

## 7 Politeness and politics in the reigns of Anne and the early Hanoverians

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*Nicholas Phillipson*

What Country soever in the Universe is to be understood by the Bee-Hive represented here, it is evident from what is said of the laws and Constitution of it, the Glory, Wealth, Power and Industry of its inhabitants, that it must be a large, rich and warlike Nation, that is happily govern'd by a limited Monarchy.

(B. Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, Or Private Vices, Public Benefits*, The Preface)

The political thought of the reigns of Anne and of the first two Georges was an integral part of the political culture of a polity whose wealth was the product of a rapid if bumpy, expansion of overseas and domestic trade; whose power was derived from the wars of the reigns of William III and Anne and the massive extension of the fiscal and military power of the state that accompanied them, and whose civil and religious liberties were enshrined in 'revolution principles' whose meaning remained obscure and bitterly controversial.<sup>1</sup> The Revolution, the Revolution Settlement, the Act of Settlement, and the Anglo-Scottish Union notwithstanding, the succession remained in question from the Revolution to the Forty-Five. Fundamental questions about the relationship of the monarch to parliament, parliament to people and the Church of England to a protestant nation deeply penetrated by dissent, remained unanswered and would continue to fracture the politics of a notoriously volatile political nation. For while it was an evident and, for some non-jurors, regrettable fact of political history that Britain had become a mixed monarchy, the question of whether the mixture was to be described in terms of the *King's Answer to the Nineteen Propositions* or in terms of contracts ancient or modern was profoundly controversial. In fact, Britain was a mixed monarchy of the sort that had worried Grotius most: the separation of powers was governed neither by clear

<sup>1</sup> See particularly J. P. Kenyon, *Revolution Principles: The Politics of Party, 1689–1720* (Cambridge, 1977). H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth Century Britain* (London, 1977).

constitutional principles nor by any general consensus. It was, he had observed, a situation which must cause ‘the utmost confusion’.<sup>2</sup>

The most obvious and notorious symptom of Grotian confusion lay in the tendency of British politics to faction. That, of course, was a problem common to all systems of government and was generally recognized to be particularly acute in mixed monarchies. However, as that shrewd Huguenot, Paul Rapin de Thoyras, noticed, the peculiarity of party conflict in Britain was that it had as much to do with what David Hume called ‘principle’ as with traditional questions of ‘family’ or ‘interest’ and had indeed, acquired the power to override them.<sup>3</sup> These ‘principles’ were as old as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and turned on classic questions of whether divine right or election provided the true basis of government and whether the obligations of subjects were founded on passive obedience or resistance. As Clarendon and Rapin had shown, during the reigns of the early Stuarts, these issues had been refreshed by what contemporaries came to think of as Arminian superstition and puritan enthusiasm, at a time when they were being marginalized elsewhere in Europe. They had been revived during the Exclusion Crisis – the seed-pod from which modern parties were generally deemed to have sprung – and had been institutionalized in the constitutional ambiguities of the Revolution Settlement. What matters here is that they acquired a new lease on life in 1701 as a result of the Act of Settlement, that flagrant Whig assault on divine and indefeasible right which unequivocally insisted on the parliamentary basis of monarchy. For the rest of our period, as long as the succession remained a matter of controversy – and Whigs and Jacobites made sure that it did so until the Forty-Five – the issues which had been raised during the exclusionist debate would continue to structure party polemic, fracturing the political culture of Britain and ensuring that the constitutional status of parties remained profoundly ambiguous.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> H. Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace in three books. Wherein are explained the Laws of Nature and Nations, and the Principal Parts relating to Government . . . to which are added all the large notes of Mr J. Barbyrac.* (London, 1738), pp. 71–2. This was incidentally, a view with which a decidedly non-Grotian thinker, Bernard Mandeville, could equally well agree. ‘In mix’d constitutions [disagreement about the distribution of sovereign power] often is the cause of fatal Quarrels, more especially in this Kingdom, where worse Calamities that have befallen either King or People have been owing to this grand Dispute’ (*Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church and National Happiness. By the Author of the Fable of the Bees* (London, 1723), p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> P. de Rapin Thoyras, *Dissertation sur les Whigs et les Torys* (London, 1717); D. Hume, ‘Of Parties in General’, and ‘Of the Parties of Great Britain’, in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. E. F. Miller (Indianapolis, 1987), pp. 54–72.

<sup>4</sup> G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, (London, 1967); J. A. W. Gunn, *Faction No More: Attitudes to Party in Government and Opposition in Eighteenth-century England* (London, 1972). Once again, cf. Mandeville: ‘Notwithstanding the various

But in this context, 'principle' was, as Rapin recognized, little more than a euphemism for religion. What is more, in a society which enjoyed an unrivalled appreciation of Christian scepticism and Hobbesian metaphysics, it was easy for Whigs, Tories and Jacobites to see the 'principles' of their rivals as mere opinions which had their roots in the imagination, pride and love of dominion of a corrupt species. Throughout our period, no one doubted the power of church politics and priestcraft to perpetuate Exclusionist controversy. It mattered to political discourse that the Revolution had been an attempt to preserve the church as well as the constitution from popery and despotism. It was equally important that the Revolution Settlement had given birth to the Toleration Act which had called into question the very nature of the *Ecclesia Anglicana*. Was it a Calvinist church, as most Anglicans, jurors and non-jurors alike, believed; a visible church, whose authority descended from the Apostles, whose doors were only open to those who were prepared to engage in its sacraments? Or was it, as Whigs and Dissenters thought, a latitudinarian church, to be conceived in Lutheran terms, as a part of an invisible church, which was co-extensive with the nation and open to all sincere and well-affected Protestants? These questions were too emotive politically to be resolved in 1689 and remained so throughout our period. Indeed, they were only to be resolved, and then only partially, by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828–9. But the sense that the Church was under pressure from Whiggery and toleration continued to shape Tory-Anglican discourse throughout our period. It was the stuff of Tory politics during William's reign, when high Anglicans kept up a running attack on sectarianism, heterodoxy, and above all, occasional conformity. It provided the occasions for those two classic trials of strength between junto Whiggery and its Tory opponents, the Sacheverell Crisis of 1709 and the Bangorian Controversy of 1717, which not only showed the grass-roots strength of the Church Party, but demonstrated how tightly intertwined ecclesiological and constitutional issues were and how politically combustible they had become. In the General Election of 1710, Tories still found it worth using slogans like 'No Rump Parliament', 'No Forty Eight', 'No Presbyterian Rebellion', 'Save the Queen's White Neck' to link Whiggery to regicide. As the moderate Bishop of Bath and Wells, George Hooper, remarked, 'Original Compact had become a dangerous phrase, not to be used without a great deal of

Turns of Fate these two Doctrines [passive obedience and resistance] have undergone, and the many Mischiefs the Dispute has occasion'd, the Question remains still, and as each Party pretends to have the better Argument, the Quarrel is undecided' (*Free Thoughts on Religion* . . ., p. 299).

caution'.<sup>5</sup> It was a situation which demonstrated the power of opinion to erode the trust on which the authority of government depended.

It was the central paradox of Augustan politics that this neo-exclusionist politics, as we may call it, this politics of opinion, was to set the agenda for party political debate in a country which had witnessed a profound shift in the distribution of property and a massive extension of the military and fiscal resources of what, after 1692, John Brewer thinks it legitimate to describe as the British 'state'.<sup>6</sup> By the end of the Nine Years' War these secular transformations had already become the subject of that powerful Whig discourse which John Pocock has described as neo-Harringtonian.<sup>7</sup> By the Revolution, Harrington's original account of the shift of power and property which had occurred as a result of the decay of feudal tenures was being seen as a context within which the Civil War and the collapse of the monarchy could be usefully discussed. Indeed, during our period, Rapin and, more famously, Hume, were to develop sophisticated accounts of these complicated events as the result of an interplay between the shifts in property and opinion that had been brought about by the collapse of feudalism and the progress of the Reformation. By the Revolution, too, Harringtonians had adapted Harringtonian thought to accommodate the – to Harrington – unexpected Restoration of the monarchy and the nobility and the rapid progress of commerce. And with the Treaty of Ryswick, neo-Harringtonian discourse had been adapted once again, to take account of the expansion of the military resources of the Revolution state. It was a Whig discourse about the problem of maintaining a mixed and ancient constitution which was being subjected to the most profound secular pressures which were peculiar to the modern age. It recognized the existence of tensions between ancient constitutionalism and modern Whiggery, between the claims of ancient and modern prudence. And it had built into it a profound distrust of the priestcraft on which neo-exclusionist party politics thrived.<sup>8</sup>

Although neo-Harringtonianism was a Whig language, it drew heavily on a vocabulary of country politics which was far from exclusively Whig;

<sup>5</sup> Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, pp. 56, 92. More generally, M. A. Goldie, 'Tory Political Thought, 1689–1714', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1977, esp. parts II and III.

