



### **The Gallant and the Philosopher**

Lívia Guimarães

*Hume Studies* Volume 30, Number 1, April (2004) 127-148.

Your use of the HUME STUDIES archive indicates your acceptance of HUME STUDIES' Terms and Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.humesociety.org/hs/about/terms.html>.

HUME STUDIES' Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the HUME STUDIES archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Each copy of any part of a HUME STUDIES transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

For more information on HUME STUDIES contact

[humestudies-info@humesociety.org](mailto:humestudies-info@humesociety.org)

<http://www.humesociety.org/hs/>

# The Gallant and the Philosopher

LÍVIA GUIMARÃES

## I

Hume wrote about women, for women, and even with the help of women. When he obtained the post of Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates, a dramatic affair related in detail in a letter to John Clephane, he recognized in women his decisive allies, in spite of the accusations of skepticism, atheism, and deism, of which Hume was then, as on so many other occasions, a victim. In his words:

What is more extraordinary, the cry of religion could not hinder the ladies from being violently my partisans, and I owe my success in a great measure by their solicitations. One has broke off all commerce with her lover, because he voted against me! And Mr. Lockhart, in a speech to the Faculty, said there was no walking the streets, nor even enjoying one's own fireside, on account of their importunate zeal. The town says, that even his bed was not safe for him, though his wife was cousin-german to my antagonist.<sup>1</sup>

As an author careful of the cultivation of style and concerned, to obsession, with having his text expunged of all traces of Scotticisms, he seems to have sometimes trusted, although not directly, its polish to their knowledge of language, a matter in which he considered women superior to men. Another letter to John Clephane gives evidence:

It is a rule of Vaugelas always to consult the ladies, rather than men, in all doubts of language; and he asserts, that they have a more delicate sense

---

Lívia Guimarães is Associate Professor of Philosophy, Departamento de Filosofia, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Av. Antonio Carlos 6627, Belo Horizonte, MG, 31270-901, Brazil. e-mail: livia.guimaraes@terra.com.br or liviaguimaraes@ufmg.br

of the propriety of expressions. The same author advises us, if we desire any one's opinion in any grammatical difficulty, not to ask him directly; for that confounds his memory, and makes him forget the use, which is the true standard of language. The best way, says he, is to engage him as it were by accident, to employ the expression about which we are in doubt. Now, if you are provided of any expedient, for making the ladies pronounce the word *enough*, applied both to quantity and number, I beg you to employ it, and to observe carefully and attentively, whether they make any difference in the pronunciation. (L 1: 182–3)

And as an essay writer, he introduces himself as Ambassador from the “learned” (masculine?) to the “conversable” (feminine?) world, and he goes as far in some essays as to address women readers exclusively, by choosing themes he supposes they either should, or would, be especially interested in. He is even willing to produce writings by their express request, at times making this offer playfully, as in the following, to William Mure of Caldwell:

Make my humble Compliments to the Ladies, & tell them I should endeavour to satisfy them, if they wou'd name the Subject of the Essay they desire. For my part I know not a better subject than themselves; if it were not, that accuse'd of being unintelligible in some of my Writings, I shou'd be extremely in Danger of falling into that Fault, when I shou'd treat of a Subject so little to be understood as Women. I wou'd, therefore, rather have them assign me, the Deiform Fund of the Soul, the passive Union of Nothing with Nothing, or any other of those mystical Points, which I wou'd endeavour to clear up, & render perspicuous to the meanest Readers. (L 1: 44–5)

At other times his willingness to comply with the requests of women is expressed in a teasing manner, as in “Of Love and Marriage,” an essay Hume describes as a “panegyric upon marriage,” composed to gratify a “humour” of the “fair sex,” at the same time as he jocosely gives warning that he fears it may degenerate into a satire.<sup>2</sup> But Hume also speaks in earnest to and of women. For example, the second part of “Of the Study of History” constitutes a serious piece of argument to persuade women that history is the kind of study best suited to them, and for which they are the best suited.

## II

With sources so diverse, it is natural to ask: how exactly did Hume view women? The scholarly response to this question varies. Annette Baier, at the positive end

of the spectrum, maintains that, in more than one way, Hume is entitled to be called an “unwitting, virtual woman.”<sup>3</sup> In Baier’s view, Hume valued—indeed, he prized—the specific addition women could bring to the collective reflective enterprise, even though he failed to grant women full equality. In Hume’s model, she notes, the “judgment of females” is ascribed the ancillary role of giving polish and refinement to the judgment of males.

This paper discusses Hume’s image of women as cognizers, mostly on the basis of three essays in particular: “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences,” “Of Essay Writing,” and “Of the Study of History.”<sup>4</sup> Along with Annette Baier and other feminist readers, I believe Hume’s solution to the problems of philosophy is especially congenial to women’s approaches.<sup>5</sup> Like Baier, I find in Hume a positive appreciation of women’s capabilities. My contribution, however, is founded on an analysis of Hume’s concept of gallantry, which I consider a relevant factor to understanding and, at times, to misunderstanding, Hume’s view of women.

Gallantry was a colloquial term of common usage in Hume’s time.<sup>6</sup> It could refer, to adopt his expression, either to “amours and attachments” or to “complaisance,” meaning male complaisance to women.<sup>7</sup> My hypothesis is that there is more to gallant conduct than what meets the eye. Despite Hume’s habitual references to women as the “fair sex,” whose traits include softness, delicacy, frailty, and many other clichés from which stereotypes are drawn, I take this “gallant” language and manner of address to be so typical of the eighteenth century, as to conceal, rather than reveal his stance.

