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Chastity and the Practice of the World in Hume's *Treatise*

CATHERINE VILLANUEVA GARDNER

Abstract: Commentaries on the *Treatise* have not always been clear as to why Hume includes a discussion of the virtue of female chastity among the apparently different artificial virtues of justice, promises, and allegiance. Placing Hume's discussion of chastity within its specific historical location can illuminate its presence and role in Book 3 of the *Treatise* and demonstrate how chastity is a virtue of social utility. An examination of the "practice of the world" can show how female chastity was a necessary virtue for the emerging "middling" classes of the eighteenth century in their pursuit of economic stability and social status.

The location of Hume's discussion of female chastity as an artificial virtue at the end of Book 3, part 2 of *A Treatise of Human Nature*¹ can tempt us to seeing this discussion as an afterthought or to treating chastity as the least important of the artificial virtues. Thanks in the most part to the work of Annette Baier, this section has come to be seen as meriting discussion. However, commentaries on the *Treatise* have not always been clear *why* exactly Hume includes a discussion of the virtue of chastity among the apparently different virtues of justice, promises, and allegiance. Despite Hume's claim that chastity is in the general social interest, chastity is, as Baier claims, different from the other artificial virtues.² Among other things, chastity is a virtue which emphasizes consistency within an individual's life rather than consistency within a population; however, consistency within a population is a feature shared by the other artificial virtues.³

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We should recognize that for Hume's contemporaries the issue of chastity would have been an evident and important one. The sort of audience that Hume would have had in mind for the *Treatise* would have already accepted female chastity as a socially imposed virtue and—even if they would not have used those terms—recognized the artificiality or social utility of the virtue of female chastity. In other words, Hume's account would have been accepted with little comment.

We need to understand what Hume calls the practice of the world, specifically, the practice that he could have been observing during his time of writing the *Treatise*. Placing Hume's discussion of female chastity within its specific historical location can illuminate its presence and role in Book Three and demonstrate how chastity is a virtue of social utility. Moreover, placing the virtue of chastity in its socio-cultural context will allow us to see Hume's account of the passions and sympathy as connected in ways to women's chastity that would have reflected the concerns and attitudes—and even the actual process of the development—of the middling class of the eighteenth century.⁴

The discussion of chastity as an artificial virtue that follows is restricted to an examination of Hume's comments in the *Treatise*. This is because the focus of this discussion is on examining why chastity is supposed to be an artificial virtue in the same way that justice is an artificial virtue. It would be a mistake, however, to think that Hume's comments in section 12 are his final or only comments on the virtue of chastity, marriage or the family.⁵ In his comments in later works, specifically, "A Dialogue," as well as some of his essays, Hume's views become more flexible, perhaps because he has observed more of the practices of the world as he grew older.⁶ Unfortunately, a thorough comparison of these works with the *Treatise* is beyond the framework of this discussion and it is only possible to note points of comparison or interest.

Section 11 of Hume's *Treatise*

The main aim of section 12 is to demonstrate how the moral obligations attached to sexual behavior—like the other artificial virtues—are generated by the social utility of this behavior: female chastity is in "the general interests of society" (T 3.2.12.7; SBN 572). But we should not ignore another element central to the argument of this section. Hume is drawing a parallel between his discussion of the obligations of princes or nations in the previous section and the obligations of women.

In this previous section on the Laws of Nations, Hume claimed that nations, in the same way as private individuals, have the same interests in creating and maintaining the laws of justice, and that these natural obligations of interest lead to the same moral obligations as for private individuals. Yet, as the interest of nations in justice is not as strong as that of private individuals, the moral obligation that comes from this interest of nations is correspondingly not as strong: "We must necessarily

give a greater indulgence to a prince or minister, who deceives another; than to a private gentleman, who breaks his word of honour" (T 3.2.11.4; SBN 569).