<sup>6</sup> J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power, War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (London, 1988), *passim* but esp. ch. 6.

<sup>7</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ, 1975), pp. 406–22.

<sup>8</sup> M. A. Goldie, 'The Civil Religion of James Harrington', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism: Papers Presented at the Folger Institute Seminar 'Politics and Politeness in the Age of Walpole' 1986*, ed. G. J. Schochet (The Folger Institute, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, 1993), pp. 31–46.

its rogue's gallery of corrupt courtiers, councillors, prelates, and that new source of corruption, the stockjobber, was as distasteful to Tories as to Whigs, and, as Swift noticed, there was nothing peculiarly Whiggish in disliking standing armies.<sup>9</sup> What is more, its concerns with power and property were of as much interest to Tories like Charles Davenant and Tory/Jacobites like Bolingbroke, as to junto Whigs and those opposition Whigs who were comfortable with the generally Ciceronian preoccupations of Harringtonians.<sup>10</sup> The story of the way in which neo-Harringtonian thought confronted neo-exclusionist party discourse has yet to be written and it is not the purpose of the present essay to attempt to do so. I do, however, want to open the subject up, by paying particular attention in what follows to a political language which served as a bridge between them. This was a language of manners which has so far received very little attention from political historians or historians of political thought. Its primary concern was with the intemperance of party polemic, with the frightening power of opinion to erode the trust on which government depended, and with the desire to demonstrate the advantage of moderation in political discourse. In this idiom, moderation was to be closely connected with the twin objectives of legitimizing the Revolution and the Revolution Settlement, and developing a language which was able to explain the political significance of the changing interests of the modern British state. It was a language which was to put pressure on the language of rights on which neo-exclusionist polemic of Anne's reign was based and on the language of virtue which enjoyed a powerful resurgence during the Walpolean era. Later on, in the hands of Hume and the historians of the Scottish Enlightenment, it was to serve as the language in which that profound investigation into the relations between opinion and property was conducted, and out of which Scottish historicism and Scottish political economy were to emerge. What follows, then, is not a comprehensive survey of the political thought of our period. It is a set of three distinct but related studies of party political discourse in the making. The first deals with the early years of Anne's reign, the second with the early years of the Robinocracy, the last with the formative years of the Scottish

<sup>9</sup> 'To be against a Standing Army in Time of Peace, was all *High-Church, Tory, and Taintivity*', *Examiner*, no. 43 (31 May 1711), in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. H. Davis (Oxford, 1940), III, pp. 163–4. More generally, see D. Hayton, 'The "Country" Interest and the Party System, 1698–c. 1720', in *Party and Management in Parliament, 1660–1784*, ed. C. Jones (Leicester, 1984), pp. 37–85.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, ch. xiii. I. Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle: the Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Cambridge, MA, 1968), esp. chs 3, 4, 6.

Enlightenment. And in each of these case studies, I shall pay particular attention to the history of language of manners, to which much of the work of the Folger Seminar was directed.

But there is one matter of context which has to be addressed before we continue. The party political discourse with which this essay is concerned took shape during a revolution in print culture which began with the failure of the ministry to renew licensing legislation in 1695. By Anne's reign, the press had become a powerful resource for transmitting the political opinions of London to the provinces by means of pamphlets, newspapers and essay-journals devoted to politics, morals, manners and religion. By Walpole's day, printers had begun to realize the commercial advantage of amalgamating these two types of periodical journalism, and of integrating such essays with the *reportage* that remained the backbone of the newspaper. There probably never will be adequate statistical data to show how the periodical press grew in our period. Michael Harris reckons that by 1712 London had about twenty single-sheet papers which sold 20–25,000 copies each week; by 1746 there were about twice that number with a total readership of around 500,000.<sup>11</sup> This huge readership and the incalculable number of those who listened to journals being read aloud in taverns and coffee-houses seem to have been drawn from the middling ranks, from shopkeepers, from artisans, and, with the founding of the *Tatler* in 1709, from women and servants. In other words, the press had not only opened up politics to the provinces but to something like a mass audience of citizens, most of whom had political opinions but not the vote. It enabled them to participate in discourse which was being shaped by the journalists of Grub Street, rather than by courtiers or parliamentarians. And it is with Grub Street discourse that this essay, like the Folger Seminar from whose proceedings it is derived, is largely concerned.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> M. Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study of the Origins of the Modern English Press* (London, [1987]), pp. 19, 190–1. Cf. the same author's 'Publishing, Print and Politics in the Age of Walpole', in *Britain in the Age of Walpole*, ed. J. Black, (London, 1984), pp. 189–210. See also H. L. Snyder, 'The Circulation of Newspapers in the Reign of Queen Anne', *The Library*, 33 (1968), 206–35. For the periodical press, see R. P. Bond, *Studies in the Early English Periodical* (Chapel Hill, 1957), pp. 3–48. For the Walpolean period, Simon Varey, 'The Growth of Capitalism and the Rise of the Press in the Age of Walpole', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 245–62. For general overviews, see J. Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1987), and G. C. Gibbs, 'Press and Public Opinion: Prospective', in *Liberty Secured? Britain Before and After 1688*, ed. J. R. Jones (Stanford, 1992), pp. 231–64.

<sup>12</sup> Most of the papers presented to that seminar are now in limited circulation. See *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet.

## I

Three great Grub Street journalists were to demonstrate the power of the press to shape political discourse in the early years of Anne's reign; the country Whig, John Tutchin, the High Church Tory-cum-Jacobite, Charles Leslie, and Daniel Defoe. Leslie thought that Defoe's voice was indistinguishable from that of Tutchin, although in this period, it is better regarded as the voice of that most elusive of political creeds, Harley's country Toryism, conceived, as the latter once remarked, as an attempt to 'Graft the Whiggs on the bulk of the Church Party'.<sup>13</sup>

Tutchin was the first in the field with the *Observer* (1702–12), his attempt to revive a country Whiggery which was under attack from the Church party and the Junto.<sup>14</sup> His Whiggery was that of a True Whig, who had been out during Monmouth's rebellion.<sup>15</sup> The constitution was a product of 'reason and nature'.<sup>16</sup> It was ancient in origin, founded on contract and the express and collective consent of a free people and enshrined in the common law. What is more, 'she's as well beloved now by all true *Englishmen*, as she was by our Forefathers a Thousand Years ago'.<sup>17</sup> Tutchin was not much interested in the precise nature of this contract. What mattered was that it had transferred power from the people to a Parliament whose power 'is so great, that I cannot find it Circumscrib'd but by *Conscience* and *Native Right*'.<sup>18</sup> Regal power was thus derived from parliament, Tutchin declared, and English history had been nothing less than a continuing attempt by patriots to preserve liberties which were 'so firmly Fenc'd with *Law*, that no one can break thro' those Fences without breaking his Neck'.<sup>19</sup> Who these 'patriots' were and in whom the right of resistance was vested was a question about which Tutchin was conspicuously vague. Unlike Defoe, he applauded the Hungarian rebellion of 1704–5 as a vindication of the natural right of resistance which Englishmen had long been accustomed

<sup>13</sup> J. A. Downie, *Jonathan Swift. Political Writer* (London, 1984), p. 137.

<sup>14</sup> Tutchin has been neglected but see J. P. Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, pp. 105–6 and *DNB*. He wrote a short, informative autobiography in the *Observer*, 22–5 August 1705.

<sup>15</sup> It was summarized in a series of essays published in the *Observer* between 29 September and 7 November 1705. These focussed in particular on his views about resistance and his differences with his principal adversary, Charles Leslie. He distinguished his own Whiggery from that of 'Modern Whigs' (who were 'the Objects of my Compassion, not of my Hatred') in the *Observer* of 20–3 January 1702/3 and from 'Republicans or Commonwealthmen' (who were 'wicked people') on 8–13 May 1703.