Hume’s “gallantry” misleads the contemporary reader, mostly because of the apparent blandness and somewhat anachronistic flourish of its first presentation. But in his text, gallantry acquires greater conceptual density and consequence: it concerns not just another form of conventional behavior, although obviously it is expressed in particular social practices, but it also names a natural passion between the sexes. Gallantry is “natural” in the Humean sense of a “constant and steady” passion. This passion, both in its original character and in its behavioral effects, may foster women’s agency and equality to men, if experienced in the polished form it can acquire in modern societies.<sup>8</sup>

While Hume applies the notion of gallantry more visibly to *social* exchanges, it affects the *intellectual* sphere as well. Hume’s reader is likely to come to a prejudiced assessment of women’s intellectual capacity, once again because of the deceptive initial appearance of social gallantry, in this case made worse by the scarce attention Hume dedicates to the theme of gallantry and knowledge. I will maintain that gallantry’s intellectual significance is comparable to the social, and that it signals at least a tendency towards equality.

### III. A Dismal Picture

In his philosophy, Hume does not single out women's acquisition of knowledge as a separate subject of investigation. The psychology of belief is the same for all humans: the same principles of association of ideas operate in their imagination, the habit of past regularities uniformly resulting in expectation of regularity in the future. For Hume, the human mind, generally speaking, does not seem to be characteristically either masculine or feminine. But for any description there can be more than one level of generality, and what appears undistinguished from afar may not appear so at close range. At close range, how would women fare?

In section 9 ("Of the Reason of Animals") of *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Hume dedicates a footnote to explaining how the ability to carry out reasoning successfully varies from one human individual to another.<sup>9</sup> He makes a list, not exhaustive, that includes differences in:

1. Attention, memory and observation;
2. Accuracy and subtlety in separating circumstances that are causally linked to an effect, from those that aren't;
3. Ability to comprehend a great complication of causes and,
4. To carry on a lengthy chain of consequences;
5. Severity of the disease of confounding ideas, to which all humans are prone, to a greater or lesser degree;
6. Degree of haste and narrowness of mind in the formulation of general maxims;
7. Broadness of experience and promptitude to suggest analogies;
8. Influence of biases (from party, education, prejudices, and passion);
9. Extent of learning and "conversation," by which means testimony is communicated and one's experience is enlarged by acquaintance with the experience of others. (EHU 9.5, note 20; SBN 107, note 1)<sup>10</sup>

As a result of the application of these criteria to a human population, all sorts of different groupings can be imagined. Would a division of women and men in two groups be one of these possibilities? Is there in Hume's text anything conducive to such a division? Yes, there is, but it is Hume's essays that fully spell it out and make up for the *Treatise's* and the *Enquiries'* relative inattention to gender-based cognitive distinctions.<sup>11</sup>

Particularly "Of the Study of History," but to a certain extent "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" and "Of Essay Writing" as well, contribute grounds to the claim that women can be compared to men on the basis of at least some criteria in the aforementioned list. A cursory look at the texts shows it.<sup>12</sup>

“Of the Study of History” holds that women’s “tenderness of complexion” debars them from the severer studies; it also voices Hume’s complaint that women receive a poorer education than men.<sup>13</sup> “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences” affirms men’s superiority to women, in strength both of mind and body.<sup>14</sup> “Of Essay Writing” states that women’s warmth of passion perverts their judgment.<sup>15</sup>

Summing these up, we cannot say but that we are left with a dismal picture before us, a picture that strongly indicates that Hume holds the cognitive skills of women in poor estimation. Hume’s attribution of a higher degree of contamination by biases arising from passion (item 8) might make for a fairly stable gender division in cognitive makeup. His observation of women’s lower level of education and narrower breadth of experience (items 7 and 9) would further command a deepening of that division. The extent to which these three factors alone could affect overall competence is uncertain. How much, for example, can item number 2—namely “accuracy, and subtlety in separating circumstances that are causally linked to an effect”—suffer from the influence of passion? Or how much more “narrowness of mind” (item 6) is to be expected from reasoners thus influenced? It is difficult to estimate.

Moreover, women’s “frailty of complexion” apparently expands their shortcomings to a much greater extent than the limits already suggested. Their deficiency, so far limited to the quality of their performance, now seems to impose restrictions on the very kinds of cognitive activity to which women may aspire; if formerly they could be said to be weaker at reasoning than men, and hence to fall short of the excellence of their male counterparts, now they are being told not even to venture on as many fields as men. The immediate result is their summary exclusion from a full range of studies. Women’s constitutional frailty not only poses an unsurpassable obstacle; it also makes women unfit for the most demanding and difficult study, the study of metaphysics.

Is it thus implied that they are also less able to “comprehend a great complication of causes and to carry on a lengthy chain of consequences” (items 3 and 4)? Or that they are less “subtle,” “attentive,” “observant,” “accurate” reasoners than men (items 1 and 2)? But then will it not be the case that, sooner or later, all items in Hume’s list will end up figuring in the division?

Let us imagine a hypothetical woman engaged in learning. In the light of what has been shown, it is reasonable to doubt whether she can ever hope to succeed. To begin with, her lack of education will obscure her view—a bad start. Then her passions may lead her astray in the process. Finally, her frailty, mental and physical, may prevent her from carrying it through to the end. Her prospects are bleak: her reasoning seems to be plagued by unawareness, misdirection, and incompleteness. If she is wise, she will humbly restrict herself to pursuits that are within her limited power. She can succeed, and get as much amusement and instruction as possible, from a limited number of intellectual enterprises, and from limited achievements

within those. Now a man, if he is wise, knowing women's limitations, will act kindly towards her with gentlemanly condescension. In polite society there is no unpleasantness to be feared, no wasted potential, no failures, and no frustrations. And yet it is a dismal outlook. But is this a fair picture of Hume's view?

#### IV. Sharpening the Image

I will not pretend that Hume is always consistent in his views about women; he is not. Nor will I pretend that his views of women are all coherent, or well-founded. But the picture sketched above conveys an *image* of woman, and I believe this image deserves to be brought into better definition before we accept it as the last word on Hume's views. I believe the image actually conveyed by Hume's texts is more complicated. It may not be entirely sharp, or consistent throughout all his writings, but it is richer, and less dismal, than the image just sketched.

"Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" contains a digression, which is just as unsettling as it is memorable, about women and the relations between the sexes in society.<sup>16</sup> In Hume's words:

As nature has given *man* the superiority above *woman*, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body; it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions. (*Essays* 133)

In cold fact, this passage seems to confirm the disheartening view presented above. But despite its immediate negative impact, I would rather withhold judgment for the moment, for several reasons. First, other passages can be found in stark opposition to it. "Of Polygamy and Divorces," for example, states: "On the other hand, it may be urged with better reason, that this sovereignty of the male is a real usurpation, and destroys that nearness of rank, *not to say equality*, which nature has established between the sexes" (*Essays* 184, emphasis added).

Second, and this is the point of most interest to me, to make full sense of Hume's writings, more is needed than can be found in the "Of the Rise and Progress," for: (i) he speaks of "lesser strength," but a full disclosure of precisely what this condition amounts to has yet to be offered, and it cannot be found there; (ii) a detailed account of the intellectual consequences both of women's "lesser strength" and of the adoption of Hume's code of behavior for men is also absent; and (iii) "Of the Rise and Progress" touches on but one particular manifestation of human sociability, and but only lightly, so that a larger view is necessary for it to be appreciated properly. I will address these three topics in turn, beginning with the last one.

In “Of the Rise and Progress,” the attitude Hume recommends to men is partly a matter of good manners; and good manners, according to him, can concern simply the *appearance* of sentiments not vicious or disagreeable to others, for the sake of pleasant companionship.<sup>17</sup> This same attitude is in part a late product of social progress and sophistication. The way Hume sees it, it represents a great modern improvement on traditions of the past, when men used to take advantage of their physical superiority to enslave, confine, beat, sell, and kill women, and to bar women from access to all spheres outside the domestic. Finally, this attitude is a passion, the passion Hume chooses to call “gallantry.” Gallantry proceeds from nature; it “springs from the natural affection between the sexes.” Hume is emphatic: nothing “can proceed less from affectation than the passion of gallantry. It is *natural* in the highest degree.” According to Hume, art and education “only turn the mind more towards it; they refine it; they polish it; and give it a proper grace and expression” (*Essays* 131).

In the *Treatise’s* analysis of the amorous passion or love between the sexes, Hume says:

’Tis plain, that this affection, in its most natural state, is deriv’d from the conjunction of three different impressions or passions, *viz.* the pleasing sensation arising from beauty; the bodily appetite for generation; and a generous kindness or good-will . . . [f]rom these two relations, *viz.* resemblance and a parallel desire, there arises such a connexion betwixt the sense of beauty, the bodily appetite, and benevolence, that they become, in a manner inseparable: And we find from experience, that ’tis indifferent which of them advances first; since any of them is almost sure to be attended with the related affections. (T 2.2.11.1,4; SBN 394–5)

In my hypothesis, this composite amorous passion could perhaps be the same as gallantry.

But gallantry belongs in the larger picture of human sociability as well. A passage in “Of the origin of justice and property” states:

But in order to form society, ’tis requisite not only that it be advantageous, but also that men be sensible of its advantages; and ’tis impossible in their wild uncultivated state, that by study and reflexion alone, they should ever be able to attain this knowledge. Most fortunately, therefore, there is conjoin’d to those necessities, whose remedies are remote and obscure, another necessity, which having a present and more obvious remedy, may justly be regarded as the first and original principle of human society. This necessity is no other than that natural appetite betwixt the sexes, which unite them together, and preserves their union, till a new tye takes place in their concern for their common offspring. (T 3.2.2.4; SBN 486)

This passage places the “appetite betwixt the sexes” at the beginning of human society. What kind of a beginning? It is plausible that Hume is not here speaking uniquely of a mythic beginning or of an ideal state of nature. In his view, human sexual conduct and experience constitutes society itself in a minimal form. And if he is, as I presume, speaking of society as it is, then the first tie—in Hume’s words, the “passions of lust and natural affection”—is ever present, rehearsed time and again for as long as human nature and survival do not drastically change.<sup>18</sup> It may even give a clue as to how other types of relations stand within a particular society: are they generous, cooperative, and fair?

Sexual appetite was found to be united with benevolence and a sense of beauty in Hume’s previous analysis of “love between the sexes.” This suggests that for Hume sex itself is not always just sex. The picture must be more complex than that. And besides:

1. In at least one place, Hume rates love between the sexes as the “sweetest and best” of human enjoyments (*Essays* 134).
2. He considers this physical enjoyment to be the support of additional enjoyments, among them friendship and mutual sympathy, themselves not strictly physical.<sup>19</sup>
3. He also sees it as enhancing the enjoyment of a number of qualities (such as beauty, wit, and kindness), agreeable in themselves and originally non-sexual.<sup>20</sup>
4. And finally, he sees it as producing not only personal well-being, but cultural and moral benefits as well.<sup>21</sup>

The necessary conclusion is that Hume’s concept of “love between the sexes” is broad, and so is the scope of its influence. Interestingly, such broadening coincides with Hume’s thicker concept of gallantry. For Hume, gallantry is more than the sheer fact of sexual attraction; in its polished form it becomes a cluster of affections, and as such it influences various aspects of human life and behavior. As I hope soon to show (sections VI and VII), the collective pursuit of knowledge can be foremost among these aspects. This realization does much to mitigate, if not to erase, the traces of condescension that gallantry appears to have, when first taken in isolation.

## V. Gallant Society

Although natural, the relations between men and women are sufficiently plastic to become modulated by diverse cultural experiences. An enhanced view of the benefits already mentioned is attained with gallantry in its modern, polished form. Modern gallantry is part of a highly complex social experience. “Of the Refinement in the Arts” describes it:

The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become: nor is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or lie with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are everywhere formed: Both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner; and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an encrease of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Thus *industry*, *knowledge*, and *humanity*, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages. (*Essays* 271)

The passage above claims that when a people as a whole becomes more cultivated, it tends, like an individual, to become more sociable and more humane, better pleased and better tempered. It does not discriminate between women and men—"both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner"—thus implying that both equally share in the modern experience. In its description, easy conviviality emerges as a feature of modern gallantry.

