

Hobbes, Locke, and Hume on Trust and the Education of the Passions

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Introduction

Thanks in large part to the reception of Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* (1993) and Francis Fukuyama's *Trust* (1995), the concept of trust has gained considerable attention in social and political inquiry of the past decade (see, for example, Misztal 1996, Seligman 1997, Nye et al. 1997, Braithwaite and Levi 1998, Warren 1999, Putnam 2000, Tonkiss and Passey 2000, Cook 2001, and Hardin 2002). The combination of the evidence cited by Fukuyama that social trust is strongly related to a state's economic performance and the evidence cited by Putnam that interpersonal trust in America has been on the decline for four decades has helped create the perception of a trust crisis (Fukuyama 1995, 269-321; Putnam 2000, 134-147). The sense of crisis is made even more acute by Putnam's earlier work on Italian culture that suggests that patterns of mutual trust and mistrust can abide for centuries within communities (Putnam 1993).

But, of course, trust itself is not a new issue, nor is this the first generation to feel a sense of crisis. Trust also deserves to be acknowledged as a pivotal concern of early modern political theory. This paper examines the writings of Hobbes, Locke, and Hume in order to sketch out different aspects of trust with continuing relevance for contemporary liberalism. Hobbes presented a case for the essential fatuousness of interpersonal trust in a world without an unlimited authority to enforce contracts. Locke assumed a comparatively high degree of trust within civil society, concentrating instead on forming and maintaining government that is worthy of civil society's trust. Hume offered us a vision of a

social world in which persons are naturally trustworthy, but can become less so as the result of politics or speculation.

In *The Problem of Trust*, Adam Seligman has argued that trust is a peculiarly modern problem. The early moderns' concern for examining individual promise-keeping was a response to the new social instability of the modern situation. Grotius, Puffendorf, Locke, Hume, and Kant's work was all part of a project to develop new forms of trust in societies that could no longer rely on the traditional social ties "to kith and kin, to territorial and local habitus." The quest for a solution to the problem of the maintenance of a community based on generalized social trust, Seligman asserts, has been at the center of social and political theory throughout entire modern era (Seligman 1997, 14-15).

While Seligman's claim may overreach (it is hard for me to understand how, say, Marx or Nietzsche were terrifically concerned with trust), the problem of trust has certainly been at the center of liberal theory since its inception. But the subtleties of proto-liberal and early liberal thinking on trust—and particularly their concern to promote trustworthiness—is missing in much of the contemporary trust discussion. Fukuyama, for example, writes:

Most thoughtful observers and theorists of political liberalism have understood that the doctrine, at least in its Hobbesian-Lockean form, is not self-sustaining and needs the support of aspects of traditional culture that do not themselves arise out of liberalism. That is, a society built entirely out of rational individuals who come together on the basis of social contract for the sake of satisfaction of their wants cannot form a society that would be viable over time (Fukuyama 1995, 350-351).

The foundations of social trust, Fukuyama concludes, must be sought in the very pre-modern relationships that Seligman notes were made problematic by the modern era, itself.

There are three related problems with this assertion. First, neither Hobbes nor Locke advocated a liberalism that was unconcerned with the virtues necessary to sustain it. Second, the presumption is that liberalism is a way of life that does not and cannot constitute a culture is, to say the least, problematic and unproven. Third, liberal society was not understood by Hobbes and Locke—and should not be considered by us today—as being comprised of individuals rationally motivated only by the satisfaction of their individual wants.

Hobbes, Locke, and Hume are each well known for their institutional answers to the problem of trust. Hobbes proposed a radical concentration of power and centralization of authority in order to terrorize into compliance anyone who might be tempted to break the peace while both Locke and Hume advocated for systems that sought to divide power in order to, in John Dunn's phrasing, "economize on trust" (1990, 24). But the institutional solutions each offered to the problem of trust were not the entirety of their efforts.

Beyond designing institutions to constrain beings of limited trustworthiness, each, in varying degrees, underscored the value of increasing the trustworthiness of the citizenry through an education of their passions. It is these non-institutional efforts to answer the problem of trust that I believe might be worth reviewing in a time of a renewed sense of crisis. Much of the recent scholarship on the political thinking of Hobbes and Locke has not been aimed at discerning how their ideas might help us think about our contemporary problems. An emphasis on understanding political ideas in their historical context has helped us understand how very alien their thinking is from our own. The historical context movement can be traced most fruitfully to Quentin Skinner's 1969 manifesto "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas" in which he provocatively suggested that recognition of the distance between the presumptions of our world and those of the authors of "the great books" should bring us to the conclusion that they have no eternal truths to teach us and that "we must learn to do our own thinking for ourselves" (52). Although Skinner's

challenge immediately received an eloquent answer from Margaret Leslie (1970) and other critics (see Tully 1988) and although Skinner has since found historical thought to be of continuing relevance in the helping us understand our own situation (Skinner 1986), investigations into historical context have come to dominate the study of both Hobbes and Locke.

The contextualist turn in Locke studies began before Skinner's declaration, with Peter Laslett's 1956 revelation that the *Two Treatises* had been composed during the Exclusion Crisis of 1678-1681 rather than during or after the Glorious Revolution. While Laslett suggested that his discovery "cannot be said to be very important to the study of Locke" (Laslett 1956, 51), a younger generation of historically minded scholars disagreed—most notably John Dunn (1968, 1969), Richard Ashcraft (1980, 1986), Mark Goldie (1983), and James Tully (1980, 1993). Each offer a rich and nuanced understanding of Locke in the context of his times and if their conclusions sometimes contradict one another quite radically, it simply goes to show both how challenging and lively the enterprise of historical hermeneutics can be. Quentin Skinner himself has perhaps been the most prominent among those who have worked to ground the study of Hobbes in the context of seventeenth century political events (1966, 2002) and late renaissance intellectual traditions (1996). Important contributions with a similar concern for history have been also been made by Deborah Baumgold (1988), Richard Tuck (1989), and Johann P. Sommerville (1992).

Hume studies have not been so dominated by contextual approaches. Such studies do exist—J.G.A. Pocock (1975) placed Hume in the context of enlightenment fascination with civic humanism and classical republicanism, while Peter Jones (1982), John B. Stewart (1992), and Adam Potkay (1994, 2000) have each offered historically-informed accounts of Hume's moral and political thinking. But to a much greater extent than Hobbes and Locke, Hume's thinking still is engaged by today's scholars as though he was our contemporary. This has been quite fruitful, particularly among philosophers interested in trust, including

Annette Baier (1990, 1994) and Simon Blackburn (1990, 1998). In contrast, appreciation for Locke's concern for trust only came about when John Dunn, a strong contextualist, asked himself a pointedly non-contextual question: "What is living and what is dead in the political theory of John Locke?" (1990, 9-25).

The argument of this essay is that Hobbes, Locke, and Hume each have something interesting to say about the connection between emotions, education, and the development of trustworthiness. The problem with the emphasis on historical context is not that the approach is wrong or uninteresting or even that it stops us from learning important things from the thinking the past. The problem is that the focus on the politics of the author's moment and the controversies and traditions that the author responded to can have the unfortunate effect of distracting us from elements of their thought that do not respond to their contexts in any controversial way. It can inhibit us from reading old texts with an eye to what they might have to tell us that is of interest to the problems of our own day. One does not have to believe that the political philosophers of the past had any greater access to the truth than do we late moderns in order to think that they might still have some ideas worth our mulling over.

Passions and Trust in Hobbes' State of Nature

The political theorists involved in social choice research are the ones most likely to treat Thomas Hobbes as a contemporary worth learning from and arguing with. A rich literature has developed that treats Hobbes as a game theorist (e.g. Gauthier 1969, 1986; Hampton 1986; Hardin 1990; Gibbons 2001). It is no coincidence, of course, that both game theorists and Hobbes are concerned with trust. However, the standard game theory account of the Hobbesian state of nature, as useful as it might be as a device to inspire new game theory trust research, misses a key element of Hobbes's thinking: passion. The state of nature is unpleasant, in part, because of the game logic of the situation, but Hobbes meant to tell us that the logic itself has emotional consequences for the players of

the game. Humans in their natural state are radically untrustworthy not simply because of the logical outcome of their pursuit of their individual desires creates a war of all against all, but because the situation itself gives people a peculiarly destructive set of emotions.

Hobbes devotes considerable attention to emotions in several of his works. In *De Homine*, Hobbes calls emotions “*perturbations* of the mind” so called “because they frequently obstruct right reasoning.” In particular, emotions inhibit us from reasoning sufficient to understand our long term good, causing us instead to focus “upon a present good without foreseeing the greater evils that necessarily attach to it” (Hobbes 1978b, 12.1). But emotions will not necessarily be obstructions. Moderate desires, for fame or for material objects, can be reasonable insofar as a moderate amount of fame and a moderate amount of wealth can be useful for our own protection (Hobbes 1978b, 12. 8).