<sup>16</sup> *Observer*, 7–10 April 1703.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 27–31 March 1703.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–17 June 1703; Cf. 8–11 July 1702.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 September–2 October 1706.



to exercise.<sup>20</sup> But Tutchin's view of resistance significantly lacked exclusionist rigour and smacked of an attempt to speak of limited resistance in terms which would be palatable to moderate Whig opinion. Thus, he invoked Grotius rather than Sidney or Locke to justify resistance to tyrants, although he did so with significantly little consistency or precision; tyrants were simply rulers who breached what he took to be the principles of the English constitution.<sup>21</sup> And although he declared that 'Providence and my own Inclination to the service of my Dear Country, has put me to the Publick Post of Vindicating the Revolution', his account of it was equally evasive.<sup>22</sup> It had been the collective act of a people which was faced with James' 'elopement'; he would, Tutchin conceded, have been 'coerc'd' if he had stayed.<sup>23</sup> Plenary powers had been given to the Convention to restore the ancient balance between regal and parliamentary power.<sup>24</sup> When seen in this light, those 'two great men, Mr Sidney and Mr Lock', appeared as the prototype of modern 'patriots' who had resisted the temptation of concocting Baconian or Harringtonian utopias and had played the nobler part of defending the principles of ancient liberty 'the one against Sir Robert Filmer, and the other against a whole Company of Slaves'.<sup>25</sup> So far as Locke was concerned, it was a portrait of the author of the first, not the second *Treatise of Government*, the critic of Filmerian patriarchalism and the defender of ancient constitutionalism. As we shall see, it was as an exclusionist of a different stamp that Locke was to appear to Tutchin's bitterest enemy, Charles Leslie.

What brought Tutchin's whiggery into political focus was its attack on those traditional country bogies, the kings, courtiers, placemen and prelates who had threatened the independence of the Commons; here, Clarendon's new *History of the Great Rebellion* (1702) could easily be turned to country Whig advantage. Tutchin's political targets were Dutch courtiers, the monied interest, and, above all Jacobites, Anglican priestcraft and its most articulate apostle, 'Parson Lesly'. Eclectic though Tutchin's Whiggery was, it remained firmly rooted in the world of the Exclusion crisis and in English xenophobia rather than Harringtonian republicanism as he made clear in a notorious satire, 'The

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–15 December 1705. Defoe's critique of the rebellion had begun on 2 September 1704 in *A Review of the Affairs of France*.

<sup>21</sup> Grotius is invoked in *Observer*, 15–18 September 1703 and 13–16 October 1703.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 26–9 June 1704.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 October–3 November 1705. On 8–13 July 1704, however, Tutchin had declared that James had been 'remov'd'. See also 2–6 October 1703, 23–6 October 1706.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 23–6 October 1706. See also 9–13 October 1703.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–18 September 1706. This appears to be the only reference to Locke in the journal from 1702–7, when Tutchin, who was murdered, ceased to edit it.



Foreigners' (1700). In this satire, William's Dutch courtiers, not standing armies, were identified as the true sources of modern corruption and they were denounced in terms which provoked an even more celebrated and indignant reply from Daniel Defoe. *The True Born Englishman* (1701) excoriated the pride and ingratitude of the English and identified the decay of trust between governors and people as the root cause of the dangers which liberty now faced. As we shall see, Defoe was to look for new discursive resources with which to address this old and menacing problem.

Tutchin's country Whiggery had tap-roots in English political culture which were too deep and too lusty for party politicians to be able to ignore. Harley and Swift hoped that it could be purged of its hostility to the Church and used to create a Toryism which recognized the legitimacy of the Revolution. In Walpole's day, Trenchard and Gordon tried to reinvigorate it with Machiavellian republicanism. At the end of our period, Hume still regarded it as one of the cornerstones of the political culture of modern England, in spite of the fact that he thought it was incapable of sustaining an adequate defence of revolution principles.<sup>26</sup> What makes Tutchin's country Whiggery particularly important to the political discourse of Anne's reign is that it served as a catalyst to the Church party and to its most potent spokesman, Charles Leslie. Not only did Leslie manage to expose the *Observer's* intellectual shortcomings but he succeeded in demonstrating the difficulty of mounting *any* credible defence of the Revolution which was based on natural rights and resistance rather than on necessity or providence.<sup>27</sup>

Leslie's attack on Tutchin was carried out in his satire on Tutchin's Whiggery, *Rehearsal of Observer* (1704–09, with a supplement from 1709–12). As in the *Observer*, this took the form of dialogues between A Countryman and Mr Observer, whose Whiggery was systematically demolished by the relentless and often brilliant iconoclasm of a companion who had been conspicuously passive in Tutchin's dialogues. At its centre lay a devastating and influential attack on 'the Great Lock', 'the Oracle of the Party' which 'I thought *Necessary*, as laying a

<sup>26</sup> D. Hume, 'Of the Original Contract', and 'Of Passive Obedience', in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, pp. 465–92.

<sup>27</sup> Gilbert Burnet thought that the revival of the High Church Party in Anne's reign had much to do with the success of the *Rehearsals*. B. Frank, 'The Excellent Rehearser; Charles Leslie and the Tory Party 1688–1714', in *Biography in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. J. D. Browning (New York and London, 1980), p.68. Leslie himself has been seriously neglected. But see Goldie, 'Tory Political Thought', 11. J. Champion deals with Leslie's attack on Socinianism in *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken. The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660–1730* (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 4.

*Foundation*'.<sup>28</sup> Locke's *First Treatise of Government* had taken the form of a classic attack on Filmer's patriarchal defence of divine right and passive obedience which was designed to clear the ground for his own defence of resistance in the *Second Treatise*. Leslie now proposed a tit-for-tat. A successful attack on the *Second Treatise* would discredit the authority of the *First Treatise* and clear the ground for a restatement of Filmerian principles on terms which would demonstrate the necessity of an apostolic Anglican church for maintaining the principles of monarchy. Leslie's assault on Locke, which was set in an Augustinian framework, took the form of a sceptical attack on all theories of natural rights. These were no more than opinions, propagated by crafty politicians, which played on the imagination, pride and love of dominion of a fallen species and bred a distrust of all established authority. Indeed, when viewed in this light, such phrases as *our Queen, our Country, our Laws*, acquired new and sinister meaning.

For who made her *Queen of ME*? Even *ME my Self!* And you know, who *Makes*, can *Unmake!* The *Inherent and Radical POWER* is still in *ME!* For, as our *Oracle* [Locke] says,

I alone am the King of *ME*.

This *Kingdom of ME*, is situated [sic] in what they Call *Terra Australis Incognita*. And is the only *Place* in the *World*, where Men were

*Born free, as Nature first made Man  
Ere the Base Laws of Servitude Began,  
When Wild in Woods the Noble Savage Ran.*

From this *Utopia* We have taken all our *Schems* [sic] of *Government* ever since! This is true *Liberty and Property*, to Reduce all to the *Noble Savage* again! To make *Mobb* the *Supreme*, and *Kings and Queens* to *Worship Us*, and Wear *OUR Liveries*.<sup>29</sup>

Thus there was no such thing as a theory of limited resistance as *junto Whigs* had claimed. All such theories pointed towards the same anarchic end, a quasi-Hobbesian state of nature ruled by the vagaries of opinion and ripe for exploitation by politicians. This sceptical assault allowed Leslie to confirm Filmer's claim that passive obedience and divine right, sanctioned by the authority of revealed religion, was still the only available theory of political obligation that was secure and intelligible. And it gave him the opportunity of reminding Tutchin that it was a theory whose authority was underwritten by the apostolic authority of

<sup>28</sup> *Rehearsal*, 14–21 April 1705; 15–22 Dec. 1705. The critique of Locke was begun on 11 August and continued until 20 Oct. 1705.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 October–4 November 1704.

the Anglican church. It was a political theology which pointed towards the old High Church view that the Revolution and the Prince of Orange's succession had been acts of necessity, sanctioned by providence to preserve the church from popery and despotism. It followed from this that the Hanoverian Succession could only be justified on the same providential grounds.

But I wou'd not be Mistaken, as if I were an Enemy to the Succession of the *House of Hanover*, in *God's* own Time, and when his *Providence* makes way for it, according to *Truth* and *Right*. Far be it for me to Limit PROVIDENCE!<sup>30</sup>

Leslie's demonstration that 'The Great Lock' was a radical exclusionist was of enormous importance to eighteenth-century political culture. It ensured that Locke would be regarded as a theorist of resistance rather than as a philosopher who, as John Dunn has shown, was profoundly concerned with restoring trust between governors and governed.<sup>31</sup> It meant that until the 1760s, the *Second Treatise* would be regarded by Whigs as a volatile text, which was best handled gingerly, and that writers like Defoe who were interested in trust would have to look elsewhere for a language in which to articulate it. But what matters here is that Leslie's sceptical discussion of opinion enabled him to ridicule Whig accounts of Saxon constitutionalism as offering no more than a hypocritical *de facto* defence of what was in danger of becoming a Whig oligarchy. It was a problem which ministerial defenders of the Revolution would address by invoking the authority of conventional as well as natural rights to explain the principles of limited resistance, by paying attention to the problem of *perfecting* as well as preserving the Revolution Settlement, and by calling for a reformation of manners to restore trust between crown, parliament and people.