"Of the Rise and Progress" adds to the picture:

Gallantry is not less compatible with wisdom and prudence, than with nature and generosity; and when under proper regulations, *contributes* more than any other invention, to the *entertainment and improvement* of the youth of both sexes. (*Essays* 133–4, emphasis added)

What better school for manners, than the company of virtuous women; where the mutual endeavour to please must insensibly polish the mind, where the example of the female softness and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers, and where the delicacy of that sex puts everyone on his guard, lest he give offense by any breach of decency? (*Essays* 134)

Without gallantry, it does not seem possible to capture the whole modern outlook. Hume recommends that the youth be raised according to gallant standards, and he affirms that women particularly contribute softness and modesty to the pool of modern virtues. Thus gallantry begins to develop associations that go well beyond

the sense of “amours and attachments.” A natural passion, it is in the process of being assimilated to the larger set of social virtues. Hume is now doing the work of conceptual change.

How so? To begin with, Hume discerns gallantry’s many hues, as shown by remarks in “A Dialogue,” “Of the Rise and Progress,” and “Of National Characters,” among others. In his account, for example, intercourse between the sexes may take the guise of a “too inflamed” romantic love, end up in jealousy, and the result is ungentlemanly (*Essays* 215). Or else, politeness may degenerate into foppishness, disguise, and insincerity (*Essays* 130–1). Nonetheless Hume upholds “free intercourse” as a cause of modern civility, humanity, and knowledge. In his view, “when properly managed,” it is the “source of all politeness and refinement” (*Essays* 215).

Now, proper management is learned from experience and practice of the world, by which means alone extravagances are corrected (EPM, “A Dialogue” 52; SBN 341). And it involves choices. “French” gallantry is one case at issue in Hume’s account in “A Dialogue”:

But our neighbours [the French], it seems, have resolved to sacrifice some of the domestic to the sociable pleasures; and to prefer ease, freedom, and an open commerce, to a strict fidelity and constancy. These ends are both good, and are somewhat difficult to reconcile; nor need we be surprised, if the customs of nations incline too much, sometimes to the one side, sometimes to the other. (EPM, “A Dialogue” 32; SBN 335)

A little further ahead he affirms:

It is needless to dissemble: The consequence of a very free commerce between the sexes, and of their living much together, will often terminate in intrigues and gallantry. We must sacrifice somewhat of the useful, if we be very anxious to obtain all the agreeable qualities; and cannot pretend to reach alike every kind of advantage. Instances of licence, daily multiplying, will weaken the scandal with one sex, and teach the other by degrees, to adopt the famous maxim of La Fontaine, with regard to female infidelity, that if one knows it, it is but a small matter; if one knows it not, it is nothing. (EPM, “A Dialogue” 47; SBN 339)

“Libertine love” is what concerns Hume here. More widespread in polite (modern) ages, it is one possible effect of modern gallantry. But differently from “too inflamed” love and insincere foppishness, “libertine love” can, in some cases, be the result of a trade-off of sorts. In Hume’s view, the French *chose* to sacrifice some utility for the sake of agreeability—a matter of preference, since both are desirable goods. Utility obviously refers to the feminine virtue of chastity, and *A Dialogue*

somehow experiments with the notion of a society where female chastity is not of primary interest, therefore not strongly inculcated.<sup>22</sup> Still, although leaning to the side of “amours and attachments,” French gallantry displays a free and easy conviviality between the sexes, and thus remains a viable option.

But perhaps, notwithstanding Hume’s admiration of the French, English gallantry may rank the highest in his preference. Its emphasis on friendship and utility over amour and agreeability (though not over complaisance) represents the finding of one possible way to “eschew excesses [in amours and attachments] and avoid jealousy” (EPM, “A Dialogue,” 48; SBN 339–40). In “A Dialogue,” Hume’s arguments for its superiority take into account specifically the benefits to society at large. In “Of Essay Writing” he makes a similar point, but has foremost in mind its particular advantages to women. He says: “They may, perhaps, meet with more Complaisance from their usual followers than from Men of Learning; but they cannot reasonably expect so sincere an Affection: And I hope, they will never be guilty of so wrong a Choice, as to sacrifice the Substance to the Shadow” (*Essays* 537).

Summing up, gallant society, in Hume’s description, is characterized by easy and free intercourse. In some cases it results in the choice of unchaste conducts. But to some extent it tends to provide greater agency to women, who are now met with respect and friendship, and are in a position to especially contribute modesty and softness to the social virtues.<sup>23</sup>

Gallantry has a bland face. The gallant is a polite man, who pays women generous attention and shows them civility. This bland appearance deceptively conceals gallantry’s immense cultural significance. When the gallant man has a correlate in the gallant woman, his complaisant behavior can no longer be reduced to sheer condescension. Even if it begins condescendingly (as all too often it does), that’s not at all where it will lead, and not at all where it will necessarily end.

Thus far the “natural superiority” of men and “inferiority” of women has been identified in the social sphere, and there first mitigated with a broader perspective of human sociability, and next, I would venture to say, seriously challenged by the moral and social perspectives it opens up for women.<sup>24</sup> It remains yet to be ascertained what intellectual changes are foreseen in these texts. Also still to be answered is the question of women’s “lesser strength” of intellect. We will have to go to other essays for some answers.

## **VI. Gallant Intellectual Society**

Gallantry brings gender into the epistemic picture, affecting issues regarding both individual and collective cognitive agency, among them: inclusion/exclusion in a community of knowers, sexed embodiment, connectedness, and cooperation.<sup>25</sup> In Hume’s approach, gallantry functions constructively as a concept on at least two levels. Symbolically, it invokes a metaphor of woman that incorporates body,

emotion, and passion in a positive epistemological valuation. And operationally, gallantry facilitates inclusion. What changes occur when women are given voice as embodied and visible knowing subjects, or when individual males are no longer imposed as norm voices of the many? How do novel social relations transform gender? From a Humean outlook, gender roles are not so entrenched that exclusion is desirable, much less inevitable. Natural affection and easy conviviality favor the epistemic inclusion of women and that, in turn, may conceivably bring about a transformation of the discipline of human knowledge itself. Perhaps women may help to raise human knowledge to new standards.<sup>26</sup> Let's see how.