A disposition to have a proper estimation of our own abilities, neither too vain nor too humble, is likewise a service rather than impediment to reason (Hobbes 1978b, 12.9). What is more, some emotions can even serve profitably to stand in for reason. Emotions that are extended into dispositions and solidified by habit become manners. Manners, Hobbes notes, are dispositions that “beget their actions with ease and with reason unresisting.” Manners can be, depending on their suitability to circumstances, either good or bad (Hobbes 1978b, 13.8).

The origin of the radical untrustworthiness of people in the state of nature is to be found both in human nature and the special environmental circumstances of the state of nature. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes tells us that appetites are both innate and artificial. The natural desires are few; they include such basic things as the appetite for food as well as the appetite to excrete.

Beyond this, however, our appetites “for particular things” are gained through experience (Hobbes 1991, 39). As we act in the world, we find that certain things bring us pleasure and some displeasure. From these observations, we begin to develop secondary passions, as we attach our experience of pleasure

and displeasure to particular objects and reflect on the likelihood of attaining them (Hobbes 1991, 41). Our circumstances, therefore, by determining our experiences and determining our assessments of the likelihood of achieving desires, shape our passions. The circumstances of the state of nature, it turns out, engender a rather unfortunate set of passions. The circumstance of the general intellectual and physical equality of human beings when paired with the circumstance of a shortage of desirable objects gives rise to what Hobbes calls “diffidence,” which is constant state of feeling despair at the prospect of attaining one’s desires (Hobbes 1991, 88). In such a state, association with other human beings brings no pleasure. This presumably makes passions like benevolence, defined as “*Desire of good to another*” and kindness, “*Love of Persons for society,*” rather difficult to develop (Hobbes 1991, 41). Hobbes, however, makes no note of this. He is more concerned to show that such a condition engenders a rather prickly concern for our own ego and the esteem in which we are held in the eyes of others. When we take no pleasure in keeping company, Hobbes writes:

...every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himself: And upon all signes of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavors, as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other,) to extort a greater value from his contemners, by dommage; and from others, by the example (Hobbes 1991, 88).

Humans are even in the state of nature, still, in a limited sense anyway, social creatures. Even in circumstances that prevent us from taking pleasure in each other’s company, we still measure ourselves in their opinions and take pleasure in their esteem and reap pain from their contempt. When Hobbes sums up the natural motives for war, he writes: “First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory” (Hobbes 1991, 88). Social choice theorists who restrict their

account of the Hobbesian world to unrestrained competition only account for one third of the story. Such are the strength of the passions engendered in the state of nature, that a covenant based on mutual trust is impossible. Extending trust in a state of war is always a sucker's game. A contract is a bond of words, and words alone "are too weak to bridle men's ambition, avarice, anger and other Passions." Adhering to such a contract would amount to betraying oneself to one's enemy, an act which violated one's own right to life. As people can never give up this right, any contract based on mutual trust in the state of nature would be void (Hobbes 1991, 96).

Contract remains, however, the only way out of the state of nature. To succeed, the contract of words must be allied with a passion. Hobbes finds two potentially helpful passions: fear and pride. Of these, Hobbes recommends fear. The passion of glory that would take pleasure in the fulfillment of contract is, in his estimation, "a Generosity too rarely found to be presumed on, especially in the pursuers of Wealth, Command, or sensuall Pleasure; which are the greatest part of Mankind." Fear, in contrast, is apparently ubiquitous enough that it is "the Passion to be reckoned upon." But between persons in a state of nature, there is no temporal power sufficiently terrifying to bring them into contract. The contract which forms civil society, therefore, must be predicated on fear of "The Powers of Spirits Invisible" who are invoked to withhold their mercy if the oath-taker renounces his contract (Hobbes 1991, 99).

The Teaching Sovereign

If fear of powers invisible is what allows persons to contract to form civil society in the first instance, fear of the established sovereign power can guide our behavior once we are in society. Once in society, justice can be established and crimes are defined. It then becomes the sovereign's responsibility, for which the sovereign is answerable to God, to promote the well being of the people. This is done in two ways. Most obviously, the sovereign will legislate and enforce laws aimed to promote the security of the subjects, using the power of the sword

judiciously to keep alive the motive of fear. The other part of governing, however, is instruction (Hobbes 1991, 231). The sovereign has both the right and responsibility to teach. In *De Cive*, Hobbes asserts that “man is made fit for society not by nature, but by education” (Hobbes 1978a, 1.2n). In *Leviathan*, Hobbes observes that the sovereign not only has the sole right to determine what is taught in the commonwealth (Hobbes 1991, 373), but the sovereign should also understand that God makes the heads of families accountable for the instruction of their children, including the fathers of families called commonwealths (Hobbes 1991, 384).

Hobbes’s most extensive discussion of education is in chapter 30 of *Leviathan*, “Of the Office of the Sovereign Representative.” Here Hobbes argues that a commonwealth cannot survive without education. Without instruction in the rights of sovereigns, the people will not properly understand their duties, and will not even have an obligation to obey. If a person is not instructed in the natural law, she will not understand that natural law prohibits the breaking of a contract. If she does not recognize the fundamental obligation to fulfill contract, she will not recognize her consequent duty to obey the sovereign. The sovereign’s attempt to punish ignorant citizens will not be understood as just punishment, but as an “act of Hostility; which when they think they have strength enough, they will endeavour by acts of Hostility, to avoyd” (Hobbes 1991, 232). In effect, an untutored subject is still in a state of nature with her supposed sovereign.

Fortunately, however, the principles of civil society are easily taught, even to the common people. It is, indeed, the higher ranks of persons that are more difficult to instruct. Hobbes writes:

But all men know, that the obstructions to this kind of doctrine, proceed not so much from the difficulty of the matter, as from the interest of them that are to learn. Potent men, digest hardly any thing that setteth up a Power to bridle their affections;

and Learned men, any thing that discovereth their errours, and thereby lesseneth their Authority: whereas the Common-peoples minds, unlesse they be tainted with dependence on the Potent, or scribbled over with the opinions of their Doctors, are like clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever by Publique Authority shall be imprinted in them (Hobbes 1991, 233).

It is the great passions of the mighty and the learned that impede their education in political science. In the conflict between their desires and the clear demonstrations of science, the “small power” of science loses out. Common people, with less lofty ambition, do not have the same conflict between science and passion. Their quieter passions for peace and security are clearly compatible with their duties.

Teaching Passions

This chapter’s discussion of the particular lessons that sovereigns ought to convey is notable for its emphasis on educating the passions. Earlier in *Leviathan*, Hobbes had observed that crime has two principle causes: passion and defects in reasoning (Hobbes 1991, 204). The lessons put forth in chapter 30 do not contain any advice on improving reasoning, but are a set of directives to the passions. In a feat of particularly creative Biblical interpretation, Hobbes weaves his own particular directives together with the directives of the Ten Commandments. In effect, Hobbes recommends that the sovereign teach his subjects what to feel. They include the duty to love their form of government before all others and desire no change, the duty to admire no subject more than they admire the sovereign, and the prohibition against speaking evil or irreverently of the sovereign, “whereby he may be brought into Contempt with his People.” Also, the people are to be taught what justice is and that injustice consists not only of unjust deeds but of unjust intentions (Hobbes 1991, 233-236).

Unfortunately, Hobbes does not offer us much in the way of pedagogical tips on the training of people’s passions. He does, however, suggest that we have

some power to realign our own passions. In discussing crimes resulting from sudden passion, he allows that some extenuation is due in such circumstances. Doing bad acts on the basis of sudden passion is not as heinous as doing the same acts on the basis of cool meditation. Nevertheless full extenuation is never granted even to crimes of passion. Hobbes writes:

But there is no suddenness of Passion sufficient for a total Excuse: For all the time between the first knowing of the Law, and the Commission of the Fact, shall be taken for a time of deliberation; because he ought by meditation of the Law, to rectifie the irregularity of his Passions continually (Hobbes 1991, 210).

If we have the obligation to regulate our passions in order equip ourselves to stay within the bounds of law, we must have the capacity for willing our own emotional self-transformation. Sad to say, Hobbes does not tell us what this process might look like. Perhaps the best clue to Hobbes's idea of how an education of the passions might be conducted is his brief discussions of eloquence. Hobbes first discusses eloquence in chapter 10, as a form of power. Following the chain of definitions, we learn that prudence, or even the reputation of prudence, is a power and that eloquence is power "because it is seeming Prudence" (Hobbes 1991, 63). This far from hardy endorsement of eloquence is further subverted by a review of Hobbes's earlier equivocal discussion of prudence. Prudence, Hobbes says, is a species of reasoning that seeks to predict the future by observing the past. While there is something to the idea of prudence, insofar as the more experienced are less likely to be surprised than the less experienced, Hobbes cautions that as a form of conjecture it is "very fallacious" due to "the difficulty of observing all circumstances" (Hobbes 1991, 22). Eloquence, it would appear, is an unverifiable claim to having access to an unreliable form of wisdom.