Hume's aim here is to show how his system can account for accepted political realities. Furthermore, as in the case of chastity, he claims that an examination of the practice of the world can offer us a far better understanding of our moral duties than can be offered by abstract speculation. He says, however, in the introductory paragraph of section 12 that he recognizes that some people may still not accept his claims about the laws of nations, specifically, the claim that the moral blame or praise we assign to the behavior of princes is "sufficiently explain'd from the general interests of society" (T 3.2.12.1; SBN 570). He therefore states his intention to support these claims about the laws of nations by considering the duties of modesty and chastity.

Hume's consideration of the virtues of modesty and chastity will lend support not only to his general principle that the artificial virtues are derived from social utility, but also to the variant of this claim in section 11 where he found that differences in the degree of moral obligation are relative to social interest. He intends to compare the force of the virtue of chastity relative to men and women, with the differences in the virtues expected of princes and private individuals. Thus we find in his concluding paragraph of section 12 that he says that the obligations of men to be chaste "bear nearly the same proportion to the obligation of women, as the obligations of the law of nations do to those of the law of nature" (T 3.2.12.9; SBN 573). While men, like princes, cannot do anything they want, the social interest in their chastity is not as strong as for women and thus the moral obligation to be chaste is not as strong.

Thus—once we read sections 11 and 12 together—we can see that Hume uses the generally accepted sexual double standard to support the more controversial "double standard" for princes. To understand why Hume would have taken the sexual double standard as a given, we need to ask the more fundamental question of what exactly were the social interests that female chastity served. More specifically, we must ask what social interests Hume would have observed being served during the period he was writing.

Hume's Account of Chastity as an Artificial Virtue

In section 12 Hume begins by claiming that that there is no foundation in nature for the behaviors of female chastity and modesty. Despite his initial reference to modesty, he focuses on the artificial virtue of chastity. This notion, he says, comes "from education, from the voluntary conventions of men, and from the interest of society" (T 3.2.12.2; SBN 570). Men look after children (and such rearing is obviously necessary for humans) because they think these children are their "own." Female chastity is necessary in order to ensure this security of paternity. As the social stigma attached to female infidelity may not be enough to guarantee that

women will resist temptation, an insistence on modesty from an early age induces in young girls a “repugnance to all expressions, and postures, and liberties” that may lead to seduction (T 3.2.12.5; SBN 572).

Hume claims, however, that it is not as yet clear how female chastity is to be produced and ensured. On the one hand, female adultery is to be set up as a heinous transgression. Yet, on the other hand, the desire for sexual pleasure that leads to this transgression is a strong natural urge that is absolutely necessary for the continuation of human beings. While the “speculative” philosopher cannot offer theoretical reasonings to answer this question, Hume claims that the actual *practice* of the world has already shown us how the question can be answered.

This practice shows that “those” who have a particular interest in the fidelity of women will naturally disapprove of their infidelity, while “those” who have no interest either way are carried along with the rest (“the stream”) and by a tendency to sympathy for the general interests of society. The first part of this claim is clear: husbands will obviously have an interest in the fidelity of women. The second part, however, requires further explanation. Here I take Hume to be saying that female chastity is not to be understood *just* as being in the interests of one particular societal group (husbands), but it is justified—like the other artificial virtues—as being in the *general* interests of society.

These general interests mean that women are educated towards chastity from childhood and, as this becomes a general rule, chastity extends to all women. Thus even though the social usefulness of chastity is just for women of childbearing age, it extends in our minds to all women. Hume further adds that men’s moral obligations with regard to chastity (according to the general notions of the world) are not so great as those of women as the social interest in men’s sexual behavior is weaker. But what then are these social interests?