Benjamin Hoadly, the chief theorist of junto Whiggery, showed how difficult the problem of mounting a credible theory of limited resistance could be.<sup>32</sup> He turned to Grotius to show that political society was the result of an unconditional transfer of power from a people to a sovereign which vested a collective right of resistance in them. He turned to Stillingfleet and the English latitudinarians to show that there was no more natural form of government than that of a king in parliament and that there was no more natural form of political obligation than

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–24 October 1705.

<sup>31</sup> J. Dunn, 'The Concept of "Trust" in the Politics of John Locke', in *Philosophy in History*, ed. R. Rorty, J. B. Schneewind and Q. Skinner (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 279–301, and *Locke* (Oxford, 1984), ch. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Another neglected Augustan political thinker, Hoadly is discussed by Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, and by Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, p. 73, and in the latter's 'Benjamin Hoadly', *History Today*, 25, 5 (May 1975), 348–55.

submission to a monarch who was ‘in actual Possession of the Throne, by Consent of the Three Estates of the Realm’ and governed in the public interest.<sup>33</sup> In this view, the public interest consisted in defending ‘the *Laws*, which are the standard of the *Publick Good* of a Country’ and resistance was justified only when life and property were at risk.<sup>34</sup> The trouble was that in spite of its appeal to the authority of the common law, this line of argument was no longer proof against Leslie’s scepticism; who after all, was to decide when the public interest had been violated and whether resistance was legitimate? Whig claims that this was the task of parliament could easily be met with the reply that parliament was a hot-bed of faction. Defoe’s later claim that the right of resistance lay with a freeholder electorate was met with Leslie’s withering retort, ‘Are not all the People as Free as they? Are not all Freeholders?’<sup>35</sup> Hoadley, however, was a good latitudinarian who saw the need for a theory of resistance which encompassed a free people at large. As he told Leslie, ‘Public Good is Public Good, and not the mistaken Fancy of Private Men, or the mistaken Judgement of Legislators or Governors’.<sup>36</sup> The public, however, was no ‘natural body’ but one which was ‘in a much more flux Condition, continually changing its Members, and with such a Term of Years perfectly new, and different from what it was’.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, ‘the Influence of government is of that universal Nature that it cannot but be sensibly felt by all, or a vast Majority of Subjects, when it is their Rights and Properties are invaded; and when it is that they are secured, and defended by their Governors’.<sup>38</sup> This was to invoke a conception of conventional rights founded on a collective view of the public interest. But explaining the nature of that interest was a matter of reforming the opinion of a singularly imprudent public – a task best left to a latitudinarian church committed to comprehending English protestants of all denominations. It was an unsteady line of argument that exposed Hoadley to Leslie’s charge that resistance was only permissible when he said it was.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> ‘A Discourse Concerning the Unreasonableness of a New Separation’, in *The Works of Edward Stillingfleet together with his Life and Character*, 6 vols. (London, 1707–10), III, p. 941; cf. p. 951.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 941. <sup>35</sup> *Rehearsal*, 6–13 January 1704/5.

<sup>36</sup> B. Hoadley, *The Measures of Submission to the Civil Magistrate consider’d. In a Defence of the Doctrine deliver’d in a Sermon Preached before the Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of London, Sept. 29 1705*, 3rd edn (London, 1710), p. xxv.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix. <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91–2.

<sup>39</sup> It is worth noting that for all their theological and ecclesiological differences, a High Anglican like Sherlock and a Dissenter like Dodderidge could still agree that they shared a joint responsibility for encouraging the reformation of manners. See R. E. Sullivan, ‘The Transformation of Anglican Political Theology c. 1716–1760’, in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 47–58, esp. p. 51.

While Hoadly had seen the importance of a reformation of manners for generating an understanding of the public interest, it was left to Daniel Defoe and to Richard Steele and Joseph Addison to show how that reformation could be brought about by means of a reformation of language. Defoe addressed this problem in two personae.<sup>40</sup> In the first, he was Mr Review, the Harleyite critic of faction and priestcraft who devoted much of his *Review* to the politics of a free Protestant polity whose interests were being transformed by war, commerce and empire. In the second he wrote as ‘The Author of the True-Born Englishman’, the political satirist and pamphleteer who wrote the classic satire on Leslie’s political thought, *Jure Divino. By the Author of The True Born Englishman* (1706). In this long philosophical poem, Defoe ridiculed a political theology which made more sense of the rude, nomadic world of the Old Testament patriarchs than of a free commercial polity. No doubt the origins of the English constitution were as ancient as Tutchin had claimed, but its principles could best be defended by drawing on Pufendorf and Harrington, and when the context was right, on Locke.<sup>41</sup> *Jure Divino* provided what Defoe later admitted was an ultimately Whiggish understrapping to a sustained assault on the superstition, enthusiasm and ignorance of a factious people who did not understand their country’s changing interests. Throughout his career he continued to preach the virtue of moderation in the use of political language in order to create a political culture which would mitigate party zeal and legitimize revolution principles. His journalism was designed for the city where opinion was formed and where its corrosive effects would have to be controlled. The success of this project depended upon his ability to catch the ears of party men of all political persuasions, by mimicking and manipulating the political languages they spoke. Here Defoe was in his element; his linguistic skills were phenomenal. He wrote as easily as a

<sup>40</sup> P. R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: his Life* (Baltimore 1989). M. P. Thompson, ‘Daniel Defoe and the Formation of Early Eighteenth-Century Whig Ideology’, *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 109–24.

<sup>41</sup> This interpretation stresses Defoe’s eclecticism as well as his important debts to Pufendorf and Harrington and takes seriously his claim to have been more than a mouthpiece of Locke. ‘I know, what Mr. *Lock*, *Sidney* and others have said on this head [the origins of government], and I must confess, I never thought their Systems fully answer’d. But I am arguing by my own Light, not other Mens’ (*Review*, 10 September 1706). It differs somewhat from the view of Thompson (n. 40 above) and substantially from that of Backscheider who notes Defoe’s frequent silent quotations and paraphrases of Locke but fails to take account of the contexts in which they are used. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe*, pp. 168–72. On Defoe’s debts to natural jurisprudence, see M. Novak’s pioneering *Defoe and the Nature of Man* (Oxford, 1963). The most recent discussion of his politics is M. Schonhorn, *Defoe’s Politics: Parliament, Power, Kingship and Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge, 1991). I am particularly grateful to Katherine Penovich for discussing Defoe with me.

High Church Tory as he wrote in the different idioms of Whiggery.<sup>42</sup> He could deploy a language with wit and good humour, with satire and raillery, or even, as in his most celebrated satire on Leslie, 'The Shortest Way with Dissenters', with an Erasmian vehemence that displayed the pessimistic depths into which he sometimes sank. But the hallmark of his journalism was his desire to provoke controversy and discussion among his readers. It was this and this alone which would make them think again about their political and religious opinions and about the interests they shared as well as those which divided them. With luck, these discussions would generate the spirit of candour which dissenters and freethinkers looked on as a sign of Grace and would teach modern Britons to realize that moderation was not only *prudent* but *honest*; only then would the way be cleared for a new understanding of the sort of virtue which was needed to defend the Revolution.

Defoe's faith in the power of language to generate a reformation of manners was Ciceronian, but it was a Ciceronianism for the citizen, not the magistrate, which identified conversation rather than oratory as the linguistic skill which would have to be cultivated if the civic personality was to be reformed. All of Defoe's journalism was designed to encourage moderation in the use of language. His use of raillery, satire and instruction to dislodge superstition, enthusiasm and ignorance; his faith in the power of good-humoured conversation and the *common sense* of companions to prevent raillery from turning into cynicism, involved an appeal to an Erasmian tradition which was being revived philosophically by Shaftesbury. His appeal to the candour and common sense of his readers appears as an attempt to link this neo-Ciceronian idiom to the spiritual disciplines of English nonconformity rather than to Shaftesbury's deistic neo-Platonism. But encouraging moderation in the use of political and religious language was, as Leslie pointed out, tantamount to advocating hypocrisy.

It's a *Catholicon* and Cures all *Diseases!* Take but a *Dose* of this, and thou may'st Drink *Poison*, and Break all the *Ten Commandments*, without any *Offence!* It Reconciles *Churches* or *No Churches*, *Christ* and *Belial*, *Light* and *Darkness!* It can *Transform* a *Revel* into a *Saint*, and *Satan* to an *Angel of Light!* It can make a *Schismatick*, a true *Friend* of the Church; and a *Whore* an *Honest Woman*.<sup>43</sup>

Leslie's expostulation indirectly raised the interesting question whether it was possible to square a defence of the Revolution with the principles of Christian virtue, a problem that was addressed directly by Richard

<sup>42</sup> Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe*, pp. 430–4. Backscheider believes that Defoe was successful in 'diluting Mist's radical Tory voice considerably' (*ibid.*, p. 431).