I would describe "Of Essay Writing" as the portrayal of a gallant intellectual society. In this sense, I see it as a companion to "Of the Rise and Progress." In the former as in the latter, participants characteristically practice and cherish values such as generosity, equality, affection, modesty, and mutual deference. In the remainder of this paper I want to defend the thesis that "Of Essay Writing" indicates a tendency in Hume to fully admit women into intellectual society, and I also want to suggest that, in his view, intellectual society might even fail to attain some of its ends in the absence of women. I will also argue that as a companion piece to "Of Essay Writing," "Of the Study of History" provides the means by which women can be admitted in and contribute to the making of knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

"Of Essay Writing" begins with a description of two parties into which the "elegant part of mankind," i.e., those who "employ themselves in the operations of the mind," is divided (*Essays* 533). The parties are the "learned" and the "conversible." It says of them:

The learned are such as have chosen for their Portion the higher and more difficult Operations of the Mind, which require Leisure and Solitude, and cannot be brought to Perfection, without long Preparation and severe Labour. The conversible World join to a sociable disposition, and a Taste of Pleasure, an inclination to the easier and more gentle Exercises of the Understanding, to obvious Reflections on human Affairs, and the Duties of common Life, and to the Observation of the Blemishes or Perfections of the particular Objects that surround them. (*Essays* 533–4)

Hume's readers tend, I believe somewhat hastily, to take men and women as personifying those two parties. In this hypothesis, men are identified with the learned, and women with the conversible world. Supposing one adopts this view, how do women fare in it? Not badly, I think, for the following reasons. "Of Essay Writing" offers a fairly egalitarian overall account, where the two parties jointly contribute to the growth of knowledge and each has need of the other for its full intellectual flourishing: women possess "delicate affections," while men bring "sound understanding" to the partnership.

Also, in this account, both parties have a lot to lose if they are kept in isolation. Perhaps men, or the learned, have even more to lose. It is not just that men could be better, and better pleased, if they could enjoy the company of women. Left to itself, the conversible world wastes its time on “gossiping stories and idle remarks.” But the consequences for the learned are worse. They are left without the “taste of life or manners,” and without “liberty and facility of thought and expression.” Philosophy, for this is the learned’s employment, thus becomes “unintelligible in her stile and manner of delivery.” It also becomes “chimerical in her conclusions,” from failure to support its reasonings on experience, for much instructive experience is to be found in common life, the domain of the conversible. The way Hume puts it, when each party’s gains and losses are counted, there is no obvious advantage to either. I consider it difficult to discern which is worse: idle intellect, or poor intellect, no philosophy, or false philosophy?<sup>28</sup> That is the implicit question here.

Nonetheless, a note of condescension cannot be denied if Hume is indeed giving men alone leave to pursue philosophy. However, I believe this is not the case. Hume does give women the “sovereignty” of the conversible world, without ever forbidding them access to the learned world.<sup>29</sup> All he says in the passage quoted above is that the studies that demand the “higher and more difficult operations of mind” are outside the scope of women’s *interests*, not of their *abilities* or, to use Hume’s own expression, that women have not shown an *inclination* for such studies. Since not all that falls outside one’s knowledge can be said to fall outside her understanding as well, we can conclude that it may be only contingently that philosophy falls outside of women’s *knowledge*. If women wished, they could pursue it.

Hume attributes one constitutionally specific trait to women: they are more amorously passionate. He names one subject matter in which a woman’s passion can impair her judgment: namely, gallantry—the term he uses here for romantic novels—and devotion, which are one in that both exploit women’s passionate nature when, for example, they tell implausible tales.<sup>30</sup> In Hume’s words: “As the Fair Sex have a great Share of the tender and amorous Disposition, it perverts their Judgment on this occasion, and makes them be easily affected, even by what has no Propriety in the Expression nor Nature in the Sentiment” (*Essays* 537).

The shadows that hung over the picture, early in this paper, now begin to be lifted. If what Hume says is true, and the qualification above just, then philosophical investigation *is* accessible to women, and as a matter of fact, it has a lesser chance of success, both in style and in content, without the involvement of women. In an offhand manner, “Of Essay Writing” recalls in the picture of the lone, ungallant philosopher the very maladies of philosophy that Hume criticizes; correspondingly, its description of woman is an image correlate of Hume’s own philosophical projects of the *Treatise* and *Enquiries*, as I will show next.

## VII. The Gallant Philosopher

The description of woman, and her dominant trait, susceptibility to passion, can be better appreciated with the addition of the more finished picture drawn in “Of the Study of History,” which is, after all, an essay about women and their knowledge, and about the good fit between the specific cognitive abilities possessed by women and the field of study that most demands these very abilities.

The dismal shadows are entirely dispelled there, for, in this essay, perhaps even more assuredly than in “Of Essay Writing,” one can finally come to terms with the question about women’s “lesser strength of mind,” or “frail complexion.” These negatively laden expressions get translated into “tenderness of complexion,” which itself is an expression with no negative overtones. A tender constitution is susceptible or sensitive, but not necessarily weak, and certainly not less capable. In Hume’s view, tenderness entails curiosity and fondness for amusement, excitement, and thrill.<sup>31</sup>

Hume recommends the study of history to women because it is appropriate to their complexion. It is important to observe that when Hume recruits women to the study of history, he is willing to change their *object* of interest, not the quality or nature of their interest itself. He is not disputing their natural dispositions; nothing is wrong with women’s tender constitution, nor with their curiosity and love of plot, intrigue, secret, and mystery. If anything is wrong, it is the objects in which they employ these dispositions, and wrong *only* if taken as objects of *knowledge*. Hume does say that history is preferable to novels, but qualifiedly so: it is preferable for those interested in gaining knowledge of human nature, for the obvious reason that historical accounts are empirical, not imaginary.

