actually took a dim view of it, as indicated by his exclamation in a letter of 22 July 1768: "O! how I long to see America and the East Indies revolted totally & finally...."⁵¹

Next there is the question of Hume's alleged anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiments, to which both Popkin and Bracken allude. One piece of documentation is supposed to be the section in the *Treatise* on "unphilosophical probability," where he is discussing the influence of prejudice on inductive reasoning. What Hume says is this:

An *Irishman* cannot have wit, and a *Frenchman* cannot have solidity; for which reason, tho' the conversation of the former in any instance be visibly very agreeable, and of the latter very judicious, we have entertain'd such a prejudice against them, that they must be dunces or fops in spite of sense and reason. Human nature is very subject to errors of this kind; and perhaps this nation as much as any other.⁵²

Surely this passage does not make "Hume...prejudiced about the Irish,"⁵³ or we would have to say that he was also prejudiced about the French—a clear *reductio ad absurdum*, given his great admiration for France. In any case, Hume characterizes the beliefs in question as "errors"; clearly, he is not subscribing to these prejudices, he is just reporting them in order to make a point about unphilosophical probability. On the other hand, Hume is calling attention to a proclivity toward just such errors as something universal in human beings; not least, he slyly adds, among members of his own nation—who, of course, include his readers as well as himself. Popkin is quite right, then, to suggest that Hume's "explanation of how people can accept general rules that overrule their evidence..., might explain how Hume managed to ignore the counter-evidence to his own views about the inferiority of blacks."⁵⁴ But surely it is to Hume's credit that he has formulated a theory of prejudice which will account for his own prejudices? Instead of pursuing this promising but admittedly tricky line of thought, however, Popkin chooses to provide us with the unsurprising piece of information that "some of the best minds of all time" have been racists.⁵⁵ So, now we can add Hume to the list. Hume, himself, as we shall see, has more interesting things to say about prejudice and national stereotypes.

In support of his anti-Irish and anti-Catholic charges against Hume, Bracken refers us to David Berman's article on Hume's attitude toward the 1641 Irish Rebellion (also called "the Ulster Rising"). Berman relates how two

eighteenth century Irish historians, Charles O'Connor and John Curry, tried to persuade Hume to correct his account of the Rebellion (chap. 55) in later editions of his *History of England*. In 1764, a couple of years after that account had been published in the first complete edition of his *History*, Hume replied to O'Connor and Curry in a letter in which the "object" of the Rebellion—"liberty"—was "excused," but the "method of conducting the rebellion"—"one of the most violent efforts of barbarism and bigotry united"—"deserved the highest blame."⁵⁶ In subsequent editions Hume did slightly soften his account of the reported savagery of the Irish rebels and he also allowed that his figure of 40,000 victims might be exaggerated.⁵⁷ Recent historical research on the Rebellion confirms the grotesquely irrational character of the rebels' behavior—eyewitness reports of which must have been available to Hume—in such incidents as the slaughter of all cattle of English breeds and even, on one occasion, the trial by jury of some "English" cattle.⁵⁸

Hume's reliability on the tangled historiographical issues of the Irish Rebellion is fortunately not our concern; we only wish to ask whether his account exhibits any marked ethnic or religious prejudices against the Rebels. Berman himself seems of two minds about this: at first, he says that Hume's "picture of the massacre in October 1641 is very much calculated to evoke such feelings as anger, hatred and indignation against the Catholic rebels," but later he concludes that "few would now want to say that it was Hume's intention to generate religious antagonism against the Irish Catholics."⁵⁹ Berman finds a plausible motivation for Hume's "harsh account" of the Irish Rebellion in Hume's well-known bitter hostility toward organized religion.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Berman points out that Hume is deeply critical of *all* the religions that make an appearance in his chapter on the Irish Rebellion.⁶¹ Finally, Berman cites Hume's "even-handed...denunciation" of the religious strife between Protestants and Catholics in the Ireland of his own day.⁶²

One other passage from Hume's *History of England* may be cited as bearing on his attitudes towards Catholics. Here is what Hume has to say about the role of the Commons in inflaming opinion against Catholics:

A horror against the papists, however innocent, they [the Commons] had constantly encouraged; a terror from the conspiracies of that sect, however improbable, they had at all times endeavored to excite.... [W]hat was the peculiar guilt of the Irish Catholics [in the 1641 Rebellion], it was no difficult matter, in the present disposition of men's minds, to attribute to that whole sect, who were already so much the object of general abhorrence.⁶³