<sup>43</sup> *Rehearsal*, 13–20 January 1704–5. Cf. 3–10 February 1705.

Steele and Joseph Addison in the middle years of Anne's reign. Both were devout Anglicans, who set out to show how the cultivation of manners, refined by the cultivation of taste and natural theology – what came to be known as politeness – could purge moderation of hypocrisy and ease the tensions between prudence, honesty and virtue which were inherent in Ciceronian ethics. Their innumerable essays on manners, morals and taste, written for the *Tatler* (1709–11), *Spectator* (1711–14) and *Guardian* (1713) were the response of two great theorists of manners and politeness to the Sacheverell crisis and the erosion of political trust that they blamed largely on the High Church party. It involved attacking not simply High Church politics but High Church morality and the 'strict' Augustinian principles on which it was founded. Defending revolution principles, in other words, was now becoming a matter of reconstructing the very foundations of English political, moral and religious culture.<sup>44</sup>

Addison and Steele's essays were designed to expose the manners and morals of the city to public discussion. They wrote for men and women who saw the modern city in Augustinian terms, as a monument to the self-love and pride of a fallen species. They portrayed the modern city as a theatre of dissimulation, hypocrisy and greed, a hatching-ground for the plots and cabals on which superstition and enthusiasm fed, a sump of luxury and corruption where virtue was always in danger of being reduced to prudence and taste to fashion. They set out to develop an alternative image of a post-Augustinian city founded upon mankind's latent capacity for the benevolence which Augustinians insisted was merely a cover for hypocrisy. It was a terrene world in which men and women would be able to distance themselves from the false friendships which were founded merely on interest and prudence and reigned in the worlds of business and politics. True friendship, friendship which was regulated by virtue rather than considerations of interest, was only

<sup>44</sup> The study of the three great vehicles of politeness has been greatly advanced by authoritative modern editions; *The Tatler*, ed. D. F. Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1987); *The Spectator*, ed. D. F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1965); *The Guardian*, ed. J. C. Stephens (Lexington, 1982). The connections between politeness and personality have been studied by M. Ketcham, *Transparent Designs: Reading, Performance and Form in the Spectator Papers* (Athens, GA, 1985). E. A. and L. Bloom, *Joseph Addison's Sociable Animal in the Market Place, on the Hustings, in the Pulpit* (Providence, RI, 1971) offer a rather dated study of the subject as a chapter in the history of the formation of a bourgeois culture. See also P. Gay, 'The Spectator as Actor: Addison in Perspective', *Encounter*, 24, 6 (Dec. 1967), 27–32. L. Klein places the subject in a different historical setting in his important *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness* (Cambridge, 1994), and in 'The Political Significance of "Politeness" in Early Eighteenth Century Britain', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, pp. 73–108. Peter France has recently explored French politeness in *Politeness and its Discontents: Problems in French Classical Culture* (Cambridge, 1992).



possible in the leisured, private world of the tavern or coffee-house, in the company of well-chosen companions who were drawn from different walks of life. Only there could perfect trust reign, could man's natural capacity for benevolence be released and could the prospect of virtuous living be envisaged. In their essays on manners and morals they hoped to show that the modern city possessed the capacity to generate virtue as well as corrupt it; commerce would be the handmaid, not the enemy of virtue, and the 'strict' morality of the Augustinians could be shown to be more appropriate to the culture of a ruder age.

Perhaps Addison and Steele's most important contribution to the language of manners was to show precisely how the cultivation of taste could conquer hypocrisy and encourage the principles of Christian virtue, an enterprise in which Addison was particularly interested. He set out to show how the principles of conversation could be extended from the moral to the aesthetic and supernatural worlds. Literature and the fine arts provided opportunities for imaginary encounters between authors, readers and fictional heroes and heroines which enabled the reader to extend his views of human nature beyond the immediate confines of the terrene world, to worlds which were regulated by higher and more universal principles of order. As a result, their judgements of men and events would become less dependent on the casual opinions of acquaintances, more informed by general principles and more sensitive to 'the dignity of human nature' and man's undoubted capacity for perfection. Such a 'frame of mind' would help the polite citizen to discover the principles of natural theology and enable him or her to engage in that comfortable, conversational relationship with the deity which Anglicans since Hooker's day had been taught to seek.

In the Addisonian city, commerce was to be a vehicle of politeness and latitudinarian theology, the source of a culture which could be re-exported to a turbulent, rustic country which had generated the superstition and enthusiasm on which neo-exclusionist zeal continued to thrive, and above all, to that most notorious of eighteenth-century battlegrounds, the family. For the polite, Addisonian family would be based on the principles of friendship and 'mutual confidence' which had been learned in the city, rather than on the patriarchal principles on which High Church political theology rested. If, as Mr Spectator once observed, 'the obedience of children to Parents is the basis of all Government', the polite family would in time become the source of the trust on which the future of liberty and happiness depended.<sup>45</sup>

For all that, Addison and Steele's enterprise was highly speculative. It

<sup>45</sup> *Spectator*, no. 424.

was, by definition, directed against the church party and was inevitably seen as a form of propaganda designed to create a Whig false consciousness.<sup>46</sup> Worse still, in spite of Addison and Steele's sorties into natural theology, the language of manners and politeness never managed to shrug off the charge that it merely encouraged dissent and hypocrisy. To those who had been branded as 'strict' moralists and others who could call on the formidable resources of Augustinian moral theology, on Machiavelli and on Hobbes, claims about the power of conversation to awaken man's natural benevolence, and to foster his sense of public and Christian duty seemed dangerously naive. Swift, who detested Leslie and had actually contributed to early numbers of the *Tatler*, was still acutely sensitive to the all-pervasive power of pride in motivating even the highest forms of saintliness and virtue.<sup>47</sup> But Mandeville was by far the most deadly critic of this language of manners and politeness. His attack had begun anonymously in 1709, in the *Female Tatler*, and was to develop into an all-out onslaught in the *Fable of the Bees*, first published in 1714 and greatly expanded in 1723 and 1728.<sup>48</sup> He was able to demonstrate, with great subtlety and wit, that claims that the principles of Spectatorial propriety rested on benevolence were spurious, and constituted 'a Vast inlet into Hypocrisy, which being once made habitual, we must not only deceive others, but likewise become altogether unknown to ourselves'. Addison and Steele had simply devised a bag of tricks like those 'made use of by the women that would teach children to be mannerly' which appealed simply because they pleased parents and gratified the self-love and pride of their children.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Thus a Tory squib, 'The Three Champions', identified the *Tatler*, the *Review* and the *Observer* as three Whig 'libellers' of the constitution. It is reproduced in R. P. Bond, *The Tatler: The Making of a Literary Journal* (Cambridge MA, and London, 1971), Illustration 7. In 1738 Swift ridiculed the notion that 'politeness is the firmest foundation upon which Loyalty can be supported' commenting 'for thus happily sings the never-too-much-to-be-admired Lord H[ervey] in his truly sublime Poem, called *Loyalty defined*,

'Who's not polite, for the Pretender, is;

A Jacobite, I know him by his Phizz'

(*A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue. Polite Conversation, etc.*, ed. H. W. Davis and L. Landa (Oxford, 1957), p. 120).

<sup>47</sup> For example, *A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue etc.*, ed. Davis and Landa, pp. 243–4.

<sup>48</sup> Mandeville's important contributions to the *Female Tatler*, first recognized by M. M. Goldsmith (note 49) are hard to locate and have never been fully republished. A modest selection appear in the highly edited *The Female Tatler*, ed. F. Morgan (London, 1992).

<sup>49</sup> Mandeville, *The Fables of the Bees*, pp. 52–3 and 331. On Mandeville as a critic of politeness, see T. A. Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1978) and his 'Bernard Mandeville's Ironic History of Politeness', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 229–44. See also M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1985); and his 'Liberty,

It was Swift's Gulliver, however, who best characterized the scepticism with which claims about the civilizing powers of politeness were met. Like Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver appears as the model of a prudent, civilized Englishman; enterprising, observant and intelligent, well able to adapt to the laws, customs and manners of even the oddest forms of civilization. If he had possessed the mind of Robinson, such encounters with exotic forms of civilization would have provided him with more extensive views of human nature and human benevolence and equipped him for a future life of virtue. Instead, these encounters taught him that mankind was irredeemably sunk in a depravity which had only been made tolerable by naive illusions about human rationality and capacity for virtue. He returned to England stripped of illusion and unfit for human society. Travel had taught him that he could only aspire to the life of a gentle yahoo, but had left him without the slightest idea how to do so. It was a problem which was to be close to the heart of one of his greatest admirers, David Hume.