Eighteenth-century Sexuality

Building a picture of what Hume calls the practice of the world requires a thorough examination of the issues of sexuality, property, and class. The first step is to ask what sector or sectors of society Hume was observing. Given the significance of Hume’s social context for the argument of this paper, a fairly lengthy examination of this context is required. While Hume was Scottish, we would be mistaken to believe that his observations were not more general.⁷ Given where Hume lived and worked, and his social class and professional aspirations, we can safely assume that he was observing mores that were both Scottish and English.⁸ The political and cultural relationship of Scotland to England is a complex one even for today, but I would argue that it is unlikely that his explicit focus would have been Scotland *per se*: those more distant geographical areas and social classes that were *not* closely identified (culturally and socially) with England.⁹

What attitudes towards marriage, adultery, and female sexuality might Hume then have observed in society during the period when he was writing?¹⁰ It would be a mistake to identify eighteenth-century attitudes with the repressive ones that followed during the Victorian period. Eighteenth-century England (and not just among certain classes in London) permitted a high level of tolerance and visibility for sexuality: “[t]he omnipresence of prostitutes, bawdy prints and titillating novels all indicate that sexual indulgence and tolerance were not just confined to a tiny libertine rakish fringe.”¹¹

Obviously it was men not women who typically exercised these freedoms of behavior, but some of the freedoms of women may surprise us (although this is not to say that attitudes towards these freedoms were not often deeply ambiguous).¹² Sex manuals and information were available to women and newspapers carried advertisements for the services of gigolos. The masquerades of London were the fashionable place for young people of varying social ranks to go, yet these masquerades were notorious for the sexual possibilities unleashed by costumed disguise. Hume's contemporary, Lady Mary Montagu, exclaimed against “the unpopularity of the married state . . . which is scorned by our young girls nowadays, as once by the young men . . . many feminine libertines may be found amongst young women of rank. No one is shocked to hear the ‘Miss So and So, Maid of Honour, has got nicely over her confinement.’”¹³

How did this sexual tolerance play out into the freedoms, if any, allowed to married women? Obviously the double standard was prevalent, but we can see that attitudes—at least in the upper classes—towards female adultery were not as strict as one may imagine. Consider, for instance, the family life of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire who had his mistress living with them. Not only did they bring up the Duke's children by his mistress, but also the Duchess' child by Lord Grey.¹⁴ Likewise “Lady Harley reputedly had children by so many lovers that her brood was known as the ‘Harleian Miscellany.’”¹⁵

Given these relative freedoms, Hume's more rigid treatment of the need for female chastity may seem puzzling. It becomes clearer once we ask specific questions about the social interests that female chastity is supposed to serve, and when we recognize that there would have been class differences in the way the sexual double standard played out.

Social Interests

Commentators have understood in a variety of ways Hume's reference to the social utility of female chastity. The most obvious would seem to be in terms of the expenses incurred by the male in the rearing of children, and the male need to know that his property is being passed on to his biological offspring.¹⁶ Ann Levey in “Under Constraint: Chastity and Modesty in Hume” offers a more sophisticated

account showing how the chastity of women is more clearly one of general social utility (not just for the direct needs of the putative father). Without the certainty of paternity, children may be abandoned and this “will lead to the disruption of normal social institutions, including presumably such things as the education of children into appropriate roles and the inheritance of property.”¹⁷

Obviously it is hard to deny the truth of these commentators’ claims, but ultimately these claims are unsatisfactory in the completeness of their explanation. Surely in the case of the first set of commentators the double standard of chastity is both a remarkably inefficient and—for women—cruel way to ensure that society is not saddled with the financial support of unwanted children. On Levey’s account the chastity of women does appear to be more logical. She sees men as living in a situation like the prisoner’s dilemma. Individual men have no direct interest in being chaste themselves but a direct interest in the chastity of other men. Unfortunately, there are no external penalties for the unchaste male. Women, however, run risks if they are unchaste: they may lose “their status as wives and the paternity of their children” (Levey, 224). Levey concludes that given “the appropriate background structures, chastity and modesty in women is the solution to a prisoner’s dilemma for men” (*ibid.*). However, this use of women to solve the dilemma of men still seems cruel. Repressing one half of human society (women are not only to be chaste but their behavior is further constrained by the social rules of “modesty”) in order to preserve the interests of the other half is extreme. It is hard to reconcile the Hume who would support—tacitly or explicitly—this use of women with the Hume who has been seen as a “friend” to women by some commentators.¹⁸