Hume's strictures against the Commons must, of course, be understood in the light of his favoring the cause of King Charles I in the 1641–1642 standoff between King and Commons. But one need not sympathize with Hume's

political preferences in this case to see that, whatever his prejudices against the Irish or Catholics in general, as a historian at least he seems to have been capable of treating these groups fairly. Indeed, in a note added at the end of volume IV of his *History of England*, Hume cites the 1641 massacre as one of three “touchstones” for an unprejudiced approach to British history:

There are indeed three events in our history, which may be regarded as touchstones of partymen. An English Whig, who asserts the reality of the popish plot, an Irish Catholic, who denies the massacre in 1641, and a Scotch Jacobite, who maintains the innocence of queen Mary, must be considered as men beyond the reach of argument or reason, and must be left to their prejudices.⁶⁴

For some three centuries now, most Irish Catholics have, it seems, denied the reality of the 1641 massacre (a denial inscribed in popular histories of Ireland, such as the nineteenth century bestseller by A.M. Sullivan)—to such an extent that the first Carroll Professor of Irish History at Oxford, Roy Foster, in his Inaugural Lecture in 1994, felt called upon to question this denial (along with several other notable Irish historical myths), which he summarized in these words: “In 1641, the Irish unite at last in a bloodless rising against the oppressor.”⁶⁵ Is it necessary to add that nothing of what I have been saying is in any way intended to deflect attention away from the long and tragic history of cruelties and injustices inflicted on the Irish both before and after 1641?

We come next to the question of Hume’s attitudes toward Jews. To begin with, Hume’s *History* (1754–1762) treats the Jews of medieval Britain quite sympathetically while recounting how unjustly they were persecuted, inducing Popkin’s comment that “Hume’s non-anti-Semitic attitude is surprising not only because it was unusual at the time, but also because of the strong agitation dating from 1753 against allowing Jews to have the rights of English citizens.”⁶⁶ In 1764, Hume became acquainted with the Dutch Sephardic Jew, Isaac de Pinto, and subsequently engaged in friendly debate with him about economics. Later, in 1767, de Pinto visited England in an attempt—eventually successful—to secure a pension from the India Company as a reward for his services in helping the British government negotiate the Treaty of Paris in 1763.⁶⁷ At this point, Hume wrote a letter of recommendation for de Pinto, which began with the words: “Allow me to recommend to your Patronage, M. Pinto, whom I venture to call my Friend, tho’ a Jew.”⁶⁸ This sentence is elsewhere quoted by Popkin in the context of a discussion of Hume’s racist footnote, and Popkin then remarks that “[W]ith Hume’s prejudices, it is easy to see that he was a fine choice to run the Colonial office in 1766.”⁶⁹ We may ignore the “Colonial office” (which, as we have seen, is nothing but a red herring), but the implication seems unmistakable—if perhaps inadvertent—that Hume was prejudiced against Jews as well as Negroes.

A more charitable interpretation of Hume's admittedly unsavory remark about de Pinto is that Hume was anticipating and hoping to forestall anti-Semitic prejudice on the part of his correspondent (who happened to be Thomas Rous of the India Company). In this connection, Popkin does note how "[I]t is curious that in all the correspondence in the case, only Pinto's two good friends, Hume and Sir Joseph Yorke, ever mentioned that he was Jewish,"⁷⁰ but does not speculate about Hume's and Yorke's possible motives. Recently, however, returning to the subject of Hume's prejudices in an essay on racism and anti-Semitism in the Enlightenment, Popkin no longer alludes to Hume's position as Under-Secretary of State and characterizes Hume as "more philo-Semitic than most of his contemporaries"; also, he now speculates about Hume's remark concerning Isaac de Pinto's Jewishness: "...in writing about [de Pinto], and for him, Hume felt he had to make the point that he was a good man, 'tho' a Jew. This may have been because the people Hume was dealing with, government leaders and India Company officials, were too conscious of de Pinto's Jewishness and not sufficiently aware of his goodness."⁷¹