But if the style of *Leviathan* itself was not enough to convince us that Hobbes does not completely reject eloquence, in the closing chapter, Hobbes

considers the possibility of harnessing eloquence to science (see also Skinner 1996). Hobbes opens his conclusion by noting the claim that the nature of human character does not allow for people to learn to fulfill their duties. Our passions are too strong, our reasoning too weak:

From the contrariety of some of the Naturall Faculties of the Mind, one to another, as also of one Passion to another, and from their reference to Conversation, there has been an argument taken, to inferre an impossibility that any one man should be sufficiently disposed to all sorts of Civill duty. The Severity of Judgment, they say, makes men Censorious, and unapt to pardon the Errours and Infirmities of other men: and on the other side, Celerity of Fancy, makes the thoughts less stedly than is necessary, to discern exactly between Right and Wrong. Again, in all Deliberations, and in all Pleadings, the faculty of solid Reasoning, is necessary: for without it, the Resolutions of men are rash, and their Sentences unjust: and yet if there be not powerfull Eloquence, which procureth attention and Consent, the effect of Reason will be little. But these are contrary Faculties; the former being grounded upon principles of Truth; the other upon the Opinions already received, true, or false; and upon the Passions and Interests of men, which are different, and mutable (Hobbes 1991, 483).

The conundrum is clear. Passions are ever an obstacle to reasoning. Solid reasoning eschews the passions that make deliberations rash and unjust. But ideas that are not associated with eloquence fail to draw our attention. We are left, then, with a choice of impotent reason or an eloquence that derives its potency from the strength of opinion, passion, and interest.

Somewhat surprisingly, Hobbes assures the reader that eloquence and reason can be reconciled “by Education and Discipline.” Without actually refuting the character he had just and had earlier attributed to eloquence, he

asserts that eloquence can be an aid to reason, at least in the moral sciences. By way of argument, Hobbes avers: “For wherever there is a place for adorning and preferring Error, there is much more place for adorning and preferring of Truth, if they have it to adorn” (Hobbes 1991, 484). The adornment of eloquence can be used to enlist our passions in attachment to truth. Eloquence, by awakening passion, can make us reason better. This is complementary, I think, to Hobbes’s discussion of the connection of reason and passion in chapter 8. Here Hobbes notes that the difference in the wits between persons is a direct result in the difference in passions. The differences in person’s passions “proceedeth partly from the different Constitution of the body, and partly from different Education.” The passions are most closely connected with wit are the desires for power, riches, knowledge, and honor. Those without great passion are not likely to develop much in the way of either fancy or judgment. But those with great passion are apt to develop considerably more wit. Hobbes writes:

For the Thoughts are to the Desires, as Scouts, and Spies to range abroad, and find the way to things Desired: All Stedinesse of the minds motion, and all quicknesse of the same, proceeding from thence. For as to have no Desire, is to be Dead: so to have weak Passions, is Dulnesse... (Hobbes 1991, 53-54).

Eloquence, we might conclude, can be employed strategically to increase passion in order to increase our powers of judgment. Properly employed, we might imagine eloquence awakening a passion for knowledge which leads us to the science of duties. By the very end of *Leviathan*, however, Hobbes has seemingly left behind the project of nurturing a passion for duty. In his closing remarks, the curriculum of political science he advocates seems to be more proximately concerned with developing an intellectual understanding of duty than a passionate attachment to it. Teaching the science of duty would have two noteworthy beneficial effects. First, a public properly educated in the science of duties would be less likely to be duped into serving “the Ambition of a few

discontented persons.” Second, knowledge of the science of duties would make the public “lesse grieved with the Contributions necessary for their Peace, and Defence” (Hobbes 1991, 491). This is clearly a lesson that influences the passions, but being “lesse grieved” with government is some distance from loving it.

We might, however, gain some sense of a Hobbesian civic education would *not* look like from *De Homine*. Hobbes here lays stress on the relation between appetite and habit. Just as we can develop bodily habits, such as a desire for alcohol, so we can develop habits of the mind that attach us to particular ideas. In particular, the opinions that we learn in youth will tend to stay with us forever, as “shackles” on the mind (Hobbes 1979a, 8.3). Therefore, all pedagogical authorities, formal and informal, play a crucial role in shaping the mental dispositions that the rising generation will carry into their adulthood. What is more, well-intentioned educators will be aware that they teach not only through doctrine, but through examples in manners. Youth will model their appetites on the appetites of their teachers, so that teachers must guard against providing bad examples with their own visible actions “for the dispositions of youths are not less, but much more disposed to bad habits by example than they are to good ones by precept.” Hobbes is particularly concerned, however, with the bad civic lessons being offered in the standard curriculum of Latin and Greek “filled with both examples and precepts that make the people’s disposition hostile to kings...” (Hobbes 1978a, 8.7).

Passion and the Limits of Reason

Altering our reasoning also has the potential to effect the passions in another way. The secondary passions, such as hope, despair, and fear, contain opinions within their definitions. While the most basic appetites and aversions do not involve reasoning, the more complex passions developed through time and experience involve our assessments of the likelihood of achieving our desires. In *Leviathan*, hope, for example, is an appetite for an object paired with “an opinion of attaining.” Fear is an aversion to an object paired with “the

opinion of *Hurt*” from it (Hobbes 1991, 41). Thus, it seems that the second source of crime mentioned above, defects in reasoning, also influences passions. Hobbes’s answer to the problems of defects in reasoning must be found elsewhere.

The three principle defects in reasoning that lead to crime are first, reasoning beginning with false principles, second, trusting in false teachings, and third, drawing false inferences from true teachings (Hobbes 1991, 204). Presumably, at least two of these defects could be remedied in part through education reform, specifically the establishment of instruction in the Hobbesian doctrines of political science in the commonwealth’s universities. First, *Leviathan*, as an educational treatise, is concerned to establish the principles of civil philosophy, the duties and rights of sovereigns and subjects, on sure foundations. Second, it is also aimed to demolish the conclusions of “false Teachers” who have misinterpreted the law of nature and the duties of subjects.

Leviathan replaces false teachings with science. In *De Cive*, Hobbes even emphasizes the central role that indoctrination plays in maintaining order as a substitute for the constant application of fear. The sovereign has the duty, he says, to root out false doctrines “not by commanding, but by teaching; not by the terror of penalties, but by the perspicuity of reasons” (Hobbes 1978b, 13.9). Education reform, however, would still allow for the problem of persons drawing false inferences from true teachings. Even if a uniform doctrine was successfully established and promulgated, the uncertain reasoning powers of people would make it inevitable that people would come to different private conclusions on many political matters even when they shared common initial presumptions. The problem of conflicts in private judgments is, as Richard Tuck has emphasized, one of Hobbes’s principle targets.

The social contract that establishes a commonwealth does not simply require persons to submit their liberties to the will of the sovereign in exchange for security, the social contract is a promise to renounce the authority of our

private judgments and submit to the judgment of the sovereign in matters of dispute (Hobbes 1991, 120). The Hobbesian sovereign, in Tuck's words, is "above all an *epistemic power*" (Tuck 1991, xvii). This is, Hobbes argues, a reasonable deal to make, required by the law of nature. But we should not lose track of Hobbes's recognition that this deal can have some psychic cost. The good citizen must be willing to swallow her pride in her own reasoning as well as the hope of acquiring some desired objects. She must find a stronger passion to make her willing to submit. Fear and glory may have been the only possibilities in the state of nature strong enough to drive us to submission. But the peace of civil society opens up the possibility of taking pleasure in company, and thus allows, perhaps, for motives of benevolence or kindness to gain strength.

