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# Without Gallantry and Without Jealousy: The Development of Hume’s Account of Sexual Virtues and Vices

LORNE FALKENSTEIN

*Abstract:* In this paper I argue that Hume’s thought on comportment between the sexes developed over time. In the *Treatise* he was interested in explaining why the world seeks to impose artificial virtues of chastity and modesty on women and girls, and how it manages to do this so successfully. But as time passed he became increasingly concerned with justice towards women and the role of free interactions between the sexes in facilitating sociability. While his later work continues to explain the origin of the artificial female virtues of chastity and modesty in the way he had in the *Treatise*, it also recognizes and condemns proprietary attitudes towards women and surveys various ways of achieving a balance between male jealousy and sociability. It concludes by condemning the male vices of jealousy and “gallantry” while suggesting that the emphasis on female chastity and modesty is excessive.

“If any false opinion, embraced from appearances, has been found to prevail; as soon as farther experience and sounder reasoning have given us juster notions of human affairs; we retract our first sentiment, and adjust anew the boundaries of moral good and evil.” (EPM 2.17; SBN 180)<sup>1</sup>

In this paper I argue that Hume's thought on comportment between the sexes developed over time.<sup>2</sup> In the *Treatise*, he was interested in explaining why the world seeks to impose artificial virtues of chastity and modesty on women and girls, and how it manages to do this so successfully. But, as time passed, he became increasingly concerned with justice towards women and the role of free interactions between the sexes in facilitating sociability. While his later work continues to explain the origin of the artificial female virtues of chastity and modesty in the way he had in the *Treatise*, it also recognizes and condemns proprietary attitudes towards women, and surveys various ways of achieving a balance between male jealousy and sociability. It concludes by condemning the male vices of "gallantry"<sup>3</sup> and jealousy while suggesting that the emphasis on female chastity and modesty is excessive.

In defending this thesis, I make a case for four further theses. I argue that Hume's interest in attitudes towards comportment between the sexes was not normative, at least not originally. In the *Treatise*, Hume appealed to chastity and modesty as empirical evidence that society is in fact able to impose an entirely artificial sense of virtue, in opposition to nature, in opposition to the interests of a considerable proportion of the population, and in defiance of the doubts and scruples of a speculative philosopher. A clear endorsement of the artificial virtues discussed—chastity and modesty—is very hard to find. On the contrary, one finds a contrast between the practice of the world and the views of a speculative philosopher that expresses reservations about the justice of the world's practice. This diffidence only increased in Hume's later work. Hume may never have arrived at a normative position of his own on this matter, but he did come to think that what he had once called the practice and sentiments of all nations and ages is sub-optimal. He explored various alternatives, adopting the detached perspective of a social scientist as he did so. But he did allow the voice of La Fontaine and "some people" to close the debate by shifting the emphasis from the female virtues of chastity and modesty to the male vices of gallantry and jealousy.

Second, a central component of Hume's account of what motivates the world to impose artificial virtues of chastity and modesty on women and girls is a concern with paternity.<sup>4</sup> This concern has often been parsed as a concern to ensure that property passes to natural sons.<sup>5</sup> Inheritance was an important issue for the large number of eighteenth-century Europeans who were neither too opulent nor too indigent to care about confining property to family members, and Hume could not have been insensitive to this fact. But, I argue, it is unlikely that he intended inheritance to have any significant role to play in his account of chastity and modesty. Hume was speaking of practices that are found in "all nations and ages" (T 3.2.12.9; SBN 573),<sup>6</sup> and he drew on his account of the passions to underwrite it. These factors entail that Hume will have seen the concern with paternity to be driven by factors that all societies share in common, even those with primitive,

subsistence economies where there is no property to pass on. For Hume, these worries centered on the welfare of children and the survival of the society.

Hume's account of chastity and modesty in the *Treatise* culminates with the claim that women have greater obligations to be chaste than men. This has been taken to mean that the account demands the existence of a sex industry.<sup>7</sup> I argue that Hume would not have recognized the necessity of this policy, and would have considered it to be unacceptable. This leaves a question of how to reconcile male liberty with female constraint that Hume continued to examine in subsequent work.

I finally aim to offer an account of Hume's shift from what might be called a "one world" account of the forces leading to the invention of artificial virtues of chastity and modesty to a "many worlds" survey of attempts to resolve the question of how best to reconcile the useful with the agreeable aspects of comportment between the sexes. I fix the cause of the shift on Hume's discovery of the extent to which women had been confined to the home in ancient Greece.<sup>8</sup> Confinement is an alternative to the inculcation of artificial virtues of chastity and modesty that Hume had previously associated with polygamous societies, with slavery, and with objectionable views on the status of women.<sup>9</sup> These views were thrown into turmoil by the discovery that it had also been practiced by the monogamous ancient Greeks. The result was a retreat from a single explanation of how all nations and ages think about chastity and modesty, a survey of different attitudes towards "gallantry" in different societies, and a tentative, but clear, recommendation concerning how best to adjust the useful with the agreeable aspects of comportment between the sexes.

## **I. Chastity and Modesty in the *Treatise***

Hume first took up the topic of chastity and modesty in *Treatise* 3.2.12, where he claimed that a study of these specifically "female virtues" would help to remove, as far as possible, a difficulty attending the system concerning the laws of nature and nations that he had presented over the preceding sections of *Treatise* 3.2. According to that system, these laws are artificial inventions. We accept them because we are convinced that they have social utility. The difficulty with this system is that some might think that "the universal approbation or blame, which follows their observance or transgression," is not sufficiently explained if we have no original or instinctive inclination to follow these laws, but have merely come to appreciate that they contribute to the general interests of society. A consideration of chastity and modesty should help to remove this "scruple" because it is obvious, according to Hume, that there is no foundation in nature for all that exterior modesty, which we require in the expressions, and dress, and behaviour of women.<sup>10</sup> And yet, there is universal approbation or blame for the observance or transgression of these particular requirements. Accordingly, if we can explain "after what manner

such notions arise from education, from the voluntary conventions of men, and from the interests of society,” we will have made a case that these factors could just as well explain our universal approbation or blame for the observance or transgression of the principles of justice and allegiance.

Principal among the factors Hume identified as responsible for the widespread approval of female chastity and modesty is the interest of society. As is well known, Hume went on to argue that this interest arises from three facts about human nature. First, human infancy is so long and feeble that considerable resources are required for the support of human children. Second, the only people who have any natural concern for human children are their parents of both sexes.<sup>11</sup> Hume went on to claim that whoever considers these matters would infer that the education or proper upbringing of the young requires a union of parents of considerable duration (T 3.2.12.3; SBN 570). The naturally occurring affection between the sexes and the naturally occurring love of parents for their children should provide for this socially useful enduring union. But this will only happen if both sexual partners believe that the children are theirs. However, and this is the third fact that Hume brought up for consideration, a woman can engage in activities that call a man’s parentage into doubt in both their eyes, while the reverse is not possible. “From this trivial and anatomical observation,” Hume wrote, “is deriv’d that vast difference betwixt the education and duties of the two sexes” (T 3.2.12.3; SBN 571). To assure themselves who the fathers of their children are, women must engage in an unnatural chastity, not required of men. To assure their partners that they are indeed the fathers, women must also exhibit an unnatural *appearance* of chastity, and so conform to whatever is conventionally decreed to constitute “modest” behaviour. And because society has an interest in the support of youth, it approves of these measures and seeks to inculcate them by education, while disapproving of their opposites.<sup>12</sup>

Hume offered a striking and often-cited summation of this situation.

But in order to induce the men to impose on themselves this restraint [of participating in a union of considerable duration for the education of the young], and undergo cheerfully all the fatigues and expences, to which it subjects them, they must believe, that the children are their own, and that their natural instinct is not directed to a wrong object, when they give a loose to love and tenderness. (T 3.2.12.3; SBN 570)

This passage could be read in one or other of two ways, depending on whether “induce” is taken to mean “morally oblige” or “psychologically cause.” Either reading raises questions.<sup>13</sup>

1. Describing men as made to feel morally obliged to care for children does not fit well with the passage’s further references to a cheerful acceptance of restraints,

fatigues, and expenses, and to an instinct to give a loose to love and tenderness. One might be morally obliged to undergo restraints, fatigues, and expenses, but it is at least odd to speak of being obliged to do so cheerfully. It is equally odd to describe men as possessing an instinct that they can choose to direct at one object or another depending on which they come to be convinced is the right one.<sup>14</sup> One would think that if an activity is instinctive it would not be subject to rational control but would instead be triggered by the perception of particular circumstances. For Hume, we cannot simply decide what passions to give a loose to. Love, for instance, is the product of a double relation of impressions and ideas. The relation needs to obtain before the passion can be felt, and for the passion to be felt the relation needs to obtain. If a child is to be loved, he or she must exhibit or be in some other way related to some pleasing qualities. This is often not true of children one knows to be one's own. It is sometimes the case for children one knows not to be one's own.