It must now be acknowledged that Hume was indeed the author of a passage which might well be taken as an expression of prejudice against Jews; the passage is best examined in the context of Hume's general account of "national characters." In the very first sentence of his essay, "Of National Characters," Hume warns us that "[T]he vulgar are apt to carry all *national characters* to extremes...[and] will admit of no exception." By contrast, he continues, "Men of sense condemn these undistinguishing judgments: Though at the same time, they allow, that each nation has a peculiar set of manners, and that some particular qualities are more frequently to be met with among one people than among their neighbours."⁷² As a working approach to national characters—or, more generally, group characters—this seems sensible enough, but, in practice, the identification of specific group characteristics is almost bound to offend some individuals, whether members of the group or outsiders. Furthermore, any discussion of *group character* risks degeneration into a mere expression of its pejorative counterpart, namely, *group stereotype*. (This is as true today, as far as I can see, as in Hume's day.)⁷³ Consider now what Hume says about certain social groups satisfying the following description: "Where any set of men, scattered over distant nations, maintain a close society or communication together, they acquire a similitude of manners, and have but little in common with the nations amongst whom they live." Hume cites three such groups: Jews, Armenians, and Jesuits. Each of the three groups is said to possess its own "peculiar" character; "the JEWS in EUROPE, and the ARMENIANS in the east" are then further characterized, with "the former...as much noted for fraud, as the latter for probity."⁷⁴ One may reasonably wonder how many Jews or Armenians Hume knew personally and how much empirical evidence he thought was available to support his generalizations. A charitable interpretation would be that Hume was hoping

his readers would at least be willing to entertain the generalizations about Jews and Armenians (and "*Jesuits, in all Roman-catholic countries*") as putative evidence for his thesis (which, of course, we have already encountered in connection with Hume's racist footnote) that all national characters have moral, not physical, causes. This interpretation is confirmed by the following note, which Hume added to the passage in question in the 1753 edition of his *Essays*:

A small sect or society amidst a greater are commonly most regular in their morals; because they are more remarked, and the faults of individuals draw dishonour on the whole. The only exception to this rule is, when the superstition and prejudices of the large society are so strong as to throw an infamy on the smaller society, independent of their morals. For in that case, having no character either to save or gain, they become careless of their behaviour, except among themselves.⁷⁵

Probably designed to enhance the plausibility of his example of the Jews (by proposing a hypothesis to account for the typical psychology of such social groups), the effect of the note is certainly to damp any anti-Semitic overtones in the annotated passage. For, if the "small sect" refers to the Jews of Europe, the "large society" must refer to all of Christian Europe; and so, if the Jews possess obnoxious qualities, it is the fault of the Christians surrounding them. Hume has deliberately rejected any implication that Jews are somehow intrinsically disposed toward fraud (or presumably any other vice). It should be added that Hume was sometimes prepared to revise his own group stereotypes, as occurred during his first travel in Germany in 1748 (on the previously mentioned trip to Turin), when, as Chamley puts it, "Hume discovers with rapture the beauty and richness of the countries he passes through, and the good manners of their inhabitants. He is angry that chauvinistic propaganda has misled him."⁷⁶

When judging Hume's ideas about prejudice it should not be forgotten that he was highly sensitive about anti-Scottish sentiments in London, especially during the 1760s (triggered by the unpopularity of King George III's favorite, the Scottish Lord Bute). Here is a description of the situation:

Whether justified or not, anti-Scottish feeling in the English soon became savage and extensive. It prompted Churchill to refer to Scotsmen as the "refuse of mankind"; it barbed many of Horace Walpole's witticisms, and added more force to Samuel Johnson's bludgeoning; it envenomed the more deadly of Junius's arrows; it led Shelburne to declare that the generality of Scots paid no regard to truth whatever; it stopped the parliamentary advancement of James

Oswald, Gilbert Elliot and other Scotsmen; it made the London streets sometimes dangerous to anyone who spoke English with a Scottish accent; and it prevented Lord Hertford from appointing David Hume Irish Secretary.⁷⁷

Hume was *persona non grata* to such an extent in Ireland—owing to both his philosophical and his historical writings—that he was even forced to cancel a planned visit to Dublin in 1766.⁷⁸ Finally, it is worth mentioning where Hume stood on some of the hottest political issues of the last years of his life: as we have already seen, he opposed the oppression of the American colonists, but he also felt they were not ready for independence;⁷⁹ as for the French, he believed their tyrannical government could not last.⁸⁰ On the other hand, he had little sympathy for the radicals' critique of the undemocratic character of British domestic politics.⁸¹