History is entertaining and instructive; it is stimulating to the fancy and to the understanding; it speaks to the sentiments and to the sensibility. It “extends our experience to all past ages, and to the most distant nations.” From a historical standpoint we are in a position to “see all the human race, from the beginning of time, pass, as it were, in review before us; appearing in their true colours.” In addition, history “opens the door to many other parts [of knowledge], and affords materials to most of the sciences” (*Essays* 566).

History and its practitioners perfectly fit Hume’s paradigm of ideal intellectual life. History has all the advantages of the easy philosophy of section 1 of the first *Enquiry*, a philosophy “such as is best fitted to please the imagination, and engage the affections” (EHU 1.1; SBN 5). Since history imparts knowledge of human nature, it also has the advantages of the abstruse philosophy, and is an ingredient of the Humean transformation of that philosophy from false into true metaphysics. And history is one of the two components, psychology being the other, of the research programme sketched in the Introduction to the *Treatise*, and developed by Hume himself: an application of the Newtonian experimental method to the study of

human subjects. For history can be rightly described as the written record of a large experiment, in which observations of human life and behavior are “collected and compared” (T *Intro* 10; SBN xix).<sup>32</sup>

Since we have been trading on images, we could now say that the three images, of women, of history, and of Humean philosophy, when put together, bear a striking similarity. In this light, women, Hume’s chosen practitioners of history, cannot be seen as in any way alienated from the life of intellect. Moreover, in trying to persuade women to study history, Hume is admitting them to the learned sphere, as full members of the intellectual gallant society pictured in “Of Essay Writing.” At worst, Hume’s image of women gives warning of perils, the lesser perils, embedded in that life, faced by any human agent regardless of gender. At best, the image is at the core of, and is the best representation of all that Hume envisioned in his renowned New Scene of Thought.<sup>33</sup>

But history is second to philosophy. Or is it? In what sense, and to what philosophy is it second?<sup>34</sup> Because it attains less general knowledge, one could say it is second in generality, not in importance. The investigation of this more general empirical picture was the object of Hume’s intellectual efforts. But did he not achieve it by means of the study of history too? Is Hume then sending women an invitation to participate jointly with him in the accomplishment of his own philosophical project? The Humean philosopher is a historian, and she can be woman. She is not the dogmatic metaphysician that Hume ridicules; she is not the Philosopher hero of Hume’s fancy.<sup>35</sup> Not an oddity from the past, and not an elusive idealization, she is, like him, a gallant philosopher.

## NOTES

I gave earlier versions of this essay to the Department of Philosophy at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, January, 2001, and to the 28th Annual Hume Conference, in Victoria, Canada, July, 2001. I am very grateful to all people present on both occasions. I particularly wish to thank Don Garrett, Simon Blackburn and Geoff Sayre-McCord, whose kindness and wisdom I was happy to enjoy during my stay at UNC. I also wish to thank Angela Coventry, Lorraine Besser-Jones, Hans Muller, and John Russell Roberts, members of the Hume Group at UNC, for the semester of learning that I enjoyed in their company. Thanks also to Thomas Lennon, Margaret Atherton, the anonymous referees for the 28th Hume Conference and for *Hume Studies*, and to Kenneth Winkler and Elizabeth Radcliffe, editors of *Hume Studies*, for their many helpful comments, criticism, and generous advice. Grants from CNPq and FAPEMIG, Brazil, allowed me to visit abroad and to attend the Conference.

1 *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols., ed. J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), 1:166. Hereafter referred to as L.

2 Hume volunteers to voice men's complaints, but with no other aim, he says, than to promote the understanding between the sexes and, as it were, to make their peace. For, he adds, women alone tend to defend the married state, and to consider themselves to be the objects of criticism whenever that state is criticized. See David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), 557–62. Hereafter referred to as *Essays*.

3 In her account Hume was an outsider, a Scot amidst the English, and, against an ingrained rationalistic philosophical tradition, a loner, in the sense of a revolutionary, who gave practical and social questions primacy and substituted reflection, an activity of the whole mind, cooperatively accomplished by a whole society, for the narrow concept of reason and knowledge of his predecessors. See Annette C. Baier, "Hume: The Reflective Women's Epistemologist?" in *Feminist Interpretations of David Hume*, ed. Anne Jaap Jacobson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 21–2, 27–9, 35–6.

4 I am aware that Hume's essays present a mere *image* of women, and not at all an image with sound scientific credentials. Hence I will not attempt to probe into how well warranted it is, or into what are its claims to justification. If, at least in some of its aspects, his picture is rich in observation, it is meager in experimentation. If I may be allowed to exploit the metaphor, I would say that it is my intention to sharpen Hume's image, and to free it of some possible distortions in the viewer's initial perception of it.

5 What do I mean by women's approaches? I certainly do not mean either a collage of feminist thinking or any one particular modern feminist theory in its full-fledged form. That would not do justice to the rich diversity within current feminist philosophy, nor to the significant period of time that divides us from Hume. What I mean, in short, is that Hume's general view of knowledge voices a number of concerns commonly addressed by feminist philosophies and is consistent with modern feminist attention to the part gender roles and images play in the drawing of that general view.

6 Actually gallantry was more than common, it was a pervasive early modern concept, broadly used to describe conduct and character, most notably in novels, where we find it in many different associations: with levity and fashion sometimes, at other times with grace and urbanity.

7 See David Hume, "A Dialogue," appended to *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 48, note 93; SBN 340, note 2. Hereafter referred to as EPM. Following the letters SBN are page references to *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

8 In her "Hume, the Women's Moral Theorist?" Annette Baier observes that in appearance gallantry is condescending. Accordingly, she declares Hume's gallant remarks to be apparently sexist, but ascribable to his "social realism" about the actual status of men and women in his time. I agree that gallantry may appear sexist. Now, in her "Hume on Women's Complexion," even though Baier remains sympathetic with Hume, and although the theme of gallantry is marginal to her purpose, all of her few references to gallantry shed an unfavorable light on it, depreciating it either as a case of inoffensive, albeit insincere pleasantry or, when it involves male condescension, as an unequivocal, even offensive, case of sexist attitude towards women. There I find

myself in disagreement with her. As I said, my argument in this paper is precisely that it is neither. See e.g. Annette C. Baier, "Hume on Women's Complexion," in *The 'Science of Man' in the Scottish Enlightenment—Hume, Reid and their Contemporaries*, ed. Peter Jones (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 33, 44, 46.