There is a short-cut to the passion of love, specifically concerned with love of children. Hume thought that in the case of parents' love of children, the belief in consanguinity will short-circuit the double relation and produce "the strongest tie the mind is capable of," even in the absence of any pleasing qualities in the child (T 2.2.4.2; SBN 352). Conjecturally, causality, being the strongest of all relations, facilitates an easy transition of the mind from self, considered as cause, to child, considered as effect, leading to a kind of self-identification with the child and a corresponding transfer to self-interest to the interest of the child.<sup>15</sup>

2. This raises the possibility that Hume may have intended to identify the belief in consanguinity as a psychological cause rather than the ground for a moral obligation. But this in turn raises questions about why female chastity and modesty should be necessary to achieve this end.<sup>16</sup> It is belief that the male requires, not knowledge or certainty, which cannot be had of any matter of fact. No parent, not even a mother, can be certain of parentage, stories of changelings being at least as old as the Book of Solomon and, in a society where the employment of wet nurses was common, notorious.<sup>17</sup> The author of "Of scepticism with regard to the senses" (T 1.4.2) will have maintained that the mother who has not kept an eye or a hand upon the child from infancy is in no position to declare that it is hers (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74), and husbands who are willing to believe the identity of their most chastely conceived children from one moment to the next on less evidence than that will find good enough reasons for believing in their paternity of the children even of lapsed wives (reasons that, for Hume, naturally compel belief even though they fall short of demonstrative certainty). Consistently with what he thought of other beliefs, Hume must have viewed the belief that children are one's own as the "necessary result of placing the mind in such circumstances" and "an operation of the soul, when we are so situated, as unavoidable as to feel the passion of love, when we receive benefits; or hatred, when we meet with injuries" (EHU 5.8; SBN 46). A

survey of the relative proportions of marital encounters to opportunities afforded to the most likely rivals during the crucial period will induce a correspondent degree of belief according to Hume's theory of belief in the outcomes of games of chance (T 1.3.11.9–13; SBN 127–30), and for Hume the belief arising in these cases is as irresistible, even if not as strong, as the beliefs arising from "proofs." The degree of family resemblance the offspring bears to the father can be a crucial factor that overwhelms all other considerations (T 1.3.9.10, 1.3.9.13; SBN 111–12, 113–14). Even the testimony of the wife herself and of bystanders, as unreliable as it is likely to be in cases of this sort, will not be discounted, especially because, as Hume was careful to declare, men will often want to be deceived in this matter (T 1.3.13.16, 1.3.13.18; SBN 152, 153).

But these are merely ancillary considerations. The most decisive factor is that, in the general case, the naturally occurring attraction between sexual partners is bound up with passions of kindness and benevolence (T 2.2.11; SBN 394–96). These passions should give rise to some degree of fidelity on the one side and trust on the other, without the need for any special artifice to symbolize chastity or punish infidelity. Yet, in the opinion of the Hume of the *Treatise*, all nations and ages have concurred in considering women and girls to have a strong and disproportionate obligation to be chaste and modest (T 3.2.12.9; SBN 573). The trivial and anatomical difference is not enough to explain why. At a minimum, it must be observed that adultery does in fact occur (not everything that can happen will happen), and it must be further supposed or feared that, in the absence of remedial measures, it could occur so frequently as to undermine the factors leading men to believe themselves to be fathers. These are not points Hume made, but perhaps he considered them too obvious to bear mention.

After *Treatise* 3.2.12.3 (SBN 571), which carries the argument as far as I have considered it here, Hume ceased to continue the investigation in his own voice. He instead turned to discuss the opinions of two other parties, a speculative philosopher and the world. These two parties are divided over the alternative, normative and the naturalistic readings of the striking passage from *Treatise* 3.2.12.3 (SBN 570).

A speculative philosopher, Hume claimed, would "examine the matter *a priori*," from a perspective grounded in antecedently established principles of justice. The speculative philosopher would reason that, because men are induced to labour for the maintenance and education of their children by the persuasion that they are their own it is "reasonable, and even necessary, to give them some security in this particular" (T 3.2.12.4; SBN 571). Various means of providing this security are then canvassed. However, all are ultimately rejected, *prima facie* because of their impracticality, but in good measure because making them practicable would involve injustices towards women that countervail the entitlements of men.

A first proposal is to deter women from infidelity by subjecting those proven to have committed adultery to severe public punishment. The speculative philosopher considers this an inadequate solution because it requires legal proof, which is often too difficult to come by in such cases (T 3.2.12.4; SBN 571). This is presented as a merely practical difficulty, but the flip side of the coin is that the remedy could only be strengthened by means of extra-legal proceedings against suspect women. The speculative philosopher considers this to be too high a cost to pay for male security about paternity.

The speculative philosopher next considers that women who are only suspected of adultery might be subjected to the punishment of infamy or loss of reputation attended with “a peculiar degree of shame . . . above what arises merely from [the] injustice” of infidelity (T 3.2.12.4; SBN 571). This, too, is rejected as impractical. Even though people care about how others view them, and even though the court of public opinion will reach decisions on slight evidence, the temptation to infidelity is so strong, the circumstances that give rise to the temptation are so difficult to anticipate and counteract, and the prospects of evading or mitigating the consequences of the indiscretion so considerable, that this proposal also seems impracticable.

A society might attempt to combat the strong natural inclination to have sex, and the “insensible and seducing” circumstances that arouse it, by education in the conventions of modesty, that is, by training girls from infancy to be revolted by “all expressions, and postures, and liberties, that have an immediate relation to that enjoyment” (T 3.2.12.5; SBN 572). But Hume maintained that the speculative philosopher would consider even the combination of these solutions to be ineffective.

For what means, wou'd he say, of perswading mankind, that the transgressions of conjugal duty are more infamous than any other kind of injustice, when 'tis evident they are more excusable, upon account of the greatness of the temptation? And what possibility of giving a backwardness to the approaches of a pleasure, to which nature has inspir'd so strong a propensity; and a propensity that 'tis absolutely necessary in the end to comply with, for the support of the species? (T 3.2.12.6; SBN 572)

Here, the impracticability of the proposed measures is bound up with considerations of justice towards women. The greatness of the temptation, and the fact that it is necessary that we succumb to it provides an excuse sufficient to mitigate our condemnation, and this leads the speculative philosopher to conclude that people could not be persuaded to consider female infidelity to be a particularly serious vice.

However, Hume went on to claim that this scepticism arises from an imperfect knowledge of human nature (T 3.2.12.6; SBN 572), and that the world manages to generate all the beliefs and practices the speculative philosopher considers “rather to be wish’d than hop’d for” (T 3.2.12.6; SBN 572).

Those, who have an interest in the fidelity of women, naturally disapprove of their infidelity, and all the approaches to it. Those, who have no interest, are carried along with the stream [, and are also apt to be affected with sympathy for the general interests of society<sup>18</sup>]. Education takes possession of the ductile minds of the fair sex in their infancy. And when a general rule of this kind is once establish’d, men are apt to extend it beyond those principles, from which it first arose. (T 3.2.12.7; SBN 572)

Whereas the speculative philosopher’s reasoning is based on the notion that a male’s contribution to child-care entitles him to some special assurance that the children are his own, the world is not motivated by any such quasi-contractual considerations. Its reasonings are instead “form’d . . . naturally, and without reflection” (T 3.2.12.7; SBN 572). They are the product of the self-interest and fears of some, the sympathy of others, the force of education, and the influence of general rules.

There are some people “who have an interest in the fidelity of women,” Hume claimed. He did not say who these people are or what gives them their interest. But the later reference to general rules suggests how an interest might arise, and so, who would have it. Were women generally promiscuous, experience of that fact would establish a general rule that would considerably weaken, or even countermand, the factors leading a man to believe that he is the father of his child. Even were only some women known to be promiscuous, their behaviour would serve as the foundation for a general rule concerning the behaviour of others like them. The more alike, the more certain the inference. But it is a feature of the way general rules work that they can be extended to only accidentally resembling cases. Whenever there is some striking resemblance, even if unrelated to the truly efficacious circumstance, the inference from the rule will have some strength.

Supposing that this influence of general rules is widely felt, even if not explicitly recognized in theory, there would be two primary groups who have an interest in the fidelity of women. Prospective and new mothers would be concerned that instances of infidelity in women like themselves could call their own compartment into question and lead their partners to deny paternity and refuse support. And the husbands of fertile wives<sup>19</sup> would be concerned that these same instances would call the conduct of their own wives into question, leading them to be denigrated as fools and cuckolds by their peers. Each group can be expected to condemn female infidelity in the strongest terms.

These two groups constitute only a segment of human societies. Among the others are the young, the old, and the (hetero)sexually uncommitted or disinterested, including the “debauch’d batchelors” and infertile women Hume mentioned later. However, because those with an interest in female fidelity can be expected to vent disapproval for any instances of infidelity or anything suggestive of it, and because passions are contagious and readily communicated from those who feel them to those who have no concern in the matter (T 3.3.1.7; SBN 575–76), the sentiments of a segment of society can propagate beyond its bounds.

A further factor influences the uncommitted as well: sympathy for the general interests of society. Just as the world’s disapproval of female immodesty and infidelity is not based on any reflection on male rights or entitlements, so this sympathy is, as Hume put it, “form’d by the world naturally, and without reflection” (T 3.2.12.7; SBN 572). It is an instinctive reaction to an evident fact (adultery occasionally occurs), and the fear this arouses (men will suspect their mates of adultery and fail to love their children, burdening society with large numbers of inadequately supported youth, which will be to the detriment of all). The chastity and modesty of women is accordingly taken to be in the social interest. Some striking instances of the extent to which this is a truly natural and unreflective reaction will be mentioned in a moment.

Hume went on to maintain that education and the influence of general rules extend the condemnation of female immodesty and infidelity to those whose interests are most opposed to any such condemnation. Young women and girls, who have the most to lose in terms of freedom of association, freedom of expression, and reputation, are educated from infancy to fear the consequences of violating these constraints.<sup>20</sup> Even debauched bachelors are influenced. One would think that if a bachelor is debauched, he would take considerable delight in sexually provocative displays on the part of women and would go to some effort and expense to expose himself to them. But, Hume wryly observed, having once obtained what he most wants, his socialization takes effect, and he discovers that he “cannot choose but be shock’d with any instance of lewdness and impudence in women” (T 3.2.12.7; SBN 572).