Once again, I must repeat that I am not trying to construct an apology for Hume's political or personal opinions. But I do admit to feeling solicitous for Hume's reputation when I come upon genocidal insinuations (no less), such as the following: "Often, 'alien' racial elements are to be driven out or exterminated—policies that were recommended in relation to the Irish and Jews in England in the nineteenth century. We have seen that Hume takes a hard line."⁸² Must not this be read as associating Hume's alleged "hard line" with the "extermination" of alien groups? To me, that sequence of two sentences constitutes either an instance of irresponsibly careless writing or else a vicious libel of Hume—which just might be actionable if the victim were a living person. (And the author of those sentences berates his scholarly opponents with phrases like "intellectually dishonest" and "Stalinist falsification"!)⁸³ May I respectfully suggest that charges of bigotry and prejudice should be pondered *especially* scrupulously when the targeted individuals are historical figures no longer able to respond in their own defense?

NOTES

1 See J.A. Leo Lemay, ed., *Reappraising Benjamin Franklin: A Bicentennial Perspective* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1993), and Peter S. Onuf, ed., *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993).

2 Among those who have contributed to the analysis of Hume's racism are David Brion Davis, Winthrop D. Jordan, Richard H. Popkin, Harry M. Bracken, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and John Immerwahr; their main publications on this subject will be referred to in the course of subsequent discussions.

3 Gordon S. Wood, "Jefferson at Home," *New York Review of Books*, May 13, 1993, 6, referring to Paul Finkelman, "Jefferson and Slavery: 'Treason Against the Hopes of the World'," in Onuf, *Jeffersonian Legacies*. Wood attempts to present a balanced picture of Jefferson's political opinions in "The Trials and Tribulations of Thomas Jefferson," also in Onuf, *Jeffersonian Legacies*.

4 John Immerwahr, "Hume's Revised Racism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (3, 1992): 481-482.

5 Richard H. Popkin, "Hume's Racism Reconsidered," *The Third Force in Seventeenth Century Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 64-75, at 64.

6 See Eugene F. Miller, ed., *David Hume, Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, rev. ed., (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987), 208; 629. This seems to be the only edition of Hume's *Essays* which includes both versions of the footnote. What has come to be taken as the standard edition of Hume's philosophical writings—T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, eds., *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, 4 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1874-1875)—is unreliable for the different versions of the *Essays*.

7 Miller, 629-630; 208. Both versions of the footnote then go on as follows:

No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over EUROPE, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA, indeed, they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.

8 James Beattie, *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and J. Bell, 1770). Beattie was rewarded for publication of this volume with an honorary Doctorate of Civil Law from Oxford and a pension from the King.

9 Beattie, *Essay*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and J. Bell, 1771), 487. Hume's supporters claimed that Beattie's attack stemmed from a prior denigration by Hume of Beattie's poetry. Beattie denied this, and a recent commentator on the episode supports Beattie's denial, while holding that "It is impossible to know now whether Hume's attack on Beattie's poetry either preceded or followed the appearance of [Beattie's] *Essay* (James Fieser, "Beattie's Lost Letter to the *London Review*," *Hume Studies* 20 [1]: 80). Beattie's poetry does not rate very highly by modern standards: none of his poems is included in *The Penguin Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse*, edited by Dennis Davison (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), and only a single two-page excerpt from one of his longer poems is included in *The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, edited by Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

10 Quoted by Immerwahr from a letter of Hume's of 26 October 1775 ("Hume's Revised Racism," 481).

11 Ibid.

12 See "bigoted," *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, 185, with the earliest uses going back to the seventeenth century.

13 Only a few of the dictionaries of English I have consulted—all very recently published—mention race in their entries on "bigot" or "bigoted."

14 Beattie, *Essay*, 546.

15 Immerwahr, "Hume's Revised Racism," 484 (citing Beattie).

16 Ibid.

17 Popkin gives a brief account of Hume's "Of National Characters" and of the role of the racist footnote in its argument in "Hume's Racism," in his *The High Road to Pyrrhonism* (San Diego: Austin Hill Press, 1980), 251–266, at 252–254; reprinted from *The Philosophical Forum* 9 (2–3, 1977–78): 211–226.