Although fear brings us to covenant, the creation of the covenant itself changes everything. While the sovereign will always need to maintain a reserve of terror, the great significance of moving from nature to society is the creation of an arena of trusting relationships. The third law of nature discussed in *Leviathan* is "*That men performe their Covenants made*" (Hobbes 1991, 100). This is, quite simply, a directive to be trustworthy. In *De Cive* Hobbes expresses the same point in the language of trust: "Another of the laws of nature is to *perform contracts*, or to *keep trust*" (Hobbes 1978b, 3.1). Trustworthiness then is clearly a civic virtue. But as Hobbes's discussion of the laws of nature continues, we see a whole train of virtues brought forward and defended with an eye towards their utility in maintaining peace: gratitude, mutual accommodation, forgiveness of the repentant, non-cruelty in punishment, non-contempt, humility, a commitment to equality and equity, and a willingness to submit to neutral arbitration (Hobbes 1978b, 3.9-3.22; Hobbes 1991, 105-109). But the atmosphere of trust is what makes the moral virtues possible. We are obliged to hold these virtues in our heart at all times, but we are only free to act on them once civil society is established. While we are confined by the vicious logic of the state of nature to actions drawn from

vicious passions, a new world of endeavor is opened to us with the creation of an atmosphere where mutual trust makes sense. By trusting the sovereign, we allow the continuance of the order that makes our own ethical life possible. The order created by fear of the sovereign power is an atmosphere where one is not only free to trust others, but also one in which one is free to be trustworthy oneself. We can live our conscience, we no longer have to keep the laws of nature hidden away in our hearts, but we can now embrace them and will them.

In order to preserve the possibilities of generous passions, the sovereign's authority must not be undermined. The society of mutual trust is dependent on the citizenry trusting the sovereign's epistemic authority. Because there is always the possibility of failures in reasoning to bring people to wrong conclusions even if they start with proper principles, education is not enough to guarantee unanimous agreement. The maintenance of the sovereign's authority requires the extinguishing of the idea of a right to private judgment (Hobbes 1991, 223). This is to be regarded as a disease of commonwealths, not only because it directly breeds disorder as persons decide to obey laws or not as they see fit, but also because the mere voicing of criticism of the sovereign's directives breeds a general atmosphere of mistrust (Hobbes 1991, 230, 234). So terrifying is the state of nature, so debased is that human existence, that nothing should be allowed to undermine the authority that maintains order, even the merest criticism.

But thinking and talking are two different matters. Hobbes does not tell us we have to change our opinions to correspond with those of the sovereign, he simply tells us that we should keep our mouths closed when we disagree. Indeed, we cannot will ourselves to changing our opinions even if we try—as stated clearly in *Leviathan*: “Sense, Memory, Understanding, Reason, and Opinion are not in our power to change....” They are the products of our experience and thus beyond our control. What we can control, however, is our utterances. We are counseled to “forbear contradiction,” to “speak, as (by lawfull Authority) we are commanded....” This, Hobbes says, is all the trust in the

sovereign we need. We do not need to believe—or even comprehend—the doctrines that the sovereign promulgates, we simply need to say that we do. What we need, he writes, “in sum, is Trust, and Faith reposed in him that speaketh, though the mind be incapable of any Notion at all from the words spoken” (Hobbes 1991, 256). This is, to say the least, a very shallow form of trust. It is a trust in the idea that it is a good thing to preserve the sovereign power rather than a trust in anything in particular that the sovereign power might say. It is a trust devoid of any belief beyond the necessity of the unifying power.

In the *Elements of Law*, Hobbes defines trust as “a passion proceeding from belief of him from whom we expect hope for good, so free from doubt that upon the same we pursue no other way” (Hobbes 1994, 1.9.9). In this reading, the sovereign need only be trusted because all our hopes for good are connected with the continuation of the peace brought by sovereignty, not because we have any particular confidence in the sovereign’s access to knowledge.

Locke on Passion and Reason

John Dunn is the commentator who is most responsible for our present understanding of the importance of the concept of trust in Locke’s political thinking as well as the dark profundity of Locke’s vision. In Dunn’s account, Locke described a mental world in which we can have no certainty confidence in our convictions—relying on trust in an unreliable epistemic authority that may fail us—and a political world that is likewise based on placing trust in a government that may betray us (Dunn 1985, 34-54). Dunn’s account of Locke’s concern for trust is incomplete, however, insofar as he pays little attention to Locke’s efforts to encourage trustworthiness of both government and citizenry through education. This concern has also escaped the notice of scholars who have devoted considerable attention to Locke’s educational writing (Tarcov 1984, Schouls 1992).

For Locke, as for Hobbes, the state of nature is a measure of the trustworthiness of people operating without the security of a political authority.

Locke's state of nature is, of course, much less terrifying than Hobbes's. In Hobbes's state of nature we see an environment in which the savage passions are fostered and the tender passions are impossible to develop. In contrast, Locke's natural persons are quite clearly reasonable and rational, and generally capable, due to the simplicity of understanding the natural law, of governing their conduct. But even in Locke's state of nature, interests and passions will stand in the way of reason, making the state of nature inconvenient. When we become parties in disagreements, our understanding of the natural law cannot be counted on:

...it is unreasonable for Men to be Judges in their own Cases, and Self-love will make Men partial to themselves and their Friends. And on the other side, that Ill Nature, Passion and Revenge will carry them too far in punishing others. And hence nothing but Confusion and Disorder will follow... (Locke 1988, § 13).

Civil government is established to remove the problem of partial judgment and too passionate punishment. The government is entrusted with the people's authority to judge and punish violations of natural law. The purpose of the *Second Treatise* is to outline a proper understanding of the nature of this trust and to argue for the people's abiding right to judge the government's fulfillment of its responsibilities. It is an abstract work, dedicated to providing a reasoned account of the origin and extent of political power. If its tone is less measured than the tone of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the general interest in reason and ultimate trust in the powers of individual reason are consistent between Locke's two most famous works. Passion does not play a large role in either. When it does come into play, it is apt to be portrayed in a negative light, as when Locke observes in the *Essay* that passions are frequently obstacles in the path of understanding. He writes:

Probabilities, which cross Men's Appetites, and *prevailing Passions*, run the same Fate [*i.e.* rejection]. Let never so much

Probability hang on one side of a covetous Man's Reasoning, and Money on the other; and it is easie to foresee which will outweigh. Earthly Minds, like Mud-Walls, resist the strongest Batteries: and though, perhaps, sometimes the force of clear Argument may make some Impression, yet they nevertheless stand firm, keep out the Enemy Truth, that would captivate, or disturb them (Locke 1975, 4.20.12).

Locke, however, did not ever conceive that reason and passion were necessarily in conflict. Passion could be both either a help or a hindrance to reason and in no wise could it be dispensed with. Locke offers a brief discussion of passion in *Essay*, Book II, chapter 20, "Of Modes of Pleasure and Pain." Here Locke instructs us that among the simple ideas that people have are the ideas of pain and pleasure. Good and evil are words that we use to describe objects associated with pleasure and pain. It is pleasure, pain, good, and evil, Locke writes, that "are the hinges on which our *Passions* turn" (Locke 1975, 2.20.3). The basic passions are love and hatred, we gain ideas of them when we reflect on things that bring us happiness or misery. More specific passions include desire, joy, sorrow, hope, fear, despair, anger, and envy. Some passions involve direct experience of pleasure or pain, others involve "uneasiness" in contemplation of an absent pleasure or pain. It is uneasiness, Locke notes, which is "the chief if not only spur to humane Industry and Action" (Locke 1975, 2.20.6). In the next chapter, "Of Power," Locke argues that without uneasiness, we have no will:

For good, though appearing, and allowed never so great, yet till it has raised desires in our Minds, and thereby made us *uneasie* in its want, it reaches not our *wills*; we are not within the Sphere of its activity; our *wills* being under the determination only of those *uneasinesses*, which are present to us, which, (whilst we have any) are always solliciting, and ready at hand to give the *will* its next determination (Locke 1975, 2.21.46).

Locke may not have gone so far as Hobbes in claiming that one could not live without passion, but he clearly holds that one cannot act without it. For Locke, however, liberty involves restraint on acting on desires. In order to act, we require desire, but in order to act freely, we need to be able to suspend our willing action to fulfill our desires in order to examine their objects and compare them one to another. He writes:

There being in us a great many *uneasinesses* always soliciting, and ready to determine the *will*, it is natural, as I have said, that the greatest, and most pressing should determine the *will* to the next action; and so it does for the most part, but not always. For the mind having in most cases, as is evident in Experience, a power to *suspend* the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires, and so all, one after another, is at liberty to consider the objects of them; examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others. In this lies the liberty that Man has... (Locke 1975, 2.21.47).

The purpose of the examination is whether the object we desire does, in fact, serve our ultimate purposes. When we suspend willing, what we are asking ourselves if what we want to do is what we should really desire for ourselves, all things considered. We examine whether our purposes “lie in the way to [our] main end, and make a real part of that which is [our] greatest good” (Locke 1975, 2.21.52).