While education extends respect for the rule well beyond those who have an interest in seeing it observed, the influence of resemblance extends the rule’s application to only accidentally similar cases, such as that of barren and post-menopausal women, while preventing it from being extended to importantly related but remarkably non-resembling cases, notably that of men (T 1.3.13.8; SBN 147). This is one striking instance of how the world’s attitudes prove to be unreflective. The behaviour of infertile women is only tenuously relevant to the world’s concerns over the abandonment of children, whereas male promiscuity has a direct impact on the problem.<sup>21</sup> But rules are most naturally generalized to resembling cases. Because infertile women have female sex organs whereas there is

nothing a husband can do that could lead his wife to suspect that the child she is bearing is not her own, a “remarkable difference” prevents an association of ideas in the latter case while an irrelevant similarity facilitates its extension in the former (T 3.2.12.7; SBN 573). Either way, the rule is not properly applied.

The attitudes of the world prove to be natural and unprincipled in another way as well.

There are many particulars in the point of honour both of men and women, whose violations, when open and avow'd, the world never excuses, but which it is more apt to overlook, when the appearances are sav'd, and the transgression is secret and conceal'd. Even those, who know with equal certainty, that the fault is committed, pardon it more easily, when the proofs seem in some measure oblique and equivocal, than when they are direct and undeniable. (T 1.3.13.16; SBN 152)

From the same principles we may account for those observations of the Cardinal de Retz, that there are many things, in which the world wishes to be deceiv'd; and that it more easily excuses a person in acting than in talking contrary to the decorum of his profession and character.<sup>22</sup> (T 1.3.13.18; SBN 153)

Where women are concerned, the moral would be that the world more easily excuses a woman for the greater vice of infidelity than for the lesser of immodesty.

These passages highlight a further disagreement between the world, which can overlook even known violations in the point of honour of women as long as they are discreet, and the speculative philosopher, who claims that infamy “is inflicted by the world upon surmizes, and conjectures, and proofs, that would never be receiv'd in any court of judicature” (T 3.2.12.4; SBN 571). According to Hume, the very factor that, according to the speculative philosopher, makes public legal punishment so difficult to justify in cases of adultery, namely a degree of secrecy, is precisely the one that leads the world to be inclined to overlook these same indiscretions, even when it knows for a fact that they have occurred. Modesty, that is, whatever is conventionally agreed to constitute a pretence of chastity, is far more important to the world than the real thing, and discretion excuses infidelity, perhaps even in the eyes of the wronged husband, who will take some comfort in the efforts at concealment on the part of those in the know, since they serve as a mark of ongoing respect and consideration (T 1.3.13.14; SBN 151).

In sum, this early account of chastity and modesty ought to be read as a contribution to social psychology rather than to normative ethics. It is, after all, an account of the natural and unreflective reasoning of the world on this matter, not of the conclusions of the speculative philosopher, whose attempt to ground

these virtues in *a priori* considerations ends in scepticism. Given Hume's view that moral distinctions are explained by the satisfaction or uneasiness we feel in contemplating characters (T 3.1.2.3; SBN 471), we would think that explaining how female chastity and modesty have come to be widely approved would be the same, for him, as explaining how they have come to be widely *felt* to be virtuous. But this is not quite the same as establishing that they *are* virtuous. As Hume carefully put it, "We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases: But in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous" (T 3.1.2.3; SBN 471). And when one examines the details of his account, one finds subtle indications that he might not have shared the feeling he attributed to others. The account is not given in his own voice, but attributed to two other parties; speculative reasoning concerning the demands of justice and natural, unreflective reactions to evident facts are divided between the two parties; the former party considers transgressions of conjugal duty to be more excusable than any other kind of injustice because of the greatness of the temptation (T 3.2.12.6; SBN 572); and the latter party develops attitudes that are ineptly extended and applied. The Hume of the *Treatise* may nonetheless have concurred with the belief that women have special obligations to be chaste and modest. Whether he did would depend on how seriously he took the possibility that the sexual impulse could come to be so promiscuously indulged by so many as to undermine the factors naturally leading men to believe themselves to be fathers of their children. This is not a topic on which he declared himself. The De Retz passage suggests that a sufficient degree of discretion should be all it takes to deal with the problem, but that, too, is not said in his own voice. If the Hume of the *Treatise* did accept that women have special obligations to be chaste and modest, the factors that have just been noted foreshadow later developments.

Notwithstanding this ambivalence, *Treatise* 3.2.12 does unequivocally explain how female chastity and modesty have come to be so widely approved of, even though they are not natural. Moreover, *Treatise* 3.2.12 provides a striking instance of how education, voluntary conventions, and the merely apparent interests of a segment of society can conspire to restrain one of the strongest of natural inclinations, in the process instilling widespread respect for a virtue that has questionable social utility, subjects women and girls to unjust and disproportionate constraints, and is ineptly extended and applied. If education, convention, and utility can do this for the artificial virtues of chastity and modesty, then there can be no objection to supposing they can do the same for as truly and generally useful an institution as the rules of justice. The universal approbation and blame that attend the observance or transgression of the rules of justice are therefore entirely compatible with considering them to be artificial rather than natural, and the world's attitudes to female chastity and modesty provides a striking example of why. In the end, this is the only point *Treatise* 3.2.12 was written to establish.

## II. Inheritance of Property

I have presented Hume's account of the world's moral psychology as grounded on the fear that instances of female adultery could compromise the care of children, and I have suggested that Hume's speculative philosopher might have regarded discretion as the most just and effective solution to this problem. In making this case, I have laid aside the possibility that the world might be motivated by a further consideration, the desire to see property pass to natural sons, and with that, the possibility that it might demand something closer to legal proof, possibly valuing it so much as to purchase it at the cost of vast sums of money and decades of legal wrangling.<sup>23</sup> While I do not mean to question the careful historical work that has been done to establish that these were very important considerations for many eighteenth-century European families, I have three reasons for denying that it was a feature of Hume's account in the *Treatise*.

First, there is no textual support. Baier—who in “Hume on Women's Complexion” observed that “[e]verything Hume writes about [marriage], both in his first discussion and later, keeps paramount the question of the good of children”—had earlier stated that “[by Hume's account the male . . . also wants to ensure that his property is not passed on to a *wrong object*,” citing SBN 570, which corresponds to T 3.2.12.1–3 (“Good Men's Women,” 7). But Hume did not say this in that passage. All he said is that men must believe that “their natural instinct is not directed to a wrong object, when they give a loose to love and tenderness.”<sup>24</sup>

Hume did identify the desire to leave possessions to those who are dearest as a cause of industry (T 3.2.3.11; SBN 510–11). But this is to identify industry as an effect of love of others, while saying nothing about the cause of that motivation. It would get the point backwards to identify industry as the cause motivating a male to demand chastity of his wife so that he could be assured of having a natural heir to benefit from his industry. It would, moreover, be dangerously circular. It needs to be explained why a man would want to have an heir in preference to living the life of a debauched bachelor.

Hume did identify land or fixed possessions that have been inherited through a descent composed entirely of males as a special cause of vanity (T 2.1.9.11; SBN 307–308). But this cause is backward-looking, opportunistic, and only tenuously related to the chastity and modesty of living women. “'Tis not every removal in time, which has the effect of producing veneration and esteem. We are not apt to imagine our posterity will excel us, or equal our ancestors” (T 2.3.8.11; SBN 436). Husbands are supposed to be concerned that their wives be chaste. If they are also concerned that their grandmothers and great-grandmothers *were* chaste, the former has no bearing on the latter, and the most formidable efforts to ensure the former can do nothing to change the past, which can only be excused or concealed, not remedied. And if husbands are concerned to have a natural (and

hopefully male) heir for their land or fixed possessions, that is a concern that is not explained by their backward-looking pride in the male ancestry of those items. That backward-looking pride will be felt whether they have an heir or not, and the forward view can give no pride because the future is unknown, and whether the eldest son (or grandson or great grandson), supposing there is one, will do his part to perpetuate the family can never be assured.

Second, a concern with rightful inheritance is not well suited to support the conclusion Hume wanted to draw in the *Treatise*. For Hume, whatever it is that leads people to consider women to have a greater obligation to be chaste and modest than men, it is something that has been “the practice and sentiments of all nations and ages” (T 3.2.12.9; SBN 573), even primitive, indigent, and nomadic nations and ages with no land or fixed possessions to endow. Hume was a later-born son in a society that understood inheritance in terms of the doctrine of primogeniture. He also depended on the largess of his family for much of his early life. And he never married. He will have viewed this matter from the perspective of the later-born child who benefitted from love of children rather than the perspective of the husband with property to endow (witness the particularly sharp observation of “Dialogue” 23). He will have been less inclined to universalize the practices and attitudes of his own time and place.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, a concern to perpetuate the family line through a succession of males does not fit well with Hume's account of the passions or the laws that determine property. Books 2 and 3 of the *Treatise* identify love of children as a passion. They do not identify the desire for children as a passion. Whereas Kames declared that “[r]espect to an antient family moves [a man] to take a wife” (*Essays*, 287), for Hume what motivates men and women to bond together to form the first societies is the desire to have sex.<sup>26</sup> Children are an unintentional by-product of that passion, and love of children only arises consequent to their birth (T 2.3.1.8, 3.2.2.4; SBN 402, 486). The desire to leave wealth to children is a yet more remote consequence of that love. Attraction between the sexes and love of children are prerequisites for the very existence of society and the creation of landed families with fixed possessions. And once such families have emerged, the regard paid to them is exclusively backward-looking. One takes pride in one's lineage, and is ashamed of being an upstart and seeks to conceal the fact (T 2.3.8.11–12, 2.1.9.10–13, 2.2.5.10; SBN 436–37, 307–309, 361). An upstart who can feel no pride in his lineage might nonetheless hope to begin a family that will eventually be respected. But hope is not pride. The respect, should it come, will come long after the upstart is dead and in a position to feel pride. And if the upstart is labouring for the anticipated pride of the progeny, that begs the question of the cause of the upstart's concern for the progeny.<sup>27</sup>