18 Paul E. Chamley, "The Conflict between Montesquieu and Hume: A Study of the Origins of Adam Smith's Universalism," in *Essays on Adam Smith*, edited by Andrew S. Skinner and Thomas Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 274–305.

19 Chamley, 296.

20 Chamley, 298.

21 Chamley, 292.

22 Chamley, 285.

23 Chamley, 300. Chamley here misses the later version of the footnote despite his recognition of the unreliability of the Green-Grose edition of Hume and the consequent necessity of examining the successive editions of Hume's essays.

24 "Of National Characters," Miller, 207. Note that these inferior nations are not denied "human minds."

25 Miller, 208, n. 10. Chamley's comment on the footnote is as follows: "Hume falls...into a sort of ethnic messianism...making use of a strictly racial criterion.... Montesquieu had vehemently rejected these kinds of ideas, and

had crushed them with sarcasm"; (cf. especially 15.5 [*Spirit of the Laws*]), ("Conflict Between Montesquieu and Hume," 300). This seems off the mark: whatever Hume's beliefs may have been, he was never "messianic" about propagating them.

26 Thus, although I do not wish to quibble about words, I find misleading Winthrop Jordan's characterization of Hume's footnote as a "diatribe against the Negro" (*White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812* [Baltimore: Penguin, 1969], 446). More felicitous is David Brion Davis's description of Hume's racism as "cloaked in the cautious, reasoned language of science" (*The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966], 457).

27 "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," Miller, 122. The sentence quoted continues: "which, in the course of so many centuries, might naturally be expected to ripen into something more perfect and finished, than what has yet arisen from them."

28 Keith A. Sandiford, *Measuring the Moment: Strategies of Protest in Eighteenth-Century Afro-English Writing* (Cranford, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1988), 17; 92. Sandiford's valuable book is marred by his derogatory and inaccurate remarks about Hume; for example, Beattie's critique is described as directed against Hume's views on slavery rather than race (49).

29 Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), chap. 5, "Eighteenth-century Voices," 94.

30 Miller, 208, n. 10.

31 For a short biography of Williams, see Fryer, 421.

32 Immerwahr, "Hume's Revised Racism," 485.

33 See Ernest Campbell Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 263-264: "In the long history of speculation on the question, David Hume was the first to maintain, however sceptically, the superior populousness of the modern world over the ancient world. The whole matter may seem academic to the twentieth century but it was integral to the Enlightenment." Also, Mossner praises Hume for his opposition to slavery but, when discussing "Of National Characters," ignores the racist footnote and concentrates on another footnote which offended the clergy (260-262).

34 Incidentally, P.A. Brunt (*Italian Manpower, 225 BC-AD 14* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971], 11-12), makes considerable claims for "Hume's method" (in his "epoch-making essay"), which, "however it may be disapproved by modern demographers who have more facts to work on, must still be employed by the student of the population of Republican Italy." (I owe this reference to Miller, 379, n. 2.) A very recent treatment of the population of ancient Rome also praises Hume; see Tim G. Parkin, *Demography and Roman Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 66; 162, n. 2.

35 "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations," Miller, 383-384.

36 And yet one of the grounds on which Popkin seeks to contrast Hume and Condorcet is that "[f]or Condorcet, slavery was a contradiction of human nature" (*The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992]), 2.

37 Harry M. Bracken, "Essence, Accident and Race," in *Mind and Language: Essays on Descartes and Chomsky* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1984), 40; reprinted from *Hermathena* 116 (1973): 81–96.

38 George Berkeley, *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, edited by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (London and Edinburgh: Nelson, 1948–1957), vol. 7, 122.

39 Berkeley, vol. 7, 346.

40 James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1792–1794), vol. 2, 107. Though Beattie continues eloquently to oppose slavery, he omits from this book his earlier critique of Hume's racism; the only mention of Hume now takes the form of praise for his *History of England*.

41 James Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (Dublin: T. Walker et al., 1784), 145–147. The entry on Ramsay in the *DNB* (XVI, 689–690) says that "[T]he publication of this essay was the most important event in the early history of the anti-slavery movement" but tells us nothing about Ramsay owning slaves.

42 Ramsay, 248.

43 Popkin, "Hume's Racism," 259; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 18; Immerwahr, "Hume's Revised Racism," 482.