The existence of violent passions, however, can inhibit our freedom. When we are impetuous, we “are not Masters enough of our own Minds to consider thoroughly and examine fairly.” In the grip of strong passion, we act without consideration of consequence. Locke counsels us, therefore, that we need to work to govern our passions. That this is possible is suggested by the experience that we have when we forbear to act on our passions in the presence of “a Prince, or a great Man.” We can not only keep violent passions in check if we choose, but we can seek to alter our passions, attaching our appetites to new objects. He writes:

...the moderation and restraint of our Passions... 'tis in this we should employ our chief care and endeavours. In this we should take pains to suit the relish of our Minds to the true intrinsick good or ill, that is in things; and not permit an allow'd or supposed possible great and weighty good to slip out of our thoughts without leaving any relish, any desire of it self there, till, by a due consideration of its true worth, we have formed appetites in our Minds suitable to it, and made our selves uneasie in the want of it, or in the fear of losing it (Locke 1975, 2.21.53).

This intellectual effort to alter one's appetites, however, might fail. Sometimes and for some people, reasoning will suffice to allow for the improvement of one's desires. But if consideration is insufficient in many cases, we can resort to "practice, application, and custom." What we might first view as unpleasant, "repetition wears us into liking." Over time, what actions we once willed without relish become habits, and "Habits have powerful charms" which make them very reliable springs to action (Locke 1975, 2.21.69).

When a habit is "forward, and ready upon every occasion, to break into Action, we call it *Disposition*" (Locke 1975, 2.22.10). In *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, Locke makes clear that among the appetites that we can aid through the development of habits are those appetites that bring us to better understandings. "[T]he difference so observable in men's understandings and parts," he writes, "does not arise so much from their natural faculties as acquired habits." In reasoning at least, practice is essential. No set of rules can, by itself, bring a person to good reasoning (Locke 1843, 26). The *Conduct*, which is indeed just such a set of rules, must be viewed as a piece of advice to aid gentlemen in developing proper habits of reflection and perhaps a disposition to liberty.

The ultimate aim of reflection, Locke tells us, is determining our ultimate good. This, clearly, is to act in accordance to divine law in order to reap divine rewards. Locke writes “the highest perfection of intellectual nature, lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness” (Locke 1975, 2.21.51). The improvement of our understanding, therefore, has transcendent importance. We need both liberty, which allows us to forbear willing to conduct investigation into the objects of our desire, and reason, which ensures that our investigations lead us to truth. Both require a careful government of passion.

Education and Unreasoned Morality

One of the more important lessons offered by Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is that reasoning is prone to all sorts of difficulties. The kind of disciplined reflection necessary to gain knowledge of our greatest good is not a practical possibility for most people. In *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, Locke observes: “It should seem... that ‘tis too hard a task for unassisted reason, to establish morality, in all its parts, upon its true foundations, with a clear and convincing light.... [S]uch strains of reasonings the greatest part of mankind have neither the leisure to weigh, nor, for want of education and use, skill to judge of” (Locke 1958, § 241).

In *Reasonableness*, Locke argues that revelation has been offered by God as a clear guide to moral behavior in a world in which most will be incapable of reasoning to ethics. “The greatest part cannot know,” Locke says, “and therefore they must believe.” The precepts of the gospel can be made plain and clear, suitable to “the lowest capacities of reasonable creatures” (Locke 1958, § 243). Thanks to revelation, reason is not necessary for us to achieve our greatest good. All the education that people need for their salvation can be conveyed in simple religious teaching.

Locke as a political actor, however, was not content that basic Christianity would be the only education on offer to everyone. The trust that is government, according to Locke, requires that governors be supplied with wisdom and virtue

sufficient to allow them to fulfill their callings. In Locke's day, government was understood to be the privilege or duty of the gentry. His *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is specifically designed to give advice to members of that class in the education of their children. In his Epistle Dedicatory, he explains that he is motivated by duty to his country to publish his thoughts (Locke 1989, 79). "The Gentleman's Calling," Locke asserts, is, from a patriotic point of view, "the most to be taken Care of.... For if those of that Rank are by their Education once set right, they will quickly bring all the rest into Order" (Locke 1989, 80).

It is of some interest, I think, that Locke's educational plan for the young gentleman is not designed to create persons capable of reasoning their way to morality. The young gentleman certainly gets a broader education than basic Christian doctrine, but Locke's educational advice is much more concerned with guiding passions in socially useful ways than in guiding them in ways to promote philosophical reflection. The intellectual skills emphasized in Locke's *Education* are rather narrowly focused compared with discussions in his *Essay* and his *Conduct*. The emphasis is on developing a kind of worldly wisdom or prudence. The tutor is impart to the student his knowledge of the "Ways, the Humours, the Follies, the Cheats, the Faults of the Age he has fallen into, particularly the Country he lives in" (Locke 1989, § 94). History provides another means for developing this kind of wisdom. It is "the great Mistress of Prudence and Civil Knowledge; and ought to be the proper Study of a Gentleman, or Man of Business in the World" (Locke 1989, § 182).

For the same reason, Locke recommends travel. Travel, as a direct experience of the variety of the world, can bring "an Improvement in Wisdom and Prudence, by seeing Men, and conversing with People of Tempers, Customs, and Ways of living, different from one another, and especially from those of his Parish or Neighborhood" (Locke 1989, § 212). This kind of wisdom, however useful it might be, is not necessarily the kind of wisdom that teaches moral duties. In a 1703 letter to Richard King, Locke neatly differentiates between

prudence and morality: “The Business of Morality I look upon to be the avoiding of Crimes; of Prudence, Inconveniencies...” (Locke 1976-1989, no. 3328). The shaping of moral behavior in Locke’s *Education* is not done, intellectually but through manipulation of passions and development of habit. Locke primarily is concerned to foster habitual concern with “Credit, Esteem, and Reputation” (Locke 1989, § 108). Reputation, Locke tells parents, while it is not an exact “Measure of Vertue,... yet it is that, which comes nearest to it” (Locke 1989, § 61).

The strategy Locke advocates is specific application of thoughts he had earlier expressed in his *Essay*. In that work, Locke differentiates between “*Ideas* [that] have a natural Correspondence and Connexion with another” that can be discerned by reason, and ideas that are connected in our minds “wholly owing to Chance or Custom.” Once ideas get associated in our understandings, Locke complains, “’tis very hard to separate them” (Locke 1975, 2.33.5). He specifically cautions parents and educators to be aware of this phenomenon:

Those who have Children, or the charge of their Education, would think it worth their while diligently to watch, and carefully to prevent the undue Connexion of *Ideas* in the Minds of young People. This is the time most susceptible of lasting Impressions,... yet I am apt to doubt, that those which relate ... to the Mind, and terminate in the Understanding, or Passions, have been much less heeded than the thing deserves; nay, those relating purely to the Understanding have, as I suspect, been by most Men wholly overlook’d (Locke 1975, 2.33.8).

What is remarkable about *Education* is that Locke, while he does devote some attention to preventing some “undue Connexion of *Ideas*,” is also perfectly willing to implant unreasoned and perhaps unreasonable connections that prove to be useful.

Locke advises parents to make use of the natural desires. A child’s desire for liberty can be very effectively used to enhance or diminish other passions. If

the parent wishes to increase a child's appetite for an activity, the parent should make performance of that activity a reward. If the parent wishes to reduce a child's appetite for an activity, the child should be required to perform it. In the first case, the love of liberty will be associated with designated activity; in the second, the aversion to compulsion will be transferred to the designated activity (Locke 1989, §§ 128-129). Parents should also make use of the child's natural desire for praise. This passion, Locke advises, should be strengthened through association. "To make the Sense of *Esteem* or *Disgrace* sink the deeper" the parent should make "other *agreeable* or *disagreeable* Things ... constantly accompany these different States." The object is to make children "in love with the Pleasure of being well thought on" which will make them "in love with all the ways of Vertue" (Locke 1989, § 58).

If we contrast the education Locke proposed for the rulers with that that he proposed for the ruled, it seems that the level of power entrusted corresponds to the kind of education required. As much effort as Locke put into examining the proper way to reason, neither group was given an education aimed to promote intellectual liberty. For the common people, it was enough, both for their salvation and for the social order, for them to be indoctrinated in the basic precepts of Christianity. For the rulers, however, special education was required to suit them for their trust. This trust required rulers to have the requisite wisdom and virtue. They needed to develop prudence in order to conduct politics well. They also needed to develop a particular kind of virtue, one intimately associated with reputation and esteem, in order to ensure they would pursue the public good.