Hume's account of the rules that determine property provides no more support than his account of the passions. *Treatise* 3.2.3.11 (SBN 510–13) observes that

while the interests of society demand that the property of the deceased pass to someone, they do not dictate who that person should be. Reason would dictate that it ought to be those who are dearest to the deceased, as this promotes industry. But that need not be the first-born son.<sup>28</sup>

### III. Imbalance of Obligations

Whereas the Hume of the *Treatise* was inclined to take moral distinctions to be straightforwardly identified with our feelings of approval and disapproval for characters, the later Hume was more explicitly of the view that the development of principles of justice, and even of certain conceptions of virtue and vice, can be the work of ages.<sup>29</sup> Attitudes on these matters evolve as originally plausible principles are discovered to give rise to unintended inconveniences. Where the world's natural and unreflective attitudes to female chastity and modesty are concerned, there is at least one pressing inconvenience, created by the imbalance in the obligations that are naturally and unreflectively placed on the two sexes. Towards the close of his discussion of chastity in the *Treatise*, Hume remarked that society's interest in the chastity of men is weaker than its interest in that of women, and that men's obligation to be chaste is considered correspondingly weaker (T 3.2.12.9; SBN 570). This furthers the main point of *Treatise* 3.2.12, that moral approbation and blame are determined by a regard to the (apparent) interest of society, but it raises the question of how a society could reconcile any degree of male promiscuity with the demand that all human beings with female sex organs, even the aged and the barren, be chaste. In a heterosexual society where all women are modest, or "backward" to sexual opportunities, and only men are allowed some indulgence of venereal appetites, this would mean that female infidelity, which after all takes two, would most likely be instigated by men, giving rise to the inconvenience that those principally responsible for the transgression are less blamed for it. Aside from considerations of justice, this is not very effective.

In later work pursuing this question, Hume only ever considered one way to reconcile male promiscuity with female fidelity: polygamy. Serial monogamy, or what Hume called "divorces," commits both men and women to be faithful to one another for the period their affair lasts, and so imposes equal demands of chastity on both sexes. Arrangements where a man might have a principal consort, while keeping one or two mistresses, give men *some* liberty to indulge their appetites, but if the consort and the mistresses are not given an equal liberty, the arrangement is tantamount to polygamy. Hume rejected alternatives that do not involve female participation without further comment or without mention.<sup>30</sup>

As noted earlier, some commentators have suggested that Hume would have considered prostitution to be a solution, but, as with inheritance, there is no textual warrant for this suggestion. Prostitution may have been prevalent and, to

some degree, accepted in Hume's society.<sup>31</sup> Hume likely read Mandeville's argument for tolerating prostitution, and may also have read *Stews*, often attributed to Mandeville.<sup>32</sup> But when Hume read Mandeville he will have read of women "hired as publickly as Horses at a Livery Stable" (*Bees*, 95); he will have seen sex work described as "the worst of Employments" (*Bees*, 97); and he will have read of a necessity to "sacrifice" one part of "Womankind" to "preserve" another (*Bees*, 97) grounded in a supposed impossibility of curbing male sexual rapaciousness "by any law or precept" (*Bees*, 95). If he read *Stews*, he will also have read that "nothing but meer Necessity obliges [women] to continue in that Course [as prostitutes]," because it is "plain" that "they themselves in Reality utterly abhor it" (*Stews*, 9). He will have seen the author of *Stews* propose that "the Mistress [of the brothel] have an absolute Command in her own House, and that no Woman [working in it] be suffer'd to go abroad without her leave" (*Stews*, 14). (One of that author's concerns was to prevent prostitutes from working independently of the brothels [*Stews*, 15], an offense he proposed to deter with the threat of transportation [15]). Hume will also have noted that the author of *Stews* considered sex work to be so unattractive that the only way to recruit sex workers would be to either rely on young men to "debauch" girls or import them from elsewhere (*Stews*, 62–66). Given these sorts of pronouncements from those who meant to advocate institutionalized sex work, Hume would have had reason to consider the industry to be a form of slavery, attended with the inconveniences he was later to describe at such length in "Populousness."<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, he will not have considered these inconveniences to be inevitable. Unlike Mandeville and the author of *Stews*, Hume did not accept that male sexuality is any more irrepressible or any less ductile than female. While the philosopher of *Treatise* 3.2.12 declared the sexual drive to be a strong propensity that it is necessary for both sexes to comply with for the survival of the species, the world shows the philosopher that the drive is one that can very well be suppressed. Most obviously, it is suppressed in young girls, but Hume did not recognize any distinction between the impressionability of male and female children. He believed both that the females can be brought up to be backwards to male sexual advances and the males to be shocked by any instance of lewdness or impudence in women. If he ever patronized prostitutes, he may have been among those who could not help but be shocked. He may also have had an opportunity to verify the observation the author of *Stews* had made about the degree to which they enjoyed their work—that nothing but lechery could render it bearable and they will long ago have lost the last degree of that (*Stews*, 9).

This reflection, had he made it himself, would only have been line with the consequences of his own account of chastity and modesty. Hume considered the world to value female chastity and modesty to such an extent that it will not tolerate it in post-menopausal or barren women (T 3.2.12.7; SBN 572–73; EPM 4.7; SBN

207–208). It could hardly, therefore, tolerate it in sex workers, on pain of making the admiration and benefits offered to those more successful in the occupation a subversive counter-force to the social attitudes promoting female chastity and modesty. Sex workers would have to be despised, even by their patrons.

The Houses I speak of are allow'd to be no where but in the most slovenly and unpolish'd part of the Town, where Seamen and Strangers of no Repute chiefly Lodge and Resort. The Street in which most of them stand is counted scandalous, and the Infamy is extended to all the Neighbourhood round it. . . . The Female Traders that come to these Evening Exchanges are always the Scum of the People. (*Bees*, 96)

Like homosexuality and masturbation, prostitution is a solution to the imbalance of male and female duties that Hume cared “not to examine more particularly.” He would have had more than reticence as a reason for dismissing it. Polygamy is the only way of reconciling male promiscuity with female chastity that he ever considered worth a more particular examination.

#### IV. Confinement and Sociability in Hume’s Later Works

##### *The Essays*

When Hume turned to examine polygamy, he judged it to be equally unacceptable. For Hume, polygamy is inseparable from jealousy. Jealousy is not a passion that Hume examined in Book 2 of the *Treatise* or in the later *Dissertation on the Passions*. But together with such other largely unexamined passions as interest, resentment, benevolence, and ambition, it came to have a large role to play in the explanations of human behaviour offered in the *Essays*, the *History*, and the *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*. (One of the tragedies of the later development of Hume’s thought is that he chose to write his *Dissertation on the Passions* as a reordered series of excerpts from *Treatise 2*, rather than rethink the subject in light of the passions that his work was showing him were most useful for explaining human behaviour and the notions of character and governing passion that undergird it.) Lacking any precise definition or analysis on Hume’s part, I take his references to jealousy in “Polygamy and Divorces”—and other contexts where comportment between the sexes is at issue—to refer to the desire to keep what one considers one’s property from being used by others. In a society where ratios of the sexes are roughly equal, a man could only keep multiple wives to himself by fencing them off from other men, and so, treating them as a form of property, degrading them to the level of chattel, who can be “sold, beaten, and killed” (“Polygamy and Divorces,” 184–88). Hume repeatedly and strongly condemned the confinement of women for many

reasons. He declared it to be a “real usurpation” that destroys the “nearness of rank, not to say equality” that naturally exists between men and women (“Polygamy and Divorces,” 184). He considered it to be destructive of what is most pleasing in interactions between the sexes, which is incidentally what is most pleasing in life (“Arts and Sciences,” 134; “Polygamy and Divorces,” 184). And he considered the presence of women to be requisite if social interactions are to be agreeable rather than merely useful (“Dialogue,” 32, 47, 49; “Arts and Sciences,” 134).

At least by 1742, when the essays containing these opinions appeared, Hume had reached the conclusion that, whatever might be “the practice and sentiments of all nations and ages” (T 3.2.12.9; SBN 573), male promiscuity cannot be reconciled with female chastity. The best policy is to place equal obligations to chastity on both sexes. This is the stated conclusion of Hume’s essay on “Polygamy and Divorces,” of 1742, which recommends lifelong monogamy.

There may be a parallel, unstated conclusion. “Polygamy and Divorces” begins by describing marriage as a legal contract, which, like any other, is open to negotiation between the parties and can take any form they agree upon. Children must be provided for, but there are various ways this might be done, and affluent circumstances make it possible to leave it to the parent who is most assured of her parenthood, and those employed to work under her watchful eye. Presumably, even where wealth is in the hands of men, men can be expected to be as willing to support the children their spouses bring with them as to indulge their spouses’ other luxurious desires, as Hume had already come close to remarking at *Treatise* 3.2.2.5 (SBN 487).<sup>34</sup> One might read the essay’s ensuing election of monogamy as a mere pretence for presenting these introductory thoughts, and so take it as arguing that there is nothing intrinsically immoral about even female promiscuity. A further possibility, therefore, is that already in 1742 the option that both sexes might be allowed to be equally promiscuous, particularly in affluent circumstances, would have been in the back of Hume’s mind.