44 Popkin, "Hume's Racism Reconsidered," 71, n. 30. It is worth mentioning that, in a letter to Grégoire of 25 February 1809, Jefferson expressed himself as quite prepared—indeed, eager—to retract his earlier opinion of the low intelligence of Negroes; see Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Modern Library, 1944), 594–595, or Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *The Portable Jefferson* (New York: Viking, 1977), 517. On the other hand, Jefferson may not have been entirely sincere in writing to Grégoire, since he told another correspondent that "he had given Grégoire a 'very soft answer'" (quoted in Jordan, *White Over Black*, 454).

45 Davis, 458.

46 The most important of the paragraphs opposing slavery are among the excerpts from "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations" reprinted in David Fate Norton and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *David Hume: Philosophical Historian*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 81–82.

47 Popkin, "Hume's Racism," 265.

48 A demonic image which may have been intended as Hume occurs in an allegorical portrait, "Dr. James Beattie: The Triumph of Truth," painted in 1773 by Joshua Reynolds; see Nicholas Penny, ed., *Reynolds* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986), 257–259, and Edgar Wind, *Hume and the Heroic Portrait: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Imagery* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 28–31.

49 Bracken, "Essence, Accident and Race," 83; "Philosophy and Racism," 255.

50 Mossner, 539. Mossner refers to Mark A. Thomson, *The Secretaries of State 1681–1782* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), which includes the

following summary of Hume's own description of his work day: "Hume tells us that when he was under-secretary to Conway he spent five hours a day in the office—from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m.—and had little to do when he was there. He passed a good deal of this time in reading books, writing private letters and talking to friends" (134).

51 J.Y.T. Greig, ed., *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), II 184.

52 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), I 3 iii, 146–147.

53 Popkin, "Hume's Racism Reconsidered," 65.

54 *Ibid.*, 65, n. 6.

55 *Ibid.*, 66.

56 David Berman, "David Hume on the 1641 Rebellion in Ireland," *Studies* (Dublin) 65 (258): 101–112, at 103.

57 For a brief recent account of the Rebellion, see R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* (London: A. Lane, 1989), 85–89. Foster estimates 2,000 victims but says the figure "must remain speculative"; and he adds that "the number of victims killed in the initial 'massacre' rapidly became inflated to fantastic levels, affecting both Irish historiography and Protestant mentality from this time on" (85). A recent estimate of the total number of British settlers in Ulster by 1641 is 34,000 (Hilary Simms, "Violence in County Armagh, 1641," in *Ulster 1641: Aspects of the Rising*, edited by Brian MacCuarta SJ [Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1993], 137), and this enables us to calculate that some 7 percent of them (2,000 of 34,000) were killed during the Rebellion. Again, Simms's careful estimate of casualties among the settlers in County Armagh—the region where the Rebellion originated—concludes that "at least 17½% and at most 43% of the British population in County Armagh died in the violence of 1641–1642." Simms adds that "it was not the planned annihilation of British protestant settlers as depicted by some historians but a series of uncontrolled massacres and murders carried out by local Irish leaders and their men" (138).

58 See M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 232–233.

59 Berman, 103; 108.

60 Drawing on Berman, Jacqueline R. Hill relates Hume's account of the Rebellion to what she refers to as "Enlightenment" historiography:

...Hume was not primarily interested in "what had really happened" in 1641; rather, he approached the past for examples to illustrate the universal principles which he and other thinkers of the Enlightenment believed they had uncovered. Yet, however impartial and universal these principles might seem to be, they retained elements of an anti-Catholic—and in Hume's case, anti-Irish—bias. For, amid the examples of religious excess from both Catholic and Protestant traditions which must have been to hand, it is to the Irish Catholics—urged on by their priests—that

Hume attributes "cruelty...the most barbarous that ever, in any nation, was known or heard of" ("Popery and Protestantism, Civil and Religious Liberty: The Disputed Lessons of Irish History 1690–1812," *Past and Present* 118 [February 1988]: 111).

But surely, quite apart from Enlightenment historiography, *any* historian writing of atrocities will find it difficult to maintain a perfectly "impartial" tone. I see no reason to deny that Hume did want to know the truth about 1641, and I suggest we take him seriously when, in the letter to O'Connor and Curry cited above, he says that in writing his account of the Rebellion, "I sought truth, and thought I found it" (Berman, 103). For an outline of Hume's historical methodology, see David Fate Norton, "History and Philosophy in Hume's Thought," in Norton and Popkin, xlii ff. Norton finds Hume's philosophical foundations for that methodology unsatisfactory because "there is still no external or shared standard by which evidence can be evaluated" (xliv), but Norton gives no indication of what such an elusive standard might be.