## II

High Church political theology and a corresponding concern with opinion and manners appeared to the Folger seminar to be two crucial and strangely neglected features in the cultural landscape of the politics of Anne's reign. Equally, it may be suggested that these same factors played an important part in shaping the political thought of the Walpolian era. The formative period in its development was the period of the Bangorian Controversy and the Bubble Crisis when Church and public credit both seemed to be in danger and when there was good reason to fear the spread of Jacobitism and ministerial power. Once again, the agenda for political discourse was set by the opposition rather than the ministry, in this case by two opposition Whigs, Thomas Gordon and John Trenchard, much of whose thought was set out in the *London Journal* and later collected in the *Independent Whig* and in the much-reprinted *Cato's Letters*. In their hands, opposition Whiggery developed as a language of opposition concerned with controlling ministerial corruption rather than vindicating the right of resistance. It was a republican language, which drew on Machiavellian and Harringtonian resources and centralized problems created by priestcraft and

Luxury and the Pursuit of Happiness', in *The Languages of Political Thought*, ed. A. Pagden (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 225–51; and D. Castiglione, 'Mandeville Moralized', *Annali della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, 17 (1983), 239–90. For Mandeville as a critic of virtue conceived in classical republican idioms, see S. Burt, *Virtue Transformed, Political Argument in England, 1688–1740* (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 7.

opinion which had hitherto only lain in the peripheral vision of republican political thought. And it was to demonstrate how a reformation of manners could lead to the perfection of the constitution.

The importance of priestcraft and opinion in shaping opposition whiggery is most clearly apparent in Gordon's writing. In the *Independent Whig*, the classic independent Whig virtues he commended – a distrust of placemen, courtiers, and prelates; an insistence on the need to judge issues on their merits; a belief in toleration – were used as a foil for an attack on priestcraft which was designed to support the prorogation of Convocation in 1717.<sup>50</sup> The bitter experience of the seventeenth century, Gordon wrote, had shown that it was necessary to keep the Church's nails 'always par'd, and their wings clipp'd'.<sup>51</sup> It was doubly important to do so now, at a time when it was necessary to maintain an expensive navy and standing army to defend the country from Jacobites and the French. This required high taxation and that was, as ever, the mother of popular discontent which could all too easily be inflamed by religious enthusiasm and Jacobitism. As Gordon pointed out tartly

If our High Church were but equally faithful to their oaths, and equally Friends to their Country, we should have seen neither new Troops nor Rebellions. The Army has sav'd us from the High Church. But for all that I have said, I should be sorry to see the People of England either love or fear a standing Force: To do either infers Danger.<sup>52</sup>

This unexpected defence of a standing army as the bastion needed to curb High Church enthusiasm is an indication of the importance of priestcraft and opinion to Gordon's Independent Whiggery. However, it was in *Cato's Letters* that he and Trenchard developed their thinking about the political framework which could be supported by Independent Whig virtue.<sup>53</sup>

Like Defoe, Cato assumed that although the constitution was ancient,

<sup>50</sup> The church's apostolic claims were memorably described in an equally memorably titled pamphlet as 'a vast Chain, long enough to hold ten Millions of Foxes . . . one End of which is tied to the Apostles, and the other to themselves, and it reaches from Jerusalem to Lambeth, taking Rome in its way' ([T. Gordon], *An Apology for the Danger of the Church, Proving that the Church is, and ought to be always in danger: and that it would be dangerous for her to be out of Danger* (London 1719), p. 23). See also Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, pp. 174–9.

<sup>51</sup> [T. Gordon], *The Character of an Independent Whig* (London, 1719), p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>53</sup> For Cato, see C. Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge, MA, 1959), pp. 115–25; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, ch. xiv. See also S. Burt, 'Private Interest, Public Passion, and Patriot Virtue: Comments on a Classical Republican Ideal in English Political Thought', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 157–78. Her important study, *Virtue Transformed*, ch. 3, shows that egoist psychology was central to Cato's political thought but does not, in my view, take enough account of his concerns with opinion.

its principles could best be understood in terms of the philosophies of Pufendorf and Harrington and the effects of the recent progress of society on the common law. But Cato was more interested in political engineering than moral engineering and in perfecting the constitution rather than merely preserving it. He was Harringtonian in his preoccupation with power and property, in his interest in the use of legislation and rotations to maintain the balance between them and in his overriding concern with maintaining civil peace. He was neo-Harringtonian in recognizing that it was better to secure peace by perfecting the principles of a restored Saxon constitution than by undertaking utopian exercises in constitutional engineering or in redistributing property.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, he identified the recent growth in the military and civil powers of the crown as important threats to the balance of the constitution and recognized the value of militias in restoring the balance between power and property and releasing the citizen's capacity for civic virtue.

Yet this was Harringtonian and neo-Harringtonian thought with a difference. Unlike Swift and later Bolingbroke, Cato was not exclusively concerned with the civic virtue which was attached to landed property. In an age of commerce, he was prepared to recognize that 'companies' (provided they did not turn into monopolies) had legitimate interests which had to be accommodated politically if the balance of power and property was to be maintained.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, in one essay, which argued the case for a regular rotation of ministries, Trenchard went so far as to liken the relationship between a ministry and parliament to that of a board and its shareholders. There

the General Court, composed of all its Members, constitutes the Legislature, and the Consent of that Court is the sanction of their Laws; and there the Administration of their affairs is put under the Conduct of a certain Number chosen by the Whole. Here every Man concerned saw the Necessity of securing Part of their property, by putting the Persons entrusted under proper Regulations; however remiss they may be in taking care of the Whole. And if Provision had been made, That, as a Third Part of the Directors are to go out every Year, so none should stay above Three . . .<sup>56</sup>

What troubled Cato more, however, was the problem of controlling opinion. It was opinion as much as shifts in the distribution of property that had been responsible for destroying the gothic constitution in the previous century. Nowadays, it was opinion that was obscuring the thinking of companies, parties and religious sects about the true nature

<sup>54</sup> *Cato's Letters: or Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious and Other Important Subjects*, 5th edn, 4 vols, (London, 1748), I, p. lv.

<sup>55</sup> For example, *Cato's Letters*, no. 10, 3 January 1720/1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 60, 6 January 1721.

of their interests.<sup>57</sup> Opinion encouraged faction and ministerial corruption; indeed, Jacobitism and stockjobbing could now be seen as manifestations of the sort of enthusiasm which had destroyed the constitution a century before. Opinion was a new form of *fortuna* which would have to be mastered if liberty was to be preserved.

This allowed Cato to offer a new analysis of political corruption. He showed how factions manipulated parliaments and ministries in the hope of persuading them to create 'monopolies' in trade, commerce and religion. He showed how these had a tendency to exclude those in possession of property from access to political power. Frequent parliaments and frequently rotating ministries, such as those which had preserved Roman and Harringtonian liberty, would put an end to such corruption. But this would be impossible without a party system which was free from faction and purged of the opinions which distorted a true understanding of the public interest. This meant that all parties, Whig and Tory, High Church and Low Church, would have to come to an *éclaircissement* and reach an understanding that their common interest lay in preserving the present constitution.<sup>58</sup> This required a reformation of manners to curb the Spectatorial moderation which threatened to undermine the natural spirit of jealousy that fuelled the citizen's sense of right and obligation. Indeed, moderation was simply a new manifestation of the sort of superstition that had made Englishmen careless of their liberties in the past.<sup>59</sup> What was needed was a new understanding of the principles of human nature and new histories of Rome and England to teach citizen to distrust *all* ministers, as a matter of principle, even those who held office in a country which was governed by 'a wise and beneficent prince, a generous and public-spirited Parliament and an able and disinterested Ministry'.<sup>60</sup> Cato's anger, properly directed to the perfection of the constitution, would leave the country with a constitution in which the balance of opinion, property and power would remain perpetually in equilibrium, and would make those *ricorsi* which had devastated England in the past redundant.

Cato's politics looked back to the early years of Anne's reign, when parliaments had been triennial rather than septennial and when the queen had lived in the hope of creating ministries of able counsellors, drawn from different parties. Bolingbroke, however, had less visionary fish to fry. By the late 1720's, when his onslaught on the ministry was at its fiercest, oligarchy was better established than it had been in Cato's

<sup>57</sup> For example, *Ibid.*, no. 16, 11 February 1720/1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 16, 11 February 1720/1; no. 85, 14 July 1722.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3, 19 November 1720.

day, and the problems of mounting an effective opposition was correspondingly more acute. In trying to awaken the spirit of Catoic liberty, Cato had addressed the people at large; Bolingbroke, however, simply wanted to target freeholders. Cato wrote about the *possibility* of corruption; Bolingbroke thought he had *real* corruption to cope with. Cato had glimpsed a world in which future *ricorsi* would be unnecessary; Bolingbroke failed to see how the Robinocracy could be dislodged without one. For Bolingbroke, in other words, Cato's thought had moved too far from its Machiavellian moorings.