“Polygamy and Divorces” draws a stark contrast between attitudes towards women in Eastern and European societies. The former is characterized by barbarism, polygamy, and confinement, the latter by polite society, monogamy, and artificial virtues of chastity and modesty. Whereas in the *Treatise* Hume had simply spoken of the attitudes of the world, here he recognized that there is more than one world, and that his world, the civil society of aristocratic, eighteenth-century Europe, had rather different attitudes towards comportment between the sexes than other worlds. Whereas his world permitted socialization between unmarried men and women, demanded legal proof before inflicting public punishment, and would tolerate infidelity if done in secret by women who kept up a pretence of modesty, there were worlds that confined women to the home and would inflict public punishments on the bare suspicion of adultery or something less blameable than that. And whereas his world sought to prevent female promiscuity by

inculcating artificial virtues, other worlds preferred strict supervision and the execution of transgressors.<sup>35</sup>

But this neat opposition broke down sometime between 1742, when “Polygamy and Divorces” was first published, and 1751, when “A Dialogue” appeared. In that work, Hume announced that confinement was not just practiced by polygamous cultures, but had also been practiced by the monogamous ancient Greeks (“Dialogue,” 44). This is not something that Hume considered to be established knowledge. The care he took to argue for it from literary remains suggests that he took it to be a new discovery, or at the very least, to be not widely known (see esp. “Dialogue,” 44–46). The discovery would have forced Hume to reflect that the worlds that he had so sharply distinguished from one another in “Polygamy and Divorces” were closer to one another than he had supposed. Polygamy requires that women be fenced off from other men. But the example of ancient Greece shows that confinement can occur even in monogamous societies. Hume must have wondered why. He would not have had to look far for another answer than the desire to be assured of parentage. “[E]ven a rape dishonours,” wrote Adam Smith, “and the innocence of the mind cannot, in our imagination, wash out the pollution of the body” (533). The imagination that Smith here attributed to all of us, “our imagination,” is the jealous imagination. It is the imagination of women as a form of property and of any trespass onto that property as a form of spoilage. Such attitudes are all that is needed to inspire a culture of confinement, quite independently of any concern with parentage. Hume had condemned these attitudes in his essays, but he had also associated them exclusively with polygamous cultures. He may have come to think that those cultures have no monopoly on jealousy and proprietary attitudes towards women.

### *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*

Whatever his reason for doing so, there is a change in Hume’s later work on comportment between the sexes. Rather than draw his entire account from a consideration of the issues of childrearing and paternity, Hume began to speak of a tension between domestic and sociable pleasures (“Dialogue,” 32), and between useful and agreeable virtues (“Dialogue,” 47). The care of children remains an issue, and a disproportionate obligation to chastity in women is still identified as having utility (EPM 4.5–7, 6.14; SBN 206–208, 238–39), but the later work also seeks to make a place for the agreeable aspects of interactions between the sexes, and proposes that doing so may have to come at the cost of tolerating “intrigues and gallantry” (“Dialogue,” 47). In this connection, emphasis is not placed on chastity and modesty, but on secrecy and mitigating the jealousy and the “gallantry” of men.

Hume's discussion of comportment between the sexes in *Morals* opens with a repetition of two claims that had been made in the *Treatise*: that the maintenance of children requires parental fidelity, and that sexual infidelity "is much more pernicious in women than in men" (EPM 4.5–6, SBN 206–207). This time, the claims are clearly made in his own voice. But there is nonetheless a dialectical element to Hume's presentation. *Morals* divides virtues into two pairs, those which are useful or agreeable, either to self or to others. It discusses virtues in each of the resulting four categories in separate sections. Hume's first remarks on chastity occur in the large portion of *Morals* (sections 2–5) devoted to the discussion of virtues that are useful to society, and there Hume made it clear that it is only its social utility that makes chastity a virtue. "Without such a utility . . . such a virtue would never have been thought of" (EPM 4.5; SBN 207).<sup>36</sup> The claim that infidelity is more pernicious in women is based on a clear calculation of utilities: infidelity on the part of either partner will impair the cohesiveness of the family, but it will not impair the concern both parents feel for their children. But infidelity on the part of women can prevent male love of children, whereas infidelity on the part of men can have no such effect. It is bad either way, but worse where women are concerned.

However, this is only what (some) utilitarian considerations would dictate. There are agreeable as well as useful virtues, and it is not clear that, where the two come into conflict, the latter always trump the former. Hume wrote that on the utilitarian calculus, "the laws of chastity are much stricter over the one sex than over the other" (EPM 4.6; SBN 207, my emphasis). But he did not write that they ought to be. *Morals* 4.7 (SBN 207) itself suggests that what is most useful is not always what is most agreeable or what is most acceptable. The hunchback in the Rue de Quincempolix was useful. But that did not make him a handsome fellow. Our judgments of what is handsome are influenced by further considerations. In the immediate context of *Morals* 4.7 (SBN 207), the influence of general rules extends utilitarian considerations to cases where they do not apply. But the reverse effect, refraining from considering things to be agreeable simply because they are useful, is also possible, as the case of the hunchback itself shows.

Before turning to the reverse effect, a further passage merits comment. In the 4th edition of *Morals* of 1760, Hume added the following strong remark on female chastity:

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*. The greatest regard, which can be acquired by that sex, is derived from their fidelity; and a woman becomes cheap and vulgar, loses her rank, and is exposed to every insult, who is deficient in this particular. The smallest failure is here sufficient to blast her character. A female has so many opportunities of secretly indulging these appetites, that nothing can give us

security but her absolute modesty and reserve; and where a breach is once made, it can scarcely ever be fully repaired. If a man behave with cowardice on one occasion, a contrary conduct reinstates him in his character. But by what action can a woman, whose behaviour has once been dissolute, be able to assure us, that she has formed better resolutions, and has self-command enough to carry them into execution? (EPM 6.14, SBN 238–39)

The passage forms one of two paragraphs that were added to the 1760 *Morals*. Its first sentence mentions a consideration that is one chief source of our attitudes to female chastity and infidelity, and this consideration had been the topic of the earlier paragraph. It is the fact that “[q]ualities often derive their merit from complicated sources.” That earlier paragraph identifies one complicated source for the merit ascribed to honesty, promise-keeping, and veracity, the fact that these qualities are not only useful to society but, after they become entrenched, elevate the reputation of the person who possesses them. This complication of causes leads them to acquire a merit that is out of proportion to their mere utility. The later paragraph then identifies a further complication of causes responsible for the disproportionately high blame placed on female infidelity. In this case, the additional source is the ease with which adultery may take place in secret. The ease of concealing adultery makes it impossible for a woman who has once come under suspicion to fully reassure her community. The impossibility of doing anything that can remove suspicion, in turn, inflates the infamy attached to any suggestion that adultery may have taken place, making the smallest failure sufficient to blast a woman’s character. Hence, the high blame that is thrown on any failure.<sup>37</sup>

If this is correct, then it would be a mistake to read this passage evaluatively rather than descriptively. It does not convey Hume’s own moral judgment. Phrases such as “sufficient to blast her character” merely describe how society reacts, not Hume’s own view. His purpose was to explain why, in this case, such high blame is assigned on account of such small failures, though in other cases, such a policy would be condemned as unjustly extreme. This is compatible with maintaining that the high blame is entirely inappropriate.

### “A Dialogue”

*Morals* is devoted to presenting an account of human moral judgments. It takes those judgments as data to be explained, and looks for an underlying regularity that accounts for them. It does not first ask whether the judgments it seeks to explain are the correct ones. It suffices that a large and painstakingly collected body of historical sources testifies to their persistence over time and across cultures. Having established that we approve of qualities of character that are useful or agreeable to the person themselves or to others, *Morals* is done. Its conclusion

tries to make a case for why one should act in accord with motives identified as virtuous, even when doing otherwise might go unnoticed, but the work does not seek to determine what is best in any given circumstance or consider what happens when different components of the four-fold criterion come into conflict. That is left to "A Dialogue," which devotes considerable attention to the case of comportment between the sexes.<sup>38</sup> After an initial survey of manners in ancient Greece and modern France, the topic first comes to a head at "Dialogue" 32 (SBN 335).

[T]here is almost as great difficulty, I acknowledge, to justify French as Greek gallantry; except only, that the former is much more natural and agreeable than the latter. But our neighbours, 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. ("Dialogue" 32; SBN 335)

This is a complex passage. It presumes an understanding of what gallantry is in general, of what French and Greek gallantry are in particular, and of why they are both difficult to justify. The "but" that begins the second sentence can also be a tripping stone. I read the passage as saying that whatever difficulties there may be with French and Greek gallantry, the French version is preferable because it is more natural and agreeable, and it is preferable even though ("but") it sacrifices some domestic pleasures for the sake of sociable pleasures. But this general point needs to be understood in light of Hume's account of gallantry, and that, in turn, calls for some consideration of the difficult question of Hume's view of women's place in society.<sup>39</sup>

In "Polygamy and Divorces" (184), Hume spoke of a "nearness of rank, not to say equality," between men and women. But in "Arts and Sciences" (133), he claimed that men have a "greater strength both of mind and body," that gives them superiority over women. These are difficult claims to reconcile.<sup>40</sup> But comments he had made in the *Treatise*, as well as in "Arts and Sciences," provide a way of doing so. The key is the concept of gallantry, and Hume's understanding of the nature of male superiority. Hume believed that such superiority as men have over women holds only on average, maintaining that it "often happens" that "the mother [is] possess of a superior spirit and genius to the father," and that in some cases, the superiority is so considerable as to incline the children to rather wish to be identified with her (T 2.1.9.13; SBN 309). In "Arts and Sciences," he further observed that overlapping degrees of ability do not just take place between individuals of different sexes, but between the old and the young, or the healthy and the disabled, or natives and foreigners. There are multiple different dimensions along which different people may excel one another, and for any degree by

which I exceed certain others, there will be others who exceed me to that same extent. Assuming a prerogative to dictate to others because of my superiority can only make me very uneasy when I find myself in the presence of those who are equally superior to me. Doing so in the presence of others whom I consider to be inferior but who do not share that opinion can culminate in the perpetual contest of abilities characteristic of heroic cultures. And it is disagreeable to always have to be prepared for combat, be it of arms or of wits.