Hume on the Natural Trustworthiness of People

If we also begin our examination of Hume's discussion of trust in the state of nature, we find that, in contrast with both Hobbes's and Locke's, Hume's state of nature is not altogether unpleasant. We also find, of course, that we do not contract our way out of it. In contrast to Hobbes's and Locke's natural humans,

Hume's people do not cooperate in order to end the violence or uncertainties of the state of nature, they cooperate simply in order to gain material advantages. Hume attacks the Hobbesian state of nature as a myth, as a kind of mythical golden age in reverse. In his *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume explicitly rejects Hobbes's contention that ignorance and savagery are so prevalent in the state of nature that people "could give no mutual trust" (Hume 1975, 189). He charges that Hobbes, in constructing his natural person, does not demonstrate an adequate understanding of all important facets of human nature. Particularly, Hume complains (unfairly, I think) that Hobbes pays no attention to the power of our natural benevolent feelings. We have natural sympathies for one another that should not be overlooked. Quoting Horace, Hume writes: "The human countenance... borrows smiles or tears from the human countenance" (Hume 1975, 220). This is one of the species's constant occupations:

In general, it is certain, that, wherever we go, whatever we reflect on or converse about, everything still presents us with the view of human happiness or misery, and excites in our breast a sympathetic movement of pleasure or uneasiness. In our serious occupations, in our careless amusements, this principle still exerts its active energy (Hume 1975, 221).

Human beings in nature are not entirely egoistic, concerned with themselves alone without desires to form ties with others. While we are, of course, self interested, we are also naturally drawn to others, and, in particular, Hume tells us, we are drawn to others of the opposite gender. From this natural attraction of sex, families arise. And families immediately find that being governed by some artificial rules is "requisite for its subsistence." Thus, through family nurturance, Hume claims, some kind of trustworthiness is engendered through the establishment of a set of rules that supplements natural sentiments. Children are always "trained up by their parents to some rule of conduct and behavior" (Hume 1975, 190). The rules inculcated by family nurturance are

embraced, and human beings adjust their sentiments to include them. Even if our natural sympathies for our fellow creatures were not powerful enough to keep us from becoming savage Hobbesian isolates, the further training of our sentiments by our families would ensure that our behavior would be under some considerable restraint even in nature.

From the organization of families, we move to the unification of several families into a society. Within this society, the members of the different families find through experience that new rules and procedures are useful to preserve peace and order. These new rules are likewise embraced by members of the community, and each extends their sympathies to include the new dictates. But beyond the society, no established rules and procedures are recognized. No justice is accorded to those outside of our recognized community. But as societies grow, and more and greater connections are made between people. Hume writes: “the boundaries of justice grow larger, in proportion to the largeness of men’s view, and the force of their mutual connexions. History, experience, reason sufficiently instruct us in this natural progress of human sentiments...”(Hume 1975, 192).

Hume instructs us that two aspects of the world make justice necessary. First, the world always has a shortage of desirable objects. Justice “the cautious, jealous virtue” has no place in a world where everyone has enough (Hume 1975, 184). Second, while we have a natural inclination to benevolence which makes us capable of friendship, gratitude, natural affection, and public spirit, human beings are, nonetheless, creatures of limited sympathy (Hume 1975, 178). We are naturally partial to ourselves and our friends (Hume 1975, 188). If we were capable of extending our sympathies to everyone and embracing universal benevolence, justice would be unnecessary even in a world of scarcity. Justice would be superfluous in a world of complete trust: “Every man... being a second self to another, would trust all his interests to the discretion of every man” (Hume 1975, 185).

In the world as it is, however, we can accommodate the problem of limited sympathy and naturally partiality by learning the advantages of more equitable conduct (Hume 1975, 188). Justice, Hume famously argues, is an artificial virtue. Its foundation is its utility, we adopt new standards of justice in order to reap the advantages of rules that govern both our behavior and the behavior of others. Justice allows us to deal profitably with people that do not engage our sympathies strongly. If we operate with good rules, we can have positive and profitable interactions with people we do not love. But while the foundation of justice is reason, a computation of advantage, our sentiments nonetheless quickly become engaged when we accept rules. When we adopt a new principle of justice, Hume says, we redirect our sentiments: “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 good and evil” (Hume 1975, 180).

Government Promotes Trustworthiness; Politics, Untrustworthiness

Thus Hume teaches that while the ultimate foundation of justice is utility, in ordinary practice it is sentiments that keep us within the bounds of justice. But these sentiments cannot always be trusted to be strong enough for us to resist the temptation to betray our fellows, particularly those for whom we have no particular sympathies. The problem is that the utility of justice is enjoyed over the long term, and our imagination is not always strong enough to allow us to see the consequences of a breakdown in social trust. The situation Hume describes in the *Treatise* involves the classic Hobbesian logic—in a society without trust, ethical behavior becomes a sucker’s game, every unjust act by anyone else is a new argument for me to act unjustly “by shewing me, that I should be the cully of my integrity, if I alone shou’d impose on myself a severe restraint amidst the licentiousness of others” (Hume 1978, 535).

The objects of our passions that drive us to betray trust are concrete and close at hand while the object of a society ordered by mutual trust is quite

abstract and remote. This is the problem noted by both Hobbes and Locke—people are often not capable of living their lives with their own long-term interests in mind. The solution is to align our long term interests with our short term interests through some artifice. For Hume, the artifice of choice is government. It is the job of government to make it every person’s direct interest to act according to the dictates of justice. Through government, we are protected not only against the dangerous inclinations of our neighbors, but from our own moral failures (Hume 1978, 537-538). Government, by providing strong disincentives to unjust behavior, makes us trustworthy when our sentiments and imaginations would not. Hume, however, nonetheless specifically rejects the contention that human society is impossible without government. In situations where the objects to be gained by injustice are not all that alluring, our sympathetic attachment to justice can suffice (Hume 1978, 539).

The success of government is predicated on its being put into trustworthy hands. The magistrates are those “whom we ... immediately interest in the execution of justice.” Two qualifications suit them to execute justice. First, they will be strangers to the parties in most disputes and will have no interest in biased results. Second, they are so satisfied with their current situation that they are aware that the sustenance of justice is in their immediate interest (Hume 1978, 537). Clearly, anyone in a large society can meet the first qualification, but imagining who might meet the second is less straightforward.

Annette Baier finds this passage perplexing, calling the magistrates’ presumed ability to hold on to integrity without imposing restraints on themselves “moral luck” (Baier 1991, 259). Lucky they may be, I don’t think their integrity is the product of their moral character, so much as the situation that is handed to them. The magistrates’ interest in justice, Hume notes, is given to them by us. This is done through a constitution.

As Hume explains across several of his *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, the measure of the success of a constitution is the degree to which the public

interest is promoted by the operation of its mechanisms (Hume 1985, 43). While Hume seems to have thought that a republican form of government might theoretically be susceptible to the most perfect constitutional design, the design of any particular republic was not necessarily superior to any particular monarchy or aristocracy. A modern absolute monarchy like France, for example, gave so much power to the king that it created a species of trust between the king and the people that the king had no reason to limit their liberties while the Dutch republic had tyrannical tendencies (Hume 1985, 11). Republics, aristocracies, and monarchies might each be more or less good or more or less tyrannical.

The objective of a legislator is to design government offices and procedures in a way that magistrates have no incentive to act contrary to the public good or, if they do, they have insufficient opportunity to act tyrannically without being checked by another power in the state (Hume 1985, 29-31). Thus, so far from actually trusting to the moral character of magistrates, Hume accepts that the first principle of constitutional design is that “every man ought to be supposed a *knave*” (Hume 1985, 42). The magistrates are not virtuous by moral luck, but they are made to have interest in justice insofar as they are bound by good constitutional design to act virtuously regardless of their character. The best constitution, Hume says, will make it “the interest, even of bad men, to act for the public good” (Hume 1985, 16).

The proposition that political actors will act knavishly is not simply an inspiration to legislators to design for the worst case scenario, it is a recognition that politics does tend bring out bad impulses in people. Politics, and republican politics in particular, breeds factions. Hume writes that insofar as legislators who design laws that ensure the power of the government promotion of the public good should be praised, the founders of factions that seek to use the power of government for what turn out to be nonpublic ends are to be disesteemed (Hume 1985, 55).

Factions may be defined by simple direct personal affections and animosities (which is more common in small states) or by real differences in interest, speculative principle, or a more remote and traditional affection for particular leaders or families (all of which tend to be more important in large states). All of these factions represent failures in attachment to the public good. Factions of real interest would seem to be the product of a failure of a sense of justice when faced with a passion for dominion. Factions of affection fail to place the sentiment of justice ahead of personal attachment. Factions of principle are based on faulty ratiocination. Whatever their origin, their operation all tends toward the destruction of the good operations of government.

What is worse, however, is that once people become members of faction, their failures become magnified. Once enmeshed in a party, the normal restraints on our pursuit of our interest imposed by concern for the opinions of others are taken away. While concern for the opinions of our friends and neighbors might discourage our selfish behavior in ordinary life, in politics our friends in the party encourage us to take matters to the extreme at the same time that the disapproval of political enemies carries no sting (Hume 1985, 43). The political party becomes, in effect, a political community unto itself, treating the interests of those outside the faction as foreign and thus outside of the realm of proper government consideration.