Further economic and psychological considerations may initially appear to offer additional support to the type of interpretation of the social utility of female chastity given above. An example of this first type of consideration would be a recognition that if men did not support their children, few women would have been in a position to do so.¹⁹ An example of the second would be the male uncertainties and anxieties stemming from the asymmetry of knowledge about parentage of children.²⁰

But these additional considerations still leave it unclear as to what exactly is the social utility of female chastity. I believe we should be careful not to focus too closely on the issue of child rearing at the expense of neglecting an examination of the issue of inheritance, which is, after all, part of Hume’s claims about female chastity.²¹ In other words, we should not place the issue of social utility only within the framework of male-female relations. Instead we should consider the way that other important social categories—specifically class—were at play in the eighteenth century and thus in Hume’s work.

In fact, it seems rather unlikely that a wife passing off her lover’s child as her husband’s would have been a common occurrence. Although birth control was

typically used as a prevention against disease, it was available, and abortifacants were advertised in newspapers.²² Midwives, if paid handsomely enough, would deliver and dispose of babies produced by adulterous liaisons among the aristocracy.²³ Moreover, as was stated earlier, there do seem to have been cases where a husband was content to pay for his wife's illegitimate children to be raised elsewhere. *By contrast*, the need for certainty so that property was secure and could be transferred to the next generation would have been uppermost in the minds of many of Hume's contemporaries.

Class Interests and Chastity

It is important to notice the emphasis on property during this period. The eighteenth century was an unstable time for property owners, whether the property was long established or newly acquired.²⁴ For the latter, according to Paul Langford in *A Polite and Commercial People*, this was mainly due to the "pace of economic expansion" during this period and "its unstable nature," something which affected even landed society (76).²⁵

The eighteenth-century class system was complex and, to an extent, fluid. The classes can be loosely divided into three levels: elite, middling, and laboring. It would have been the middling class—a grouping of the professional and merchant classes—who would have had strong particular concerns about the issues of property because of the economic uncertainties of their lives. Their contemporaries referred to this group as the "middle" or "middling sort." The existence of a distinct and definable "middle" class did not come into place until the nineteenth century. It is for this reason that I use the looser term "middling class," which is a better reflection of "the innumerable gradations of income and snobbery on which contemporary analysts frequently commented" (Langford, 75).

Langford has argued that economic instability is correlated to a greater emphasis on marriage as a commercial transaction.²⁶ Given this, unmarried women needed to remain chaste so that they could remain competitive. A successful marriage could benefit the bride's entire family—socially as well as financially. Married women, on the other hand, needed to remain faithful so that the acquired property could be kept within the family and transmitted to the next generation (see Langford, 109–16). Furthermore, unlike the aristocracy which was at least established as a class, the middling classes needed to consolidate both their class status and their property in an attempt to climb the social ladder: "Indeed the eighteenth century has been characterized as one of relentless social climbing."²⁷ It is within this class that the sexual double standard would have been more rigidly enforced. Indeed, Bridget Hill sees the role female chastity played in the eighteenth century as having its origins in the economic and social ideals of the middling class.²⁸

Eighteenth century males' concerns about the parentage of their children would have been primarily concerns about heirs and the transmission of property, not concerns about whether they were raising someone else's child. Class status and its security was not something that could be achieved by the individual "self-made" man alone; it was achieved through the family unit and thus through female chastity.