Bolingbroke is generally seen as a Tory who appropriated an opposition Whig theory of the constitution in order to sustain a neo-Harringtonian conception of the constitution.<sup>61</sup> He stressed the contractual nature of government, the antiquity of a constitution whose principles had been reaffirmed in 1688 and 1689, and the importance of the Commons in articulating the voice of the people. He continually poured scorn on exploded ideas of divine right and passive obedience. He regarded the Revolution as a genuine *ricorso* which had laid the foundations of a modern system of liberty and opened the gate to new forms of corruption. Of these, none was more important than the modern party system. This had sprung up after the Revolution in response to the growing influence of the Crown and the misgovernment of corrupt ministries – a development which he found to be analogous to the growth of parties during the reigns of the early Stuarts.<sup>62</sup> This was the context in which he set his celebrated case for a new *ricorso*, engineered by a new country party, to put an end to party altogether. This required a new spirit of patriotism and an appropriate reformation of manners. Much of Bolingbroke's political writing was directed to this end. Sometimes he invoked 'the true old English spirit, which prevailed in the days of our fathers' in an attempt to catch the ears of country Whigs and country Tories.<sup>63</sup> But he was more interested in tracing the origin of the spirit of modern patriotism which had followed the decline of feudal tenures and the rise of the gentry. Struggles for liberty in the feudal era had been merely ephemeral because they had not been based in the claims of property. Indeed, Magna Carta had been no more than the 'accidental outcome' of a quarrel between the crown and its subjects,

<sup>61</sup> Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, chs. 3, 4, 6; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 477–86; H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, esp. pp. 177–8. Burt, *Virtue Transformed*, ch. 4. Q. Skinner, 'The Principles and Practice of Opposition. The Case of Bolingbroke versus Walpole', in *Historical Perspectives. Studies in English Thought and Society in honour of J. H. Plumb*, ed. N. McKendrick (London, 1974), pp. 93–128 is indispensable.

<sup>62</sup> *The Works of Lord Bolingbroke*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1841; repr. 1969), II, pp. 147–72.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 295.



rather than 'the natural effect of the property and power that was lodged in the barons and clergy'.<sup>64</sup> In Cato's vision, the Catoic anger of the modern independent Whig would free modern parties from corruption and restore the balance of the constitution. But Bolingbroke thought that corruption had penetrated too deep into the fabric of the constitution to allow that to happen. In his more Machiavellian vision, rulers were 'the most powerful of all reformers' and a patriot king, ruling with the consent of a patriot propertied class, was needed to abolish party and to restore liberty.<sup>65</sup>

The ministerial reaction to Cato's and Bolingbroke's assaults on the Robinocracy is not particularly easy to analyse. Much of it was developed in the 1730s in such journals as the *London Journal* and the *Gazeteer* by writers such as James Pitt, William Arnall and Ralph de Courteville, who have only recently begun to attract the attention they deserve. In their hands, the ministry developed an often sophisticated if reactive response to the opposition, which, like Cato's Whiggery, looked back to the political world of Anne's reign.<sup>66</sup>

In a polemical world which was dominated by the opposition, it was inevitable that the first task of court writers would be to legitimize a ministry whose power rested on the Septennial Act, the decision to suspend Convocation and on the influence of the crown. To judge from Pitt and Arnall's writing, what is surprising is the circumspection they showed and the use they made of Cato's appeals to independent Whigs to attack Bolingbroke. Thus, the cutting edge of Pitt's vindication of the ministry was based on a Catoic defence of the party system Bolingbroke was committed to destroy. Free parties, like frequent elections and rotating ministries, he wrote, were necessary to a free constitution; indeed, 'the oftner the Power returns into the Hands of the People the more secure they are of their Liberties', adding 'but in this the Whigs themselves do not agree'.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the Septennial Act could be defended as an act of necessity which was necessary to preserve the constitution and the succession and, paradoxically, the party system. It also allowed him to argue, on proto-Humean grounds, that the influence of the crown

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 361.      <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, II, pp. 96, 396–7.

<sup>66</sup> The materials necessary for a proper study of the ministerial press are notoriously difficult to assemble. What follows here is heavily indebted to the following sources: J. A. W. Gunn, 'Court Whiggery – Justifying Innovation', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 125–56; T. A. Horne, 'Politics in a Corrupt Society: William Arnall's Defence of Robert Walpole', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41 (1980), 601–14; M. M. Goldsmith, 'Faction Detected: Ideological Consequences of Robert Walpole's Decline and Fall', *History* 64 (1979), pp. 1–19. See also Burtt, *Virtue Transformed*, ch. 6. My discussion is to be regarded as provisional.

<sup>67</sup> *Daily Gazeteer*, 9 December 1736. Quoted in Gunn, 'Court Whiggery', p. 139.

could be legitimately used to counterbalance the growing wealth of the Commons which was threatening to upset the balance of the constitution.

This Catoic defence of the Robinocracy had interesting implications. In the first place, it allowed Pitt and other ministerial writers to develop a distinctive account of the place of party and interest in a free constitution. Like Cato, Pitt and Arnall understood the complexities of opinion; as the former put it, 'It requires no Art to govern by Force or mere Power, but the greatest to govern by the Management of other People's Opinions, Prejudices, Passions and different Views in Life'.<sup>68</sup> But where Cato had sought to free parties from the interest groups that clamoured for political attention, ministerial writers seem to have regarded this interplay of ministry, party and interest groups as the stuff of modern politics. All commercial societies were made up of 'jarring Interests, always opposite, often clashing'.<sup>69</sup> It was absurd to expect the public to speak with a single voice and it was the task of a prudent government to maintain an 'equilibrium' between them. As someone – possibly Henry Fielding – put it in 1734.

Where an unrestrain'd Freedom and Liberty is allow'd, Sectaries in Religion and Parties in Politicks, whose interests are as opposite as their Tenets and Opinions, will abound, and thus it is impossible for any Administration whatsoever, in such a State, so to . . . accommodate their Conduct, as to gain the Good-liking and Affection of all the different Parties. The utmost within the Compass of human Nature, in such a nice and ticklish Station, is so to maintain the *internal Balance* between the great Variety of Interests, as to preserve the Government stable upon the broadest Basis; to attach a Majority of the Nation's Strength to the governing Power, that the Constitution may never be liable to any destructive Changes and Revolutions.<sup>70</sup>

This argument, which identified the ministry, rather than Parliament or people, as the custodian of the public interest, could now be used to develop a defence of Walpole as a prudent minister whose task was to preserve the constitution at a time when civil order and public credit was being threatened by Jacobitism. And it enabled court writers to offer a Whig defence of the right of the king to appoint a prudent if unpopular minister who enjoyed the trust of a parliament to whom the people had delegated their powers.

It is important to notice how profoundly the political thought of

<sup>68</sup> *Daily Gazeteer*, 6 March 1736. Quoted in Gunn, 'Court Whiggery', p. 139.

<sup>69</sup> *Weekly Journal or British Gazette*, 15 April 1721. Quoted in Gunn, 'Court Whiggery', p. 140.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in J. A. W. Gunn, *Faction No More: Attitudes to Party in Government and Opposition in Eighteenth Century England* (London 1972), p. 21.

Anne's reign and the Walpolian era had been shaped by the adversarial demands of party politics. It is even more important to notice the crucial part that High Anglican political thought had played in shaping Grub Street polemic, in its formative years during Anne's reign. Here, after all, was political thought which was firmly rooted in the authority of revealed religion, in a defence of patriarchy, the primitive church and the ancient rights and apostolic claims of the Church of England. It was on these narrow historical and theological foundations and on the defence of antiquity, that the defence of divine right and passive obedience depended.<sup>71</sup> It is interesting that so many of the writers we have been considering were increasingly reluctant to place so heavy a reliance on the authority of antiquity in validating their accounts of revolution principles. Defoe and Hoadly, Addison and Steele, Cato and Bolingbroke had all appealed to Grotius, Pufendorf, and Harrington in order to distance themselves from High Church defences of the English polity. They had viewed the reformation of manners as a mechanism for curbing High Church enthusiasm, and for manipulating opinion, that new manifestation of *fortuna*, which had the power to make and break constitutions and to generate new conceptions of public and private interests. Natural jurisprudence and Harringtonian and neo-Harringtonian discourse, deployed with an unabashed eclecticism, had proved to be the most favoured resources in curbing the superstition and enthusiasm which the old neo-exclusionist discourse of Anne's reign continued to generate and to rebuild parties on new foundations.