61 Cf. the remark of J.Y.T. Greig, *David Hume* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), 198, n. 1: "Indeed no reader [of Hume's *History of England*] could fail to be uneasily conscious that Hume, even when ostensibly attacking Catholics or the Puritan reformers, was covertly dismissing all Christian sects as almost equally ridiculous."

62 Berman, 109–110. This verdict on the contemporary religious scene in Ireland is to be found in a note in Hume's "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations" (1752); a note which, however, was removed after the 1768 edition of the *Essays*, and so is often missed by modern readers. The note is not, for example, included among the excerpts from the essay in Norton and Popkin. For the text of the note, see Miller, 640.

63 David Hume, *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688, Based on the Edition of 1778, with the Author's Last Corrections and Improvements*, 6 vols. (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1983), chap. 55, vol. 5, 349; Norton and Popkin, 350.

64 Hume, *History of England*, vol. 4, n. [M], 395. This passage is quoted in David Wootton, "David Hume, 'the historian'," *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, edited by David Fate Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 289. The note including this passage is not among the excerpts from Hume's *History of England* in Norton and Popkin.

65 Roy Foster, "The Lovely Magic of its Dawn: Reading Irish History as a Story," *Times Literary Supplement*, December 16, 1994, 5.

66 Norton and Popkin, 119.

67 For full details, see Richard H. Popkin, "Hume and Isaac de Pinto, II. Five New Letters" in *Hume and the Enlightenment*, edited by William B. Todd (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 99–127.

68 Popkin, "Hume and Isaac de Pinto," 104.

69 Popkin, "Hume's Racism," 259.

70 Popkin, "Hume and Isaac de Pinto," 104.

71 Richard H. Popkin, "Medicine, Racism, Anti-Semitism: A Dimension of Enlightenment Culture," in *The Languages of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought*, edited by G.S. Rousseau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 428.

72 Miller, 197.

73 Thus, after prefacing their excerpts from "Of National Characters" with the warning that "[A]lthough Hume was a cosmopolitan citizen of the eighteenth century, the reader is certain to find that many of the views he espouses here are exceedingly biased and provincial" (Norton and Popkin, 40), the editors might have explained how difficult it is for even the most cosmopolitan citizen of the late twentieth century to resist the tendency for an acceptable belief about some group character to degenerate into an unacceptable prejudice (or "bias"). The problem of drawing a line between "reasonable" group character and "unreasonable" stereotype is searchingly discussed by Christopher Ricks (*T.S. Eliot and Prejudice* [London: Faber and Faber, 1988], chap. 3, "Prejudice"), as may be seen from his remark about the word "prejudice" itself: "The history of the word, which includes its originally meaning a useful precedent, is a pointer to the crucial difficulty that everybody has in understanding, controlling, or extirpating prejudice, since the line between an honourable appeal to precedent and a dishonourable appeal to prejudice is a nub" (82).

74 Miller, 205.

75 Ibid.

76 Chamley, 302.

77 Greig, 378. Cf. Mossner, 552–553. Mossner seems to have misread some of John Wilkes's attacks on the Scots, in *The North Briton*, as directed against Hume personally; I have not been able to find any such attacks on Hume in the periodical.

78 Greig, 494–496.

79 HL II 288: "Dr. Franklyn's [sic] wishes to emancipate them too soon from the mother Country" (1 March 1774).

80 HL II 242: "[T]he monarchical Government of France...must be replac'd" (25 March 1771).

81 Greig asks why Hume "fail[ed] to bring the same acid logic to the politics of Charles I and Cromwell, George III and John Wilkes," and answers that "[T]he paradox may be accounted for by means of unresolved antipathies, rooted, though not perhaps completely buried, in his past life" (*David Hume*, 376). What Greig has in mind are Hume's mixed attitudes toward different varieties of religious believers, and he proposes a psychoanalytic explanation of Hume's conflicts.

82 Bracken, "Essence, Accident and Race," 40.

83 Bracken, *Mind and Language*, xii–xiii.

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