However, class status was not just about property. The eighteenth-century emphasis on reputation or honor provides an important explanation for the needs of the middling classes for female chastity. For the aristocracy, good breeding would have also secured their reputation, and it would appear that a few dents need not have damaged a female aristocrat's reputation irrevocably. For the middling classes, on the other hand, reputation was needed to secure class status, as well as to contribute to the economic security of the business or profession. Indeed, it also appears that the reputation of the wife could even affect the reputation or honor of the husband, as an unfaithful wife could mean that you were thought unqualified for public office.²⁹

In this way then, the social interests that make female chastity a virtue are not *simply* those of husbands, or of individual women or of a society not wanting to provide for abandoned children; these interests are *also* social interests of class development and preservation. Indeed in his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume states that one of the ills that befall the unchaste woman is that she "loses her rank" (EPM 6.13; SBN 195).³⁰

This interconnection of class interests with female chastity allows us to see more clearly what Hume means in the following passage from *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*. He says that the virtues of honesty, fidelity, truth,

are praised for their immediate tendency to promote the interests of society; but after those virtues are once established upon this foundation, they are also considered as advantageous to the person himself, and as the source of that trust and confidence, which can alone give a man any *consideration* in life. One becomes contemptible, no less than odious, when he forgets the duty, which, in this particular, he owes to himself *as well as to society* (my emphasis).

Perhaps, this consideration is one *chief* source of the high blame, which is thrown on any instance of failure among women in point of *chastity*. (EPM 6.13; SBN 195)

These virtues not only promote the interests of society, but they are beneficial to their individual possessor. But the benefit to the individual of keeping one's word for a man is not simply about being trusted, rather this virtue gives him what Hume

calls "consideration in life." We need to understand this phrase in eighteenth century terms to mean "social esteem or regard." Hume then states that perhaps this "consideration" is a major source of the blame thrown at unchaste women. If we take "consideration" here again in eighteenth century terms, we can then see that female chastity is bound up with the social respect or status accorded to you by others. In this way, female chastity could serve class, family, and individual interests for the middling classes.

This interconnection of class interests with female chastity also allows us to understand how Hume would need to emphasize consistency within an individual's life rather than consistency within a population. Seen within a class context, "ungentlemanly" or "unladylike" behavior in an individual could affect the perceived virtues of a whole class, especially those of a class that aspires for social recognition and establishment of status. Whereas the elite classes could be distinguished by family/rank within that class and thus the loss of reputation of one family need not affect others, the middling classes were only beginning to establish groupings within these classes and thus loss of reputation was more widespread. Indeed, both modern historians and eighteenth-century writers have noted that the desire for gentility was the glue that connected the otherwise disparate sectors of the middling classes.³¹ What is interesting, and will be shown later on, is that Hume's *own* account of the principle of sympathy can be used to provide an account of how this could be achieved: it can be explained within the Humean philosophical worldview.

Thus, understood as a virtue related to property and class interests, chastity is not so different from the other artificial virtues after all in its promotion of the general good. Moreover, understood as a virtue related to property, chastity now fits well into Hume's schema of the artificial virtues.

Eighteenth-century concerns about the vulnerability and stability of possession would appear to lie at the heart of Hume's discussion of the artificial virtues. However, the concern about property of the middling class (its connection to class status) can also be seen to be reflected in Hume's account of the passions. The artificial virtue of chastity, because of the way it is intertwined with property and social status, has some kind of relation (albeit an indirect one) to the passions. It is worth exploring this briefly in order to show that the notions of class, social standing, and property at play in the artificial virtues are not an anomaly. They would have been part of the practice of the world that Hume would have observed.

Property and the Passions

The notion of property is central to Hume's discussion of the passions. It is easy, however, to ignore the actual content of Hume's observations and focus simply on his discussion of the relation of impressions and ideas in the passions. Hume

states that the relation which produces most commonly the central passion of pride is that of property. This is not to say that Hume supports the source of pride; he mocks the vanity of some men in their possessions. Hume understands wealth in terms of the power we have of acquiring what pleases us and the conveniences of life: in modern terms, the lifestyle money can give us.