9 Hume's point about humans aims to show, by analogy, that cognitive differences vary among different animal species in the same way.

10 David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

11 It would be inaccurate to say that the *Treatise* and *Enquiries* do not even hint at such division, because they certainly do. My contention is just that their scarcity of references makes it more difficult to flesh out a view of this problem on their basis alone. But, for example, see the *Treatise*: "Whether we consider mankind according to the difference of sexes, ages, governments, conditions, or methods of education; the same uniformity and regular operation of natural principles are discernible. Like causes still produce like effects; in the same manner as in the mutual action of the elements and powers of nature. There are different trees, which regularly produce fruit, whose relish is different from each other; and this regularity will be admitted as an instance of necessity and causes in external bodies. But are the products of Guienne and of Champagne more regularly different than the sentiments, actions, and passions of the two sexes, of which the one are distinguish'd by their force and maturity, the other by their delicacy and softness?" David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.3.1.5–6; SBN 401. Hereafter referred to as T. Following the letters SBN are page references to *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

12 I will be using a lot of freedom to move between Hume's technical philosophical works and some of his least technical essays, and, among the latter, a few that Hume even rejected. Hume declares, with sincerity, that he is candid in the essays, and he means what he says. But he does express doubts about a few of them, which appear to him either "cold" and "sophistical" (L 1: 31), or "frivolous & finical" (L 1: 112). In 1748, when Hume was preparing a new edition of the *Essays Moral and Political* (1742), he chose to withdraw the formerly published "Of Essay Writing," "Of Moral Prejudices," and "Of the Middle Station in Life," for precisely those reasons. I have no other justification for the liberty I am taking than the fact that all these texts are Hume's writings, therefore all of them are in some way authoritative and representative of his views.

13 That is why he especially recommends the study of history to women, as a study of which they are capable and which can provide them with the instruction they lack.

14 That is why gentlemen are obliged to be gallant (i.e., polite and complaisant) in social intercourse with women.

15 That is why they are often fooled by devotional books, and are not to be trusted when it comes to evaluating this kind of work.

16 It assembles women with the elders and strangers, foreigners and guests—all these groups of people, in one way or another badly situated—whose condition obliges a studiously polite treatment from men. The elders, because they dread contempt from

the youth, must meet with respect and deference. Foreigners and strangers, because they are without protection and defense, must be given first place in all company.

17 “But in order to render conversation, and the intercourse of minds more easy and agreeable, good manners have been invented” (*Essays* 132). Interestingly, as early as at the time of Hume’s first residence in France, one of his terms of comparison between the French and the English was their different codes of manners, which gave him occasion to dwell on the subject of politeness and good manners. For Hume, there is “real” politeness, or “Softness of Temper, & a sincere Inclination to oblige & be serviceable.” There are also expressions of politeness that are the “outward Deferences & Ceremonies, which Custom has invented, to supply the Defect of real Politeness or Kindness, that is unavoidable towards Strangers & indifferent Persons even in Men of the best Dispositions of the World.” The latter do not involve true attachment, but as long as this is understood, nothing is wrong with them: “These Ceremonies ought to be so contriv’d, as that, tho they do not deceive, nor pass for sincere, yet still they please by their Appearance, & lead the Mind by its own Consent & Knowledge, into an agreeable Delusion” (L 1: 20). I intend to show, in the light of what Hume says about the relations between the sexes, that the good manners he recommends in “Of the Rise and Progress” fall into the first category, namely that they are real kindness, and not just a convenient social mask.

18 An anonymous referee for *Hume Studies* strongly objects to this reading. She or he points out that a beginning does not entail a continuation, and that: “Strictly speaking, this passage does not say that sex makes society, or that either sex or gallantry is at the core of either human society or human sociability. The claim is that sex makes society possible, because it is impossible that in an imagined state of nature, human beings could come to understand what the advantages of society would be. Once the ties of common interest are first formed within small groups of people (we call those groups “families”), and those ties of common interest are extended outward to greater and greater numbers of people, it is these bonds of common interest, not sex, which unite the Humean society.” I accept the criticism. Yet I believe that experimenting with the sense of “beginning” that I propose may prove fruitful to understanding advanced actual societies, inasmuch as it allows for the sexual element, which, I would like to emphasize, is not exclusively sexual at all, to remain an important factor in their making and, consequently, in their understanding as well. I do not go as far as to contend that it is the single most important factor, but again neither is it outside of the scope of political and sociable human association.

19 “Nature has implanted in all living creatures an affection between the sexes, which, even in the fiercest and most rapacious animals, is not merely confined to the satisfaction of the bodily appetite, but begets a friendship and mutual sympathy, which runs through the whole tenor of their lives” (*Essays* 131).

20 “An affection between the sexes is a passion evidently implanted in human nature; and this passion not only appears in its peculiar symptoms, but also in inflaming every other principle of affection, and raising a stronger love from beauty, wit, kindness, than what wou’d otherwise flow from them” (T 3.2.1.12; SBN 481).

21 For example, the criticism of the monkish virtues is very much a matter of how their denial of sexuality results in moral and social evil. “Celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude, and the whole train of monkish

virtues; for what reason are they everywhere rejected by men of sense, but because they serve to no manner or purpose; neither advance a man's fortune in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment? We observe, on the contrary, that they cross all these desirable ends; stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper" (EPM 9.3; SBN 270).

22 In his more flippant moods, Hume writes off chastity as synonymous with prudery. See, for example, among Hume's impressions of the Continent, in his letter to his brother John Home of Ninewells, his sardonic observations about Vienna, which he names A Court of Chastity. A few bites: "A Court of Chastity is lately erected here, who send all loose Women to the Frontiers of Hungary, where they can only debauch Turks and Infidels;" "I hope you will not pay your Taxes with greater Grudges; because you hear, that her Imperial Majesty, in whose service they are to be spent, is so great a Prude;" "I have been pretty busy since I came here: & have regretted it the less, that there is no very great Amusement in this Place. No Italian Opera: No French Comedy: No Dancing" (L 1: 128–30).