This is where one sense of the complex Humean notion of gallantry enters on the scene (“Arts and Sciences,” 132–33). The individual who is gallant in this sense refrains from expressing a sense of superiority and may, when necessary to reassure the company, go to the opposite extreme of acting in a manner that, if not executed properly, might appear condescending. The aim is of course not to appear condescending, but to put everyone at ease, elevate everyone’s spirits, and facilitate sociability by suppressing a sense of superiority founded on degrees of difference that others might well contest, or that could just as well put the same individual at a disadvantage in some companies as at an advantage in others. It is not that one is acting in accord with a golden rule in the hope of not being lorded over in turn. It is rather that one has a sense that everyone will be happier and take more joy in one another’s company under this policy. As with the evolution of justice, this only works if others co-operate. If others put on airs, it is essential that the entire community make their disapproval clear. If others suppress expressions of superiority, it is essential that they be admired rather than despised for doing so, and that their efforts inspire emulation. It took time to discover the advantages of civility over a perpetual contest of authorities, and for civility to evolve. It is a recent discovery, unknown to the ancients, whose “rusticity” Hume condemned at length (for instance, “Arts and Sciences,” 128–30).

Hume did not use the term “gallantry” to refer to all expressions of the attitude I have just described. Though the *attitude* is equally applied to the old, the infirm, foreigners, and women, Hume used the *term* when the attitude is applied by men to women, never the reverse, and rarely, if at all, in other contexts. The upshot should be that in polite societies women are granted equal standing to men even if it is widely believed that, on average, men are superior. The equality of standing is merited because the average degree of male superiority is slight enough, and the violations in individual cases numerous enough that civility is mandated.

However, gallantry is not a moral, much less a legal policy. It is a rule of “good manners” (“Arts and Sciences,” 132). As such, it does not impose moral obligations or serve as a foundation for rights. Where rights and duties are concerned, general rules may still preserve an influence, particularly where calculations of utility are involved. But, as gallantry becomes entrenched in a society, it can establish practices that grant liberties and extend powers to women. In a gallant society the similar capacities of women entitle them to the respect of men, and such relative

and generalized weaknesses as are believed to remain call for polite disregard. Precisely what this means in actual practice will vary from society to society.

Being restricted in one way (as meaning comportment of men towards women), Hume's use of the term "gallantry" becomes fluid in another. It ends up referring to any of a variety of different ways in which men may interact with women, identified with the different ages and cultures in which they were practiced: the modern French, the ancient Greek, the Italian and Spanish of a generation ago, the Roman, the English, and so on.

"Greek gallantry" refers to the practice of ensuring the strict fidelity and constancy of women by confining them to the home. Hume did not say why this is difficult to justify. Presumably it is because the exclusion of women from society is too high a cost to pay for security about paternity. The presence of women is not only agreeable, it causes men to make more of an effort to be pleasant, engaging, and cooperative. This produces an improvement in the arts and in manners. It mitigates "rusticity" and is perhaps the chief cause of the development of civility, as the gallantry women inspire in men is extended more broadly ("Arts and Sciences," 134). And even in a monogamous context, the confinement of women is attended with many of the negative repercussions Hume had discussed in "Polygamy and Divorces."

"French gallantry" refers to the opposite policy of taking pride in having the wives of one's friends as mistresses (19; SBN 330), tolerating infidelity to the point of prostituting wives for social advancement (19; SBN 330–31), submitting to the government of women (23; SBN 332), and admitting women into "all transactions and all management of church and state" (46; SBN 339). "Dialogue" 32 (SBN 335) declares it to be "almost as difficult to justify" as its Greek alternative. The choice between the two is decided by the fact that ease, freedom, and open commerce between the sexes are much more natural and agreeable than strict fidelity and constancy. Utility is not mentioned. Whereas in *Morals* proper, strict fidelity and constancy is presented as useful both for society (EPM 4.5–6, SBN 206–207) and the woman herself (EPM 6.14; SBN 238–39), at "Dialogue" 32 (SBN 335), what is natural and agreeable is taken to suffice by itself to establish the preference. There is a claim that the French have resolved to sacrifice some of the domestic pleasures for the sake of sociable pleasures, but this claim opposes pleasures to other pleasures, not pleasures to utilities. Presumably, the devotion of wives is agreeable, the prospect of their being attracted by the affections of others disagreeable. But ease, freedom, and open commerce are also agreeable and jealousy disagreeable. The devotion of wives on the one side, and ease, freedom, and open commerce "are both good," according to "Dialogue" 32 (SBN 335), "and are somewhat difficult to reconcile; nor need we be surprized, if the customs of nations incline too much, sometimes to the one side, sometimes to the other."

At this point, it is possible to read Hume as pointing to an opposition between virtues of various sorts. The chastity of *Morals* 4.5–7 and 6.14 (SBN 206–207 and 238–39) is both useful and agreeable. The sociability of “Dialogue” 32 (SBN 335) is simply agreeable. It is also quite possible to read Hume as adopting a detached attitude to the conflict between these virtues and declaring that the choice between them is a function of circumstances that can vary from society to society. This is consistent with the larger project of “A Dialogue,” which is to reconcile the variability of cultural mores with the thesis that “the principles upon which men reason in morals are always the same” (“Dialogue” 36; SBN 335–36). “A Dialogue” does this by claiming that people are led to draw different conclusions from common basic principles. Sometimes this is because of different judgements concerning where the greatest utility lies, which is not always easily determined. Sometimes it is because the circumstances in which a people find themselves change what is most useful (“Dialogue” 38, SBN 336). Sometimes it is because the customs of different nations can produce a propensity to favour one kind of virtue (“Dialogue” 42; SBN 337–38). And sometimes it can be due to chance circumstances that defy explanation by general rules (“Dialogue” 50; SBN 340).

But this does not mean that the various conclusions drawn by different cultures are equally sound. There are “erroneous conclusions” that “can be corrected by sounder reasoning and a larger experience” (“Dialogue” 36; SBN 335). This is particularly the case with judgments concerning utility, which concerns a matter of fact (and chastity purports to be useful to society). Sometimes this matter of fact cannot be inferred from previously ascertained causes but can only be discovered by experience of the inconveniences that certain apparently useful practices give rise to. Thus, the Romans had excellent reasons to suppose the removal of tyrants by assassination to be a heroic act, virtuous in the highest degree, to which we “can reply nothing, but by showing the great inconveniences of assassination; which could any one have proved clearly to the ancients, he had reformed their sentiments in this particular” (“Dialogue” 31; SBN 335).

“Dialogue” 47 (SBN 339) declares the same to be the case with chastity: “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.” Hume is still not drawing a clearly normative conclusion. The passage does not endorse free commerce between the sexes. It merely observes that if we wish to have free commerce between the sexes we might need to sacrifice something that has some utility. But the continuation of the passage is rather more positive. Free commerce between the sexes proves to be the inverse of the assassination case. Assassination appears to have great utility but further experience reveals hidden but great inconveniences. Free commerce between the sexes appears to have great

disutility but further experience reveals that the inconveniences are not by far as great as were at first imagined. “Instances of license, daily multiplying, will weaken the scandal with the 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’” (“Dialogue” 47).

All three parts of this passage are worth considering further. Instances of licence are said to weaken the scandal with one sex and teach the other to adopt La Fontaine’s maxim. The sex that is being taught to adopt La Fontaine’s maxim is presumably the male sex. Women will know if they have been unfaithful, so a maxim concerning female infidelity with an “if one knows it not” component could hardly apply to them.<sup>41</sup> It must be their husbands at whom the maxim is directed. Seeing instances of license daily multiply, the husbands will be brought by degrees to think that it may not be such a disgrace if their wives are unfaithful and that it may be better not to be confronted with the evidence if they are. This means that the other sex, the one for whom the scandal is weakened, must be the female sex. Presumably, the point is that just as instances of licence teach men to adopt La Fontaine’s maxim, so they teach women to be more tolerant of the lapses of other women and less worried that the behaviour of other women will have an adverse effect on how they themselves are viewed by those around them. Thus, the two groups earlier conjectured to comprise *Treatise* 3.2.12.7’s (SBN 572’s) reference to “Those, who are interested in the fidelity of women” are both numbered to the offense.

Men still do not like female infidelity, but the two remaining parts of “Dialogue” 47 (SBN 339) show a striking indifference to the issue of paternity. The third part—“if one knows it not, it is nothing”—recalls De Retz’s claim that there are many things of which the world wishes to be deceived, and the earlier observation that there are many circumstances concerning the honour of men and women that are forgiven if properly concealed. A degree of secrecy and discretion on the part of principal parties and bystanders preserves appearances and mitigates the jealousies and the doubts about paternity that would otherwise ensue, and even if the infidelity is discovered, the attempt to conceal it is itself mollifying. Consistently with this, secrecy, which Hume never identified as a virtue in the *Treatise*, is repeatedly identified as such in *Morals* (6.21, 9.12, App. 4.2; SBN 243, 277, 313).