Again, Hume's account reflects the importance of property for the social aims of the middling class. Indeed, all the examples in which he discusses property can be seen to reflect the concerns of the middling class. The middling class knew that class status could not be acquired simply through money. Their reputation and social standing were also fundamental to the acquisition of class status. Hume claims that the desire to distance ourselves from our poor relatives and the fact that we desire the esteem of others are central to our desire for riches. In T 2.1.9 (SBN 303–9), Hume recounts his observations of our pride in our external advantages. We are proud of our riches and endeavor to distance ourselves from those family members or ancestors who are poor. Moreover, the fact that our riches have been in the family for a long time and, more significantly, that they have been passed down through an unbroken succession of males are additional causes of pride.

In the case of the latter, Hume states that we see the father as more important than the mother and thus our imagination passes more easily from the father to the child than from the mother to the child. Because of this, we are more ready to transfer the honor and status of ancestors to the child through the paternal bloodline.

Thus we can see that the child's social standing is tied to the father, not the mother. This then also emphasizes the need for the father to be sure that he is giving a social standing to his own child. Furthermore, Hume says, our pride in our riches is increased if it has been passed down through an unbroken succession of males: another reason that we can see why men are concerned that women are faithful.

The same underlying connections play out in Hume's account of the passion of love. Those who are connected to us are "always sure of a share of our love" (T 2.2.4.2; SBN 352). Hume states, and it would be hard to disagree, that the strongest relation is that of the blood relation between parent and child. What follows from this is that without the certainty of women's chastity men's love of their children will always be accompanied by uncertainty. It is also a point to notice here that uncertainty, for Hume, is not a minor state of mind; it is a troubling state of mind that has a strong connection with fear.

Thus the chastity of wives cannot be separated from the inheritance of property and its actual possession. Furthermore, the chastity of wives supplements pride in possessions in two ways. First, it guarantees inheritance through an unbroken male line and is therefore a direct cause of pride. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the certainty of possession (and therefore a cause of pride)—in the sense that it will be transferred to one's own blood—depends entirely on the chastity of wives.

In the discussion of esteem, a species of love for others, in his account of the passions Hume focuses on our esteem for the riches of others. In the “mirror” passage, Hume explains that the pleasure of the rich in their possessions is transferred to us and that our pleasure is then reflected back to the possessor of the riches. This different pleasure they gain from our esteem is then reflected back to us and there is a new foundation for our esteem. Hume says that the secondary satisfaction—the esteem of others—becomes one of the primary advantages of riches and is the main reason why we desire them for ourselves or esteem them in others.

There is no *direct* connection to be made between this account of esteem for riches and middling class concerns with social status; however, all Hume's examples show that the pleasure we feel for our possessions is a pleasure in objects of quality and beauty. This reflects the way that middle class standing in the eighteenth century was not just based on money alone, it came from how this money was spent: the finer the article, the more it transferred status onto its owner. Indeed, much of the world of Hume's passions is the world of the middling class or at least their aspirations: riches, but riches that were also about social status.

With Hume's discussion of esteem for virtues in Book 3, more of a connection between the passion for esteem and the chastity of women can be made. He says that we feel esteem for *all* the artificial virtues, and then esteem and moral approval for those who possess them when we reflect on their characters. Furthermore, our feelings for one person naturally extend to others connected to them: their family. Thus a claim can be made that the disapproval and contempt we feel for the unfaithful wife will reflect upon the husband and the family. Placed within a class context, the disapproval and contempt for the unfaithful wife felt by the upper classes would reflect upon the middling class. However, this claim needs to be tempered as, although the transference of passions is easily done, our passions descend more easily than ascend: they move less easily from wife to husband.³²

The significant relation that can be made among class, chastity and the passion is the transference to others of the feelings of moral disgust at the unchaste woman herself (and her own feelings of shame). Hume states that we feel hatred for the vice of another, specifically their character, not any particular action they may have performed. Based on Hume's account, we will detest the unchaste woman and the crucial thing here is that this distaste will transfer from one person to another. This transference is not immediate, but rather we infer this disgust from its causes and effects and feel accordingly. When we see the ostracism of the unchaste woman, we think of the cause, which is the disgust of others at her vice, and we form such a lively idea of this disgust that we begin to feel it ourselves. Conversely, when we see the unchaste behavior of a woman we feel what will be its effects, for example, the effect on her husband.