23 Hume possibly means both modesty understood as the social virtue that counterbalances pride (EPM 8, "Of Qualities immediately agreeable to others," and T 3.3.2, "Of Greatness of Mind") and modesty as a philosophical virtue that counterbalances dogmatism. "Of Impudence and Modesty," for example, says of modest persons: "Their good sense and experience make them diffident of their judgment, and cause them to examine everything with the greatest accuracy: As, on the other hand, the delicacy of their sentiments makes them timorous lest they commit faults, and lose in the practice of the world that integrity of virtue, so to speak, of which they are so jealous. To make wisdom agree with confidence, is as difficult as to reconcile vice and modesty" (*Essays* 554). In the two senses above, I believe modesty enters gallant society, where it is cultivated by women and by men alike.

24 Hume's appraisal of such possibilities shows him finely attuned not only to real conditions in diverse societies of his time (like the French and the English), but also, although not necessarily knowingly so, to some interesting fictional early modern approaches to gender. I have in mind novels by women authors with outlooks very different from, for example, Richardson's in *Clarissa*. In contrast with Clarissa and her predicament (that might be conservatively interpreted in terms of a "comply or die" sort of message to women), heroines like Charlotte Lennox's Arabella "The Female Quixote," and several of Eliza Haywood's and Frances Burney's take bolder and larger steps to self-preserving, fulfilling agency. Worldly and adventurous (Haywood's), willful and self-reliant (Lennox's), reflective and thoughtful (Burney's), these heroines do have mobility and voice, and not always at the cost of their lives. They are, or learn to be, resourceful and affirmative. I believe Hume would understand the premises in which the fictional lives of these women heroines take place better than the bleaker, "no exit" premises of Richardson's. Humean-like Arabella's only fault is a romantic imagination, spoiled by too many French novels, which she mistakes for true history—a truly Humean scenario. But that is another story.

25 It goes without saying that all of these are issues with great resonance nowadays. Within the quite extensive Humean literature, Annette Baier's *A Progress of Sentiments* stands out as a pioneering reference.

26 *Feminist Interpretations of David Hume*, published under Anne Jaap Jacobson's editorship, contributes enormously to the discussion.

27 This is another issue on which I am not in complete agreement with Annette Baier. She does not find in Hume's text the opening of opportunities for women outside of the domestic sphere, and considers "the domesticity limitation . . . to be an assumption on Hume's part concerning bio-socio-economic constants in human society." Baier catches the glimpse of a promise though, in Hume's ambiguous stance thus expressed: on the one hand he accepts women's limitation as a given, on the other he challenges them to examine the "perceptions of their interests and of their options." I must grant Baier the point that Hume does not mention, with the exception of the odd case of a queen who is a ruler, working women. Yet the way I see them, "Of Essay Writing" and "Of the Study of History" together place women in an unmistakably public and productive position. See Baier, "Hume on Women's Complexion," 39–40, 46, 49.

28 Of course, for Hume, philosophers come in many kinds, and affirmative dogmatic philosophers are incomparably worse off than negative dogmatics, or than Humean philosophers. In the next section I will have more to say about the differences among these kinds. But in anticipation of that, I would like to add just one example, which I also see as a clue to the gallant, or Humean, philosopher that I intend to portray in my conclusion; actually a clue to what he or she does *not* resemble. In a letter of 1743, to William Mure, Hume says: "Tell your Sister Miss Betty (after having made her my Compliments) that I am as grave as she imagines a Philosopher shou'd be: Laugh only once a fortnight: Sigh tenderly once a week: But look sullen every Moment. In short, none of Ovid's Metamorphosis ever show'd so absolute a Change from a human Creature into a Beast; I mean from a Gallant into a Philosopher" (!) (L 1: 53).

29 In fact, he mentions France as a country where women are sovereigns of both worlds (*Essays* 536).

30 As we will see, "Of the Study of History" gives women warning specifically against being misled into believing as true the romantic tales told in novels. Importantly, as I hope to show, Hume attributes such naïve credulity rather to women's lack of exposure to other kinds of literature than to any constitutional flaw of theirs.

31 In his comments to this paper, Don Garrett very interestingly observes that Hume gives a crucial role to curiosity in the salvation of reason in T 1.4.7, which potentially makes tenderness very important.

32 See also: "'Tis impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding; and cou'd explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform in our reasonings. . . . For to me it seems evident, that the essence of the mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations. . . . We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures" (T, Introduction 4, 8, 10; SBN xv, xvii, xix).

33 To avoid controversy, I take Hume's New Scene of Thought merely to mean the scene named in the subtitle to the *Treatise*, "An Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects." See also the young Hume's letter to a medical doctor. In this letter, Hume mentions the "New Scene" that struck him when he was 18, and his consequent plan of "applying the empirical method to moral philosophy," in a study of human nature (L 1: 13, 16).

34 As we already know from the *Treatise* and from "Of Essay Writing," history is not second to a philosophy practiced in the closet. "Of the Study of History" reaffirms it: "When a philosopher contemplates characters and manners in his closet, the general abstract view of the objects leaves the mind so cold and unmoved, that the sentiments of nature have no room to play, and he scarce feels the difference between vice and virtue. History keeps in a just medium betwixt these two extremes, and places the objects in their true point of view" (*Essays* 568).

35 Apparently only Newton and Galileo qualify for the honorific title. A passage in "Of the Middle Station of Life" reads: "Were we to distinguish the Ranks of Men by their Genius and Capacity more than by their Virtue and Usefulness to the Public, great Philosophers wou'd certainly challenge the first Rank, and must be plac'd at the Top of human Kind. So rare is this Character, that, perhaps, there has not, as yet, been above two in the World, who can lay a just Claim to it. At least *Galileo* and *Newton* seem to me so far to excel all the rest, that I cannot admit any other into the same Class with them" (*Essays* 550).