But the second part of the passage—“if one knows it, it is but a small matter”—is even more instructive. The comment condemns jealousy at the same time as it dismisses the need for the assurance of paternity that was the focus of so much attention in the *Treatise*. Even in a free and open society, paternity is not that difficult to determine if one is willing to rest with probable assurances and refrain from barely probable suspicions. And jealousy, with all its consequences, is simply disagreeable.

It is possible to take a step beyond what LaFontaine said about how to reconcile the useful and the agreeable aspects of interactions between the sexes, and Hume at least considered it, though not in his own voice<sup>42</sup>: “Some people are inclined to think that the best way of adjusting all differences, and of keeping the proper medium between the *agreeable* and the *useful* qualities of the sex, is to live with them after the manner of the Romans and the English . . . that is, without gallantry,<sup>43</sup> and without jealousy” (“Dialogue” 48; SBN 339–40).

This is a striking recommendation. It inverts traditional views about responsibility for sexual virtue and vice, by demanding as much, or more, restraint from men as women. The condemnation is directed at male pursuit of amours and attachments and male proprietary attitudes towards women rather than female immodesty and infidelity. In an open society, the temptations to infidelity can be too great to be resisted and all are better served when lapses are covered by secrecy and pretence rather than exposed for punishment or infamy. But while neither men nor women can be expected to be chaste, both can be expected to be modest and discreet, and men have a special obligation to refrain from sexual adventurism and special obligations to suppress sexual jealousy and anxieties about paternity.

There were limits to what Hume could say about comportment between the sexes without making himself notorious. In both the *Treatise* and the later works, many of his observations are put in the voice of others (the speculative philosopher, the world, De Retz, La Fontaine, “some people”) and it is left to the reader to draw conclusions from these observations. Even as much as he did say was exploited by his less charitable contemporaries to draw the most extreme consequences from his views. John Bonar represented him as arguing that “Adultery is very lawful, but sometimes not expedient” (28), and James Balfour of Pilrig charged that he proposed to make lechery, rather than chastity, the chief female virtue.<sup>44</sup> Reluctance to further court this sort of reaction may have been the only thing preventing Hume from putting his own imprimatur behind the proposal that deploring male jealousy and male lechery is a better way of reconciling the agreeable with the useful qualities of interactions between the sexes than valorizing female chastity and modesty. Supposing he did mean to endorse this approach, it is a further example of how a speculative philosopher’s merely theoretical account, and a society’s unreflective attitudes, can be corrected in unexpected ways by experience of their inconveniences.

## NOTES

Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 2015 meeting of the Hume Society and at Central Michigan University. I have benefitted from the comments of those in attendance on those occasions. I am grateful to Rachel Cohon, Roger Emerson, Henry

Fulton, Amy Schmitter, and two anonymous referees for this journal for extensive comments and discussion.

1 References are to Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Beauchamp, hereafter cited in the text as *Morals* or “EPM” followed by section and paragraph number, and to Hume, *Enquiries Concerning the Principles of Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Selby-Bigge, rev. by Nidditch, hereafter cited in the text as “SBN” followed by page numbers.

2 Most of those who have commented on Hume's views on comportment between the sexes have focused on his account of chastity and modesty in the *Treatise*, with scant attention to his later works, perhaps in the belief that Hume's thought on this matter did not change and that the *Treatise* provides the most detailed account of it. See Baier, “Good Men's Women,” 1; Immerwahr, “David Hume,” 359; Levey, “Under Constraint,” 213; Berry, “Lusty Women,” 417; and Villanueva Gardner, “Chastity,” 331–32, though Villanueva Gardner apologizes for doing only that, recognizing that Hume's views became more flexible in his later works. An exception is Guimarães, who notices many of the same facts and draws some of the same conclusions arrived at here, but does not offer a developmental hypothesis, instead painting a picture of Hume as having an underdeveloped and inconsistent account. A further and more general exception is Taylor, esp. 100, 120–29, and 148–152, who argues that Hume's views on moral evaluation developed over time. Taylor briefly discusses Hume's later view of the place of women in marriage and society (166–68).

3 As discussed further below, “gallantry” is an ambiguous term for Hume. In one sense, it does not denote a vice, in another it does. See “Dialogue” 48n; SBN 340n.

4 The view that Hume's position is based on the thesis that men require certainty that their wives' children are their own is central to Immerwahr's account, but is also to be found in Baier, “Good Men's Women,” esp. 6–7; Levey, “Under Constraint,” esp. 215–16 and 217–18; Berry, “Lusty Women,” 422, 431; and Villanueva Gardner, “Chastity,” 333–34.

5 Villanueva Gardner's central thesis is that Hume's account reflects the “middling class's” concern that property be passed on to legitimate sons, but see also Baier “Good Men's Women,” 7, 8, Levey, “Under Constraint,” 217, 220, 223, and Berry, “Lusty Women,” 423–24.

6 References to the *Treatise* are to Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Norton and Norton, hereafter cited in the text as *Treatise* or “T” followed by Book, part, section, and paragraph number, and to Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Selby-Bigge, rev. by Nidditch, cited in the text as “SBN” followed by the page number.

7 Baier, “Good Men's Women,” 8, 13, and Berry, “Lusty Women,” 426. Levey, though critical of Baier, likewise claims that the existence of a double standard regarding male and female chastity requires a class of sex workers (222).

8 This thesis is supported by the evidence that Baumstark has put together to establish that Hume intensively reread the classics in the years just prior to writing “Populousness” (63–77), and by the far-reaching consequences of that reading that Baumstark has demonstrated. See esp. Baumstark, “David Hume's Reading of the Classics,” 71, citing a letter from Hume to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, and 72.

9 Berry, "Lusty Women," 423, notices that confinement is an alternative to chastity, but does not connect that option with the evolution of Hume's thought.

10 More carefully, the views of some philosophers to this effect are so obvious as not to be worth the trouble of insisting on (T 3.2.12.2; SBN 570).

11 Though Hume did not do so here, two years later, in "Polygamy and Divorces" he cited widespread and persistent experience of the indifference and hatred of stepmothers and other strangers to justify this claim (188). Ten years later he further observed that orphanages or hospitals provide inferior child care ("Populousness," 400). Incidentally, he also suggested that other schemes for child-rearing are likely to prove less than optimal without some special artifice. Mention is made of the ancient Britons, who raised their children communally. But Hume claimed that this only worked because they formed small societies in which sexual relations were promiscuous. This allowed them to promulgate the fiction that the men were the common fathers of all the children ("Polygamy and Divorces," 183). Compare Levey, "Under Constraint," 216.

12 For some examples, see Allestree, *Ladies Calling*, and Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*. These volumes, which continued to be published in multiple editions throughout the eighteenth century, sought to sway women to accept a conventionally approved role in the family and in society by appeal to the desire for esteem and the fear of shame. Exhortations to modesty in dress, comportment, and language were a principal theme. A rather different approach to the education of women is found in Gregory, *A Father's Legacy*, which also appeared in multiple editions. Gregory was an egalitarian, who was explicitly more concerned with the improvement and the happiness of his daughters than their service to a family or society, and some of his advice explains how to manipulate the men around them. Thanks to Roger Emerson for discussion of these materials.

13 In 1734, just six years before 3.2.12 was published in the second volume of Hume's *Treatise*, Agnes Galbraith appeared before a session of the Kirk at Chirnside to confess to fornication. She was pregnant, and she named David Hume as the father (Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 81–83). Mossner at one point suggests that Galbraith may have been the victim of ongoing sexual assault by a member of her own family. As Hume had recently left the country for Bristol and so could neither contest the charge nor suffer from being found a partner in the crime, naming him as the father would have been a convenient way for the Galbraiths to conceal the incest. Whether the young Hume coupled with Galbraith or not, and if he did whether he considered himself to be the only one to have done so, he was accused of having been the one to impregnate her, and that raises questions about the extent to which this incident may have coloured what he had to say, not much later, in this passage. This incident is also discussed by Baier, "Hume on Women's Complexion," 51n12, who suggests some alternative ways of construing it.

14 Berry writes that "female chastity makes it more certain, from the man's point of view, the he is loving *his* children." (422) And Immerwhar declares that though men have an instinctive love and tenderness for their children they must believe that the children are their own "before [they] will submit themselves to the restraints associated with childrearing" (359).

15 In the *Treatise*, love of children is treated as just the outstanding case of love being produced just by a relation of self to others. Hume there attempted to reconcile the phenomenon with the theory of the double relation of impressions and ideas by maintaining that human life is enlivened by society and that the society of those related to us is particularly pleasing because they tend to share our sentiments (T 2.2.4.4–7; SBN 352–54). Thus, those related to us are loved because of some pleasing quality related to themselves after all. However, this is not particularly true of very young children, with whom we share few sentiments in common. This may be why Hume later denied that love of children is an instance of love of relations (*Dissertation*, 3.2n). There he claimed that the love of children is instead “founded on an original instinct”—a claim made in Hume’s later works about many of the beliefs and passions the *Treatise* had sought to explain by appeal to psychological principles (for example, EHU 12.7; SBN 151 as compared to T 1.4.2).

16 For an opposed view, see Baier, “Good Men’s Women,” 6, and Immerwhar, “David Hume,” throughout.

17 Hume was himself caught up in the Douglas affair, which is mentioned numerous times in his correspondence, though this case of suspicious birth only embroiled the courts some years after the publication of the works discussed here. See Sabbagh, *Trials*, or, earlier, De la Torre, *Heir*. Thanks to Henry Fulton for drawing this incident to my attention.

18 This passage was inserted by hand in Hume’s copy of the second volume of the *Treatise*. Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 150–51, claims that it “is not in any particular way connected to the point [Hume] was making.” But, as explained below at greater length, there is a connection.