The capacity to transfer feelings from one to another comes about through sympathy and, for Hume, sympathy is the principle in human nature that “pro-

duces all our sentiment of morals in the artificial virtues” (T 3.3.1.10; SBN 577–8). What is important to recognize about this principle is that, even though Hume identifies sympathy as a universal part of human nature, he states that where there is a “peculiar similarity in our manners, or character, or country, or language, it facilitates the sympathy” (T 2.1.11.5; SBN 318).

Placed within the context of a developing middle class, we can see that Hume’s *own* account of human nature can be used to offer an explanation of the mechanism through which the desire for social status, gained through property and the accompanying virtue of the chastity of women, would have glued together the different sectors of this class. In modern terms, we would talk of the psychological mechanism through which a class consciousness was developed and preserved.

Conclusion

These indirect relations that can be made between the goals and concerns of the middling class and Hume’s account of sympathy and the passions are *not* meant to be seen as the replacement for other interpretations of Hume. Rather these relations add weight to a claim that eighteenth-century concerns about the vulnerability and stability of possession, and the particular expression of these concerns in the shape of the virtue of chastity, would appear to be embedded in Hume’s discussion of the artificial virtues. The virtue of chastity is not an atypical artificial virtue or an afterthought in a catalogue of virtues, and this conclusion becomes clear once the virtue of chastity is placed within its historical and cultural context.

NOTES

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for *Hume Studies* for their helpful comments.

1 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), abbreviated as “T” and cited by Book, part, section and paragraph, followed by the page number in the “SBN” edition, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

2 See Ann Levey, “Under Constraint: Chastity and Modesty in Hume,” *Hume Studies* 23.2 (1997): 213–26, for an account that addresses the issue—raised by Annette Baier—of whether Hume was mistaken in thinking that chastity is a *typical* artificial virtue.

3 See Annette Baier, “Good Men’s Women: Hume on Chastity and Trust,” *Hume Studies* 5.1 (1979): 1–19, 12.

4 Hume sometimes saw class as a relation and sometimes as essential. This does not affect the argument of the paper.

5 In "The Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," in his *Essays: Moral Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene Miller (Indianapolis: Literary Classics, 1777/1985), 111–37, Hume talks of the ways that our views of morals and manners are affected by the attitudes of other (European) nations. Thus there is no reason to think that Hume's views would have remained static.

6 Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for *Hume Studies* for pointing out the need to recognize changes in Hume's views and for suggesting this as a possible account of these changes.

7 Modern historians typically do not make any clear differentiations between the two countries in their data for the particular classes considered here.

8 It should be noted that after the Union of 1707 there was little to differentiate fashionable Scottish society from that of England (see Rosalind K. Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080–1980* (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1983), 205). Jane Rendall includes Hume among those in the Scottish Enlightenment who saw "the drive to emulate England, economically, socially, [and] culturally" as an important component of this movement. Jane Rendall, *Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 14.

9 This is not to say that Hume was not critical of England politically, or that he did not recognize the social hierarchy that existed between the two countries.

10 Attitudes were very different in France—something Hume himself points to in *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*.

11 Roy Porter, "Mixed Feelings: The Enlightenment and Sexuality in Eighteenth-century Britain," in *Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 1–27, 12.

12 Feminist historians have been careful to point out that any sexual freedoms allowed to women during this period can as easily be read as another way of controlling women (in that their behavior conforms to male sexual fantasies) as they can be read as a sign of the equality of women.

13 Quoted in Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 263.

14 See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 533.

15 Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 264.