The Government as Educator

There are, then, three primary influences on the trustworthiness of individuals. First, Hume offers us a vision of a social world in which there is a natural propensity to produce beings that are sentimentally attached to rules and thus reasonably trustworthy. Second, he shows us how a government provides sanctions that encourage us to be trustworthy when our sentiments of justice fail us. Third, he describes a political world that produces untrustworthiness and therefore relies on balancing powers in order to keep knavish factions from imposing their tyrannical dictates on the public. While Hume advanced the idea

of natural trustworthiness as a refutation of Hobbes's understanding of the state of nature, neither Hobbes nor Locke would disagree with the latter two propositions. Both, however, then proposed something that Hume, notably, does not—that education should be used to augment the power of government sanction in order to make politics more trustworthy.

Hume does make the occasional overture toward the power of education. He observes that modern education and customs instilled more humanity and moderation than the ancient (Hume 1985, 94) and further that we don't know to what degree we might perfect human virtue (Hume 1985, 87). But, it seems it was not a central part of Hume's moral or political project to try to work this out. His political science appears to be aimed nearly exclusively at economizing on trust. In contrast to Hobbes and Locke, he devotes little direct attention to the potential of education to promote trustworthiness. But there are hints that good government itself provided a profound education.

Reflecting on the fame due good legislators, he remarks that neither the blandishments of moral philosophy nor the injunctions of religion have much effect on human conduct when compared with “the virtuous education of youth, the effect of wise laws and institutions” (Hume 1985, 55). Hume does not explain how laws and institutions produce moral education, but we might speculate that the government's project of aligning our interests in the proper order through the sanction of law does have educative effects through the development of habit. Discussing the small pedagogical power of moral philosophy, he writes:

Habit is another powerful means of reforming the mind, and implanting in it good dispositions and inclinations. A man, who continues in a course of sobriety and temperance, will hate riot and disorder: If he engage in business or study, indolence will seem a punishment to him: If he constrain himself to practice beneficence and affability, he will soon abhor all instances of pride and violence. Where one is thoroughly convinced that the virtuous

course of life is preferable; if he have but resolution enough, for some time, to impose violence on himself; his reformation needs not be despaired of. The misfortune is, that this conviction and this resolution never can have place, unless a man be, before-hand, tolerably virtuous (Hume 1985, 171).

The power of habit is such is that it can shape our passions—it can give us new likes and dislikes. Such too, we might logically conclude that it is through simple habit that our good dispositions are the product of good laws. Just as we might do a violence to ourselves by forcing disagreeable activity upon ourselves that we later come to accept and embrace through habit, so the function of law is use the threat of violence to guide our actions into activities that will similarly improve our dispositions. Moreover, good laws ensure that virtuous behavior is rewarded with some regularity and that the just don't become the victims of the unjust. All this ensures that the examples of parents and peers and the general standards of social honor will cooperate in a youth's moral education.

If this is correct, then we might understand Hume's relative disregard for considerations of education and his great concern for constitutional design and institutional stability as well as the threats posed by designing politicians to both of these things. If it is the function of good institutions to serve to make people trustworthy, the most significant issue is to convince politicians to understand the importance of political stability. While Hume accepted the axiom that all men are knaves as a design principle, his political writing makes no sense if we are to suppose that he accepted it as description of the world.

The threats to stability did not come simply from politicians with bad motives, but also from politicians with pure hearts motivated by misguided and destructive principle. His political writing is aimed at making the class with the leisure required for philosophical reflection—who happen include and form the reference group for the politically active class—more trustworthy by offering

them a sounder understanding of politics to which they might attach their sentiments.

Philosophy and Trustworthiness

Even if Hume is not concerned to reform education to promote trustworthiness, he does offer some ideas on the subject. Perhaps the surest path to heightened moral sensitivity is the development of the habit of moral self-examination. The more frequently and routinely we examine passions and our motives, the more we become attuned to the moral possibilities and moral perils of our actions. Hume writes:

A man, brought to the brink of a precipice, cannot look down without trembling; and the sentiment of *imaginary* danger actuates him, in opposition to the opinion and belief of *real* safety.... Custom soon reconciles us to heights and precipices, and wears off these false and delusive terrors. The reverse is observable in the estimates we form of characters and manners; and the more we habituate ourselves the accurate scrutiny of morals, the more delicate the feeling do we acquire of the most minute distinctions between vice and virtue (Hume 1975, 217).

Yet this observation leaves open the question of what criteria we ought to apply when we judge between right and wrong. What is the surest guide for assessing the moral impact of our actions? Never one to recommend the authority of scripture, the two remaining candidates are society and philosophy.

Society, it seems, so long as the society we are discussing is not encompassed in a political party or other partial and factious group, is a pretty good guide. Socializing, itself, can be morally edifying. Society has the power, for better or for ill, of “exciting and supporting any emotion.” Interaction with others can kindle dormant social feelings. We are disposed to feed off each other’s sympathies, and thereby strengthening our social concerns and burying our selfish interests. Hume writes:

And as the benevolent concern for others is diffused, in a greater or less degree, over all men, and is the same in all, it occurs more frequently in discourse, is cherished by society and conversation, and the blame and approbation, consequent on it, are thereby roused from that lethargy into which they are probably lulled, in solitary and cultivated nature. Other passions, though perhaps originally stronger, yet being selfish and private, are often overpowered by its force, and yield the dominion of our breast to those social and public principles (Hume 1975, 275-276).

Social sentiments are infectious. The more closely we are sentimentally attached to our fellows, the more we will aim our actions toward promoting the general interest. Along a similar line, Hume recommends the love of fame as a source of heightened moral feeling. When we pursue fame, Hume says, “we bring our own deportment and conduct frequently in review, and consider how they appear in the eyes of those who approach and regard us.” This self-scrutiny in the interest of reputation, it appears, is clearly akin to the moral self-scrutiny that Hume recommends for the improvement of moral sentiment. “This constant habit of surveying ourselves, as it were, in reflection,” Hume writes, “keeps alive all the sentiments of right and wrong, and begets, in noble natures, a certain reverence for themselves as well as others, which is the surest guardian of every virtue” (Hume 1975, 276). The Christian view of pride and vanity as immoral, it seems, is a superstition. The drive for fame has social utility.

Hume also suggests that philosophical truth can enliven the moral sentiments. But just as society and love of fame might lead us astray if we adapt our sentiments and behavior to the wrong reference group, so philosophy might also fail us if we adopt the wrong one. It is quite possible for a philosopher to discern and publish truths that lead “to a practice dangerous or pernicious.” The philosophy presented in Hume’s own second *Enquiry*, he assures us, however, is not any such system. The “philosophical truths...here delivered,” writes Hume,

“represent virtue in all her genuine and engaging charms, and make us approach her with ease, familiarity, and affection.” The particular advantages of his own account of virtue, he claims, is that it has dispensed with the “useless austerities and rigours, suffering and self-denial” which had other philosophers and divines had invested in virtue. Hume makes virtue attractive, showing its natural “gentleness, humanity, beneficence, affability” and even occasional “play, frolic, and gaiety.” “The sole trouble which she demands,” claims Hume, “is that of just calculation, and a steady preference for the greater happiness” (Hume 1975, 279). In such an exchange, virtue is a bargain.

Yet nonetheless, philosophy will likely to be found insufficient in the project of promoting trustworthiness. In his *Essays*, Hume observes that while sound philosophy can act as an aid at making a good character better, it has no power to convince people not so disposed that they should desire to become good (Hume 1985, 171). Also, Hume understands full well that relatively few people have the leisure to dedicate themselves to the study of any speculative science (Hume 1985, 54).

Of course the other problem with the study of philosophy is that most philosophies turn out to be untrustworthy themselves. Reasoning is difficult and uncertain, and the danger is that that through abstract theorizing we might come to direct our sentiments at the wrong object. Our sympathies for one another can as easily lead us into error as not. In the second *Enquiry*, Hume cautions us to remember that persons who engage in destructive behavior do not necessarily operate from base motives. “Popular sedition, party zeal, a devoted obedience to factious leaders;” he writes, “these are some of the most visible, though less laudable effects of this social sympathy in human nature” (Hume 1975, 224).

Hume allows that one might reason oneself to the conclusion that property ought to be distributed according to merit. One might do this on utilitarian grounds, supposing that the most virtuous will best use property to do good, or on superstitious grounds, supposing that “*dominion is founded on grace*,

and *that saints alone inherit the earth.*” Whatever the source, both propositions would fail in practice because they ignore the practical difficulties inherent in trying to realize these ideals, particularly the difficulty of finding a way to differentiate between either the virtuous and the vicious or the saints and the damned. The advance of such speculative theories is itself dangerous, and Hume suggests that a civil magistrate “very justly” treats an advocate of such theories as a public enemy. Hume recommends that magistrates use “the severest discipline” to teach these theorists “that a rule, which, in speculation, may seem the most advantageous to society, may yet be found, in practice, totally pernicious and destructive” (Hume 1975, 193).