19 I say the husbands of fertile wives rather than the sexual partners of prospective and new mothers because the interests of men in the latter group are unclear. They might welcome an excuse to abandon their engagement, keep their wealth to themselves, and pursue a variety of sexual encounters. It is the men in the former group, who have already publicly and irretrievably committed resources, who have an unambiguous concern.

20 It may be unfair to take Hume’s phrase, “takes possession of the ductile minds of the fair sex in their infancy,” as suggesting that women are particularly ductile (Baier, “Hume on Women’s Complexion,” 40). More charitably, he only meant to say that education takes possession of their minds when they are most ductile, namely, in infancy.

21 The worries Hume later mentioned, that “the example of the old would be pernicious to the young,” that middle-aged women might jump the gun, and that these two circumstances would lead women to think more lightly of this particular duty (EPM 4.7; SBN 207–208) hardly bear the same weight as having to resist the coercion of those with more power and no equal constraints.

22 “Il y a des matières, sur lesquelles il est constant que le monde veut être trompé. Les actions justifient assez souvent, à l’égard de la réputation publique, les homes de ce qu’ils font contre leurs professions; je n’en ai jamais vu qui les justifient de ce qu’ils dissent, qui y soit contraire” (De Retz, *Mémoires*, 366).

23 As in the Douglas case, noted earlier.

24 In a similar vein, Villanueva Gardner writes that “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” (336). But the assertion that inheritance is part of Hume’s claims about female chastity is not supported by any references or citations. There is a note, but it only comments on the *absence* of the issues of paternity and inheritance from “A Dialogue.”

25 Villanueva Gardner has made a strong case for the conclusion that “[e]ighteenth 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” (338). But what needs to be established is that Hume meant to attribute these eighteenth-century male concerns to all nations and ages. She does attempt to do this, but it is by arguing that Hume’s views on pride and the succession of property entail it.

26 In the later “Moral Prejudices,” Hume did represent Eugenius as being moved to take a wife solely from the consideration that his ancient family would otherwise have been extinguished (540–41). But this is presented only as proof that people can sometimes act from other considerations than self-interest and does not fit well with a view of pride as a principal motive. The young lady of birth and fortune who is discussed over the larger part of the essay wished for a child only out of a desire to make his education her principal concern (542). Presumably, she was motivated by a desire to selflessly devote herself to the improvement of another human being. She was explicitly not motivated to perpetuate her family through a male line. Any conclusions drawn from “Moral Prejudices” are tenuous given that Hume did not include it in any subsequent edition of his works after its first printing.

27 Appealing to the fact that Hume took the honour and status of ancestors to be transmitted through the parental bloodline, Villanueva Gardner observes, correctly, that “we can see that the child’s social standing is tied to the father, not the mother.” But then she goes on to claim that “This then also emphasizes the need for the father to be sure he is giving a social standing to his own child” (340). But this reversal of the view in time is not accounted for. From the fact that the child’s standing is tied to the father’s, it does not follow that the father needs to be sure that the child gets it. The father’s standing, in his own eyes and in the eyes of society, is tied to *his* father’s standing and to that of the line of past ancestors, not to the child’s standing. This standing depends on his (the father’s) mother’s chastity in a time before he was born, not his wife’s in the present day. The father may well be concerned to see the child acquire his standing. But the father’s possession of standing does not account for this concern. A sense of obligation to one’s ancestors might, but the upstart will have no such sense.

28 Villanueva Gardner claims to the contrary that “the chastity of wives cannot be separated from the inheritance of property and its actual possession.” She has two reasons. “[I]t guarantees inheritance through an unbroken male line and is therefore a direct cause of pride.” And “the certainty of possession . . . depends entirely on the chastity of wives” (340). The first point gets the temporal relations involved in the workings of pride backwards. The second is a function of antecedent decisions about what the laws of succession should be. Society is only concerned that there be some law regulating succession and reason is only concerned that the law not be attended

with inconveniences, the principal inconvenience being a disincentive to industry. For that concern to be addressed, it suffices that property pass to some entity the deceased holds dear. Primogeniture makes chastity important, but begs the question of why primogeniture should be fixed upon. Supposing an antecedent love of children is “the strongest tie the mind is capable of” (T 2.2.4.2; SBN 352), further supposing Hume’s questionable (but for the time common) views about the comparative “greatness” of male and female (T 2.1.9.13; SBN 308–309), and finally supposing his doctrine that “first possession always engages the attention most; and did we neglect it, there would be no colour of reason for assigning property to any succeeding possession” (T 3.2.3.6; SBN 505), the doctrine of primogeniture can be explained. But this makes the love of children the foundation of the doctrine of primogeniture, not pride in family.

29 This had been the view of the very early “Chivalry and Modern Honour.” Taylor, chaps. 4–6, has argued that Hume’s views of moral assessment in the *Treatise* were flatter and more universal than in his later works.

30 Hume believed on ancient authority that male sexual desires might be turned in a homoerotic direction by such practices as nude wrestling (“Dialogue,” 28, Letter to Gilbert Elliot of Minto of 18 February 1751 [Letter 71 in *Letters* 1: 152]). His dismissal of the option is tinged with disdain. “The GREEK loves, I care not to examine more particularly” (“Dialogue,” 28). Masturbation did not receive even that much notice, though *Stews* (30–31) declares it a safe, private, convenient, and cheap alternative to prostitution, though one attended with its own inconveniences.

31 The case that has been made for this is uncertain. In 1725, the “Societies for Promoting a Reformation of Manners” published an account of the progress made in London, Westminster, and adjacent areas crediting themselves with 89,393 prosecutions for “Debauchery and Prophaneness” over a 33 year period, including 1,951 prosecutions in the past year for “Lewd and Disorderly Practices” and 29 in the past year for “Keeping Bawdy and Disorderly Houses” (*Stews Answered*, 60). This argues for a good commerce in these practices, but also a significant degree of repression. Those convicted will have had any assets seized, and been publicly stripped and whipped (*Stews*, x–xi). Unlike *Stews*, *Stews Answered* did not have a fictitious publisher’s imprint.

32 Tolonen’s detailed study of the extent of Mandeville’s influence on Hume does not mention Mandeville’s recommendation of prostitution.

33 In fairness, the author of *Stews* deplored the fining, stripping, and whipping of prostitutes and proposed transportation of itinerant prostitutes because he believed that life in the colonies would afford them greater opportunities for improvement than imprisonment, “for *Bridewell*, as it is now manag’d, only makes them poorer, and consequently lays them under a greater Necessity than ever of continuing Whores” (15–16). He was also concerned for the health of sex workers and the upbringing of their children, and his proposals were intended to improve their working conditions.

34 See also Villanueva Gardner, “Chastity,” 337 referencing 335.

35 Berry, “Lusty Women,” 431, has claimed that socialization is likely to be a more efficient even if perhaps slightly more imperfect method of assuring males of their paternity than “claustration or eunuch-guarded seraglios.” But this is the sort of thing the speculative philosopher would think. It is not the sort of thing that, as a matter of fact, many worlds have chosen as the most effective method of ensuring paternity.

36 This remark is supplemented with a footnote that cites various ancient sources claiming that utility establishes the choice-worthiness of a thing.

37 Hume may have borrowed this idea from Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which came out in its first edition in the previous year, and which contains a passage that makes the same observation (533). But the point was a common one. It can be found in *Stews*, 44–46.

38 Guimarães has gone so far as to say that it “somehow experiments with the notion of a society where female chastity is not of primary interest, therefore not strongly inculcated” (137). This puts it very far indeed from the conclusions that can be drawn from a narrow focus on what Hume said in *Treatise* 3.2.12. Compare Villanueva Gardner, “Chastity,” 344n21, who speculates that the reason “A Dialogue” says nothing about issues of paternity and inheritance is that it is concerned to discuss different worldviews rather than offer a taxonomy of virtues. But the different worldviews in question here are views about what constitutes virtue and vice. It would be more accurate to claim that the *Treatise* offers an account of why female chastity has come to be valued in certain societies, whereas “A Dialogue” offers reasons why other societies have seen a merit in compromising this value.

39 The importance of Hume's notion of gallantry has been stressed by Guimarães, “Gallant,” 136–37, whose discussion of this topic presages that offered here.

40 For earlier attempts to do so, see Baier (“Hume on Women's Complexion,” esp. 33, 37) and Guimarães, “Gallant.” Guimarães, esp. 132, has argued that Hume was an egalitarian, but at the cost of finding inconsistency between works he would have written at much the same time.

41 If the “one” considered to be in the know or not is the husband of the unfaithful wife, then it will not be up to her whether or not he thinks her infidelity is but a small matter, so then the first part of the maxim does not apply to women.

42 This is once again a point that Guimarães has previously noticed (137).

43 A note specifies that the gallantry here meant is the gallantry of amours and attachments, not that of complaisance.

44 “Perhaps, as he had deprived that sex of chastity . . . he thought it just, in place of it, to furnish them with this other virtue, which stands in a remarkable opposition to it” (118). The other virtue is described in a footnote that appeared in the original (1751) edition of *Morals* 6.27 (Beauchamp, 229, not in SBN) and that Hume had imported from the text of *Treatise* 3.3.5.2 (SBN 614–15). It describes even women whose virtue or situation prevents them from having any intention of committing adultery as feeling a natural affection for so-called “good women's men.” These are men whose reputation or physical characteristics “promise any extraordinary Vigour of that Kind.” Balfour remarked on Hume's “gross description” of the quality of a good woman's man, noting that “decency will not allow us to view it in a full attitude.” Hume dropped this note from all subsequent editions of EPM—likely precisely because he did not want to go so far as to say anything that would open himself to this sort of rebuke.

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