16 Burns, for example, states that "to ensure that a child will be fed, a man must be assured that he is in fact responsible for it. A society has utilitarian reasons for insisting on female chastity." Steven Burns, "The Humean Female," *Dialogue* 15 (1976): 415–24, 419.

17 Ann Levey, "Under Constraint: Chastity and Modesty in Hume," *Hume Studies* 23.2 (1997): 213–26, 217.

18 See, for example, Annette Baier, "Hume, the Women's Moral Theorist?" in *Women and Moral Theory*, ed. Eva Feder Kittay and Diana T. Meyers (Rowman and Littlefield, 1987), 37–55.

19 See, for example, Baier, "Good Men's Women," 8.

20 See, for example, Sheridan Hough, "Humean Androgynes and the Nature of 'Nature,'" in *Feminist Interpretations of David Hume*, ed. Anne Jaap Jackson (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 218–38, 220.

21 Hume's comments on conventions of chastity in his later work, "A Dialogue," say nothing about the issues of paternity and inheritance. The differences can perhaps be explained by the context of his discussion. In "A Dialogue" he is discussing different moral worldviews, whereas in his *Treatise* he is aiming to offer a taxonomy of virtues.

22 See Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 27. In one newspaper, for instance, there was an advertisement by a midwife couple that offered a discreet apartment for the confinement and arrangements for care of the child (*Bath Chronicle*, 13 March 1790).

23 Indeed a newspaper reported that one midwife died of fright after delivering a baby in secret for an aristocratic woman (*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 29 March 1755).

24 See Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 62, and Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 113.

25 One way of seeing this is the fact that not only were many new laws introduced to protect or establish property, but the severity of punishments drastically increased. By 1736, servants who stole from their masters could be hanged; indeed, figures show that the majority of hangings during the mid century were for theft not for other crimes (see Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 136).

26 There is no evidence either way to suggest that Hume himself endorsed this attitude towards women and marriage at the time of writing the *Treatise*. In his later work "Of Polygamy and Divorce" he describes a good marriage as one of intimacy and friendship. In "Of Love and Marriage" Hume extends Plato's allegory from the *Symposium* to claim that the finding of one's "mate" is based on both attraction and a concern for future prospects (standard of living and children).

27 Leah Leneman, "'No Unsuitable Match': Defining Rank in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland," *Journal of Social History* 33.3 (2000): 665–82, 665.

28 See Bridget Hill, *Eighteenth-century Women: An Anthology* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 13. There is some dispute among historians as to whether there was a change from this type of mercenary marriage to marriages that were founded on an ideal of companionate love. The latter was certainly a growing ideal during the time Hume was writing, but it is unclear how many marriages *in actuality* were based on it as both types can be found during this period. At present, the view that there was no such change carries more weight. I think that Leneman seems to take the most reasonable approach by suggesting that the two types are not mutually exclusive (see Leneman, "Wives and Mistresses in Eighteenth-Century Scotland," *Women's History Review* 8.4 (1999): 671–92, 688–9).

29 See Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, 503–4. What is fascinating is that it is this class that often provided the mistresses for the aristocracy, as these middling class daughters were suitably refined and educated and often suddenly reduced “from genteel affluence to poverty” (see Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, 531). Thus there was an additional reason for the modesty and chastity of unmarried women of certain middling classes to be emphasized, so that they were not likely to fall prey to the blandishments of men of means, or—conversely—in times of family economic difficulty their virginity and spotless reputation would provide a handy bargaining chip.

30 David Hume, *Enquiry into the Principles of Morals: A Critical Edition*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), hereafter abbreviated “EPM” and cited by section and paragraph number, followed by page numbers in the “SBN” edition, *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P. H. Nidditch, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

31 See Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 59 and 116.

32 Hume says that this appears to contradict what he says at 2.1.9.13—where our *imagination* moves more easily from lesser to greater, for example, from wife to husband. However, Hume’s focus here is to explain apparent inconsistencies in his system rather than to reject the notion that our passions pass from one object to another.