Engaging in “too abstracted reflection” makes it to appear that our sentiments of justice are like superstitions. The same kind of reasoning that exposes the foolishness of superstition might be used to undermine our conceptions of justice. It seems silly, at one level anyway, that I might lawfully pick an apple from one tree, but it is criminal to touch the apple on another tree “ten paces off.” But the difference that speculative theorists miss, is that while superstition serves no purpose, some standards of justice are absolutely essential “for the well-being of man and the existence of society” (Hume 1975, 199). We might be thankful, then, that custom rather than theory dictates the allegiances of most people (Hume 1985, 513).

Hume cannot, of course, do away with abstract theorizing, and so his primary political goal is to introduce into political theory the impulse to adapt one’s thinking to the real facts of history, the concrete circumstances of the population, and a fuller understanding of human nature. Theorizing that does not do this is useless at best and is, at worse, terrifically destructive. Hume teaches that justice and government are conveniences that produce the peace and good order of society. Any proposed change in standards of justice or understandings of right government must be judged according to how these

ends might be served given our starting place in the world as it is. Only then can political theory itself prove worthy of trust.

Conclusion

While Hobbes, Locke, and Hume disagreed on many important matters, they each constructed their political theory in a political world that felt a trust crisis. While the atmospheres of Hobbes's Civil War, Locke's Glorious Revolution, or Hume's Wilkes riots are not directly comparable to the difficulties of our own times, the early moderns' search for solutions to the problem of trust might still be edifying for us. Quite clearly, neither Hobbes, Locke, nor Hume, believed that a political order could be maintained without efforts to promote trustworthiness. All understood that reason makes clear that an order that sustains and encourages mutual trust is best for all involved, but the maintenance of this order is always precarious because of the inability of humanity to regularly understand their interests. For all three, promoting trustworthiness involved promulgating passions, ideas, and habits that compensate for this basic human failing.

Locke and Hume aimed their efforts at reforming the manners of the political class—Locke through the emotional education of the gentry as children, Hume through the intellectual education of the readers of polite essays as adults. Both believed that the nonpolitical classes were generally trustworthy enough. For Locke they were made so by Christianity; for Hume by the virtuous education of good laws. Hobbes, too, hoped to influence the politically active class with *Leviathan*, but he wanted it to become the political curriculum of the universities primarily because the university was an indirect path to the hearts and minds of the broader public. The strong passions and hopes of the political class might not be controlled by good education, but Hobbes hoped to deprive them of followers by inoculating the people against the seductions of seditious doctrines.

Contemporary liberals, while we do need to acknowledge the continuing sociological reality of a division between political and non-political classes, do not need to share the early moderns' normative acceptance of political hierarchy. Liberals with a commitment to participatory and deliberative democracy may want to look at the early moderns' efforts to reform the political class for ideas on how we might want to increase the political trustworthiness of the demos. A democratized version of Locke and Hume's thoughts on making the political class trustworthy might bring us to consider what particular form of morality and what particular form of theory might be the proper objects of schooling. To democratize Hobbes would involve thinking about education as a way that the democratic sovereign prepares itself for its responsibilities.

A democratic Lockean political education would seek to imbue all citizens with both the intellectual and moral habits necessary for the trust of governing one another. If we are serious about extending meaningful political influence throughout the population, we need to concern ourselves with developing political competence. Locke understood that there are two sides of political competence—one needed not only prudence, but virtue (Anderson 1992). If we are convinced by Locke that the fulfillment of the government's trust requires trustworthy governors, as democrats we need to acknowledge with Locke that liberalism requires the instillation of public regarding virtue in everyone.

Locke's method for instilling this kind of virtue is not available to most of us. Locke's education involved the control of a child's entire social world to ensure that only proper sentiments are imbibed by children. While Locke counseled fathers to insulate their sons from the influences of both servants and other children, we cannot put this forward as a public policy even if we think that it is correct. Nonetheless, even if we might be skeptical of both the success and the practicality of Locke's methods, his goals of increasing social sensitivity and using the association of ideas to bring children to love virtue are still worth considering.

A democratic Humean civic education might be rather similar. Hume offers more specific discussion of what constitutes political prudence than Locke does, and thus a Humean political education might work hard to keep us from putting on the intellectual shackles of ideological thinking and warn us of the dangers of faction. But, of course, Hume also reminds us that we should never mistake the problems of the past with the problems of our own time. We need not share Hume's deep concern for political stability if our circumstances do not so require.

A Humean, in our current era, might point to the degeneration of the sentimental attachment to the rules of justice as a key element of our own trust crisis. A republic so quiescent as ours that it allows for the undemocratic election of the President and the waging of imperialistic warfare is in little danger of an instability caused by a public roused and enraged by factious politicians. The dominant faction in American political life may be dangerous and ideological, but the few of us expect that we are in danger of an immediate convulsion produced by the violence of faction in government. But it does seem we are looking at a long degeneration of the glue that binds us together. We are losing the sense of honor that helped keep us trustworthy in our private affairs. In Hume's terms, the laws have failed to maintain the education to virtue. The sentimental attachment to justice is not adequately supported by our politics, our culture, or our education.

We have seen within the last thirty years a precipitous decline in the trust between strangers, what Putnam calls "thin trust." Whether this trajectory will necessarily continue or whether we might stabilize at a lower level of thin trust is impossible to say. But what we can say is that if trust and trustworthiness declines, the prospects for an improving social life becomes bleak. Without the proper development of social sentiments, Hume would tell us, the prospects for pursuing the public good even in a well-designed republic become bleak. Hume will also tell us why, as Putnam has found, television viewing has such a strong

relationship with the decline in civic involvement and trust (Putnam 2000, 216-246). Because it keeps us in our home, we lose out on the moral education of sociability. When we live entirely private lives, we care nothing for fame or honor. When we don't let other people judge us, we feel no responsibility towards them.

A Hobbesian might want to remind us about the consequences of the decline of social trust. Even if we are convinced that our institutions are strong enough to maintain regular order with very low levels of interpersonal trust (and even low levels of trust in government), Hobbes would teach us that we should still worry about the decline. The problem is that the more we come to resemble the untrusting and untrustworthy individuals in the state of nature, the more unpleasant we all become and, consequently, the less pleasure we take in one another. An atmosphere of mistrust heightens our anger and resentments with one another and stifles the motives of benevolence. Even if we can so economize on trust that we can keep ourselves from violence with only a small supply, we don't necessarily want to become the kind of people that live without trust. As trust evaporates, the laws of nature themselves become unreasonable and unlivable. Moral life depends on trust for its existence, and the closer we approach the state of nature in our society, the more it is apparent that democratic sovereign is not fulfilling its responsibilities. When we become governed only by the terror of the law the sovereign has failed as a teacher.

A late modern liberal looking to construct a catalogue of virtues that might serve to sustain liberal democracy might do well to start with a review of Hobbes's laws of nature. Hobbes contends that trust is maintained when people keep their promises, express gratitude, strive to be useful to one another, forgive of the repentant, conduct themselves with humility and a commitment to equality and equity, refrain from cruelty and expressions of contempt, and submit their disputes to disinterested parties for arbitration. While these virtues may not encompass the behavior to fulfill all of our aspirations, particularly our

democratic ones, they appear to be fundamental to the basic liberal requirements of maintaining civility and a sense of mutual respect. A democratic sovereign committed to liberty could serve itself well if it began teaching these laws of nature and trying to engender a passionate attachment to them in citizens.

Despite Fukuyama's contention, it is only late modern liberalism that sees an incompatibility between liberalism and virtue. It is particularly difficult, however, for contemporary liberals to link passion, virtue, and education. The current liberal concern with individual moral and intellectual autonomy makes us hesitate to consider training passions. If reason is associated with freedom in liberal discourse, passion is associated with manipulation and paternalism. But Hobbes, Locke, and Hume offer a challenge to our desire to separate passion and education. Locke tells us that reasoning to morality is too difficult to be reliable; if we need to ensure a class of people is trustworthy, we need to shape their sentiments. Hobbes tells us that passion is necessary for reason. Hume tells us that natural sentiments of benevolence are what make moral behavior possible in the first place and that we can use reason to extend their realm. Reason and passion are no more dichotomous than liberty and virtue. The early moderns understood that liberty was maintained by an atmosphere of trust, which itself was sustained by a passionate attachment to virtues. Contemporary liberalism is impoverished to the degree that it presumes that it can sustain trust without recourse to an education of the passions.

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