All of this added up to a highly eclectic and intellectually incoherent political culture. For example, questions about the origins of government and the nature of political obligation, about the relationship between natural and conventional rights, about the relevance of ancient and modern example for modern political conduct, had been raised without being intellectually resolved, provoking questions whether contemporary Britain was capable of developing a coherent political culture capable of sustaining the Revolution and Hanoverian succession. It is in this context that it is worth turning to Scotland and to David Hume. For it was here, in a political world that was remote from that of London and from English party political discourse, that the most serious contemporary attempts to develop a coherent and peculiarly *British* political culture were to be made. And with David Hume, Augustan Britain acquired a philosopher and historian who developed a strikingly coherent if uncomfortable defence of revolution principles and an

<sup>71</sup> On the future development of Anglican political theology, see R. E. Sullivan, 'The Transformation of Anglican Political Theology, c. 1716–1760', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 47–58.

equally problematic account of the problems of maintaining the liberty and prosperity of modern Britain.

### III

At one level, the history of Scottish political thought is a story about the manner in which those languages of rights, virtue, and manners which were instrumental in shaping contemporary English political thought were appropriated in Scotland. However, that happened in a political world which was significantly different from that of England. In Scotland, the Revolution and revolution principles carried their own meanings and questions about the Hanoverian Succession. The growth in the influence of the crown and the progress of commerce and empire became inextricably intertwined with fundamental questions about Anglo-Scottish relations and the arguments for and against a new Union. Under these circumstances, it was scarcely surprising that the public life of this small underdeveloped polity came to revolve around questions about its 'independence', that were to be construed in a 'British' rather than an 'English' context. What is, perhaps, more surprising is that its political culture achieved a higher level of abstraction than that which we have been considering.

It is worth reflecting for a moment longer on the contexts in which the Scots set out to reconstruct their political culture. In England, the Revolution had been variously presented as a defence of an ancient constitution, a Harringtonian *ricorso* made necessary by the failure of the constitution to accommodate shifts in the distribution of power and property, or a Machiavellian *ricorso* which had returned the constitution to its fundamental principles. In Scotland, the Revolution Settlement had been far more radical than that of England, firmly eschewing toleration and placing the most severe limitations on the civil and ecclesiastical powers of the crown. In so doing, it looked back, in the most uncompromising manner, to 1638 and to the Rebellion, setting discussions about resistance in a context that most English political thinkers had studiously tried to avoid.<sup>72</sup> Attitudes to Scottish revolution principles were, however, to be influenced profoundly by the

<sup>72</sup> B. P. Lenman usefully discusses the lack of debate about Scottish revolution principles in 'The Poverty of Political Theory in the Scottish Revolution of 1688–90', in *The Revolution of 1688–89: Changing Perspectives*, ed. L. G. Schwoerer (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 244–59. This is not the same thing as saying that the political classes lacked ideological conviction. The Exclusion Crisis and the Revolution both badly need the attention of Scottish historians. But this needs to be set against W. Ferguson's idiosyncratic and underrated *Scotland's Relations with England: a Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1977), chs. 9–10. The subject requires further investigation.

politics of the 1690s. Scottish political and religious life became factionalized and royal government uncertain and insecure. It fertilized an anglophobia that fed on high tax demands, endemic corruption and continual English interference in Scottish politics, and it was plagued by well-founded apprehensions that the court would attempt to impose toleration on the Presbyterian kirk. Worst of all, so far from encouraging the expansion of the Scottish economy, William's wars had done little more than immiserate a country with a feudal agrarian economy and a system of overseas trade which was being devastated by the effects of international war.<sup>73</sup> When Scots looked back to the Revolution Settlement from the politically secure and economically promising plateau of the 1750s, they saw it as an attempt to secure property, religion and liberty which had conspicuously failed to curb the influence of the crown, the kirk, and a nobility whose power remained firmly rooted in a system of feudal tenures. In this broadly neo-Harringtonian view, the Act of Union of 1707 and the Hanoverian Succession had been necessary to correct and reinforce revolution principles and to lay the foundations of a system of civil liberty which would secure the 'independence' of a province of the English crown.<sup>74</sup>

The Scottish debate about the Act of Union, which ran from 1701 to 1707, was as important in shaping Scottish political culture as the English debate about revolution principles. Indeed, it is worth remembering that whereas the celebration of the tercentenary of the Glorious Revolution passed almost unnoticed in England, the Act of Union still plays a crucial part in shaping the Scottish politics of the British party system. The debate about an 'incorporating' Anglo-Scottish union was precipitated by the collapse of the Darien scheme and coincided with the Act of Settlement. The future of commerce and the Hanoverian succession alerted the Scots to the importance of commerce and credit for maintaining a free polity, and it taught a poor country a lesson which a rich country only learned a generation later as a result of the Bubble Crisis. The question of the succession gave the Scots the opportunity of exacting free trade as a price for recognizing the Hanoverian Succession. That connection was made by an irascible, intelligent Scots republican member of parliament, Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun. He steered an Act

<sup>73</sup> For the political background, see P. W. J. Riley, *The Union of England and Scotland: A Study in Anglo-Scottish Politics of the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 1978) and the same author's, *King William and the Scottish Politicians* (Edinburgh, 1979); W. Ferguson, *Scotland: 1689 to the Present* (Edinburgh, 1968), chs. 1–4. For the economic background, see T. C. Smout, *Scottish Trade on the Eve of the Union, 1660–1707* (Edinburgh, 1963). But cf. B. P. Lenman, *An Economic History of Modern Scotland 1660–1976* (London, 1977).

<sup>74</sup> N. Phillipson, *Hume* (London and New York, 1989), ch. 2.

of Security through the Scots parliament in 1703 which made recognition of the Hanoverian Succession conditional on extending the radical principles of the Scottish revolution settlement and giving the Scots free access to English markets at home and overseas. Fletcher's Act of Security was a Harringtonian document, and the subtle and intelligent thought it embodied was to set the agenda for future discussion of what may be called union principles in Scotland. For Harringtonian republicanism was to play the same catalytic part in shaping political debate in Scotland as High Anglicanism did in England.<sup>75</sup>

Fletcher, like Trenchard, made his debut as a political thinker with a contribution to the militia controversy in 1697–8 which served as the opening chapter to a much more elaborate science of politics. Terse and elliptical, *A Discourse of Government Concerning Militias* was the most acute of all contributions to the militia controversy. However, it also contained a powerful critique of English neo-Harringtonianism. For Fletcher was a Harringtonian of a peculiarly Scottish stamp, an unashamed 'utopian' of the sort Tutchin and Trenchard had distrusted. As a Scottish patriot, he wanted to return the Scottish constitution to the fundamental principles of 1638 and 1688. This would create the conditions in which a virtuous parliament could engineer a shift in the balance of power and property by means of agrarian laws and a system of public credit. These would destroy feudal tenures and the power of a factious nobility and encourage the progress of agriculture, trade, manufactures and employment. All of Fletcher's political thinking was geared to achieving this Harringtonian end. But it was a far more complex matter than English neo-Harringtonians had realised. Placing limitations on the power of the crown would doubtless restore the independence of local communities and enable them to be governed by a virtuous gentry. But Fletcher did not believe that traditional country institutions were capable of checking the growing influence of the crown or of providing the military resources which were needed to defend the kingdom in an age of advanced military technology. Moreover, he thought that it was dangerous to discuss the libertarian virtues of militias in terms of the part they had played in the feudal age. Indeed, in writing about 'the past and present governments of Europe' he was anxious 'to disabuse those who think them the same, because they are called by the same names'. Instead, he called for an extension of Scottish revolution principles to Britain as a whole and a radical reorganization of its regional structure. This would be done by replacing the county

<sup>75</sup> J. Robertson, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue* (Edinburgh, 1985). See also my 'The Scottish Enlightenment' in *The Enlightenment in National Contexts*, ed. R. Porter and M. Teich (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 19–40.

structure of Britain with five huge militia camps which would be seats of government, commerce and culture and would provide for the defence of the nation. Like the Covenanters, he was proposing to create a British polity on Scottish terms.

I perceive now [says an interlocutor in Fletcher's utopian conversation about the future of British liberty] the tendency of all this discourse. On my conscience he has contrived the whole scheme to no other end than to set his country on an equal foot with England and the rest of the world. To tell you the truth, said I, the insuperable difficulty of making my country happy by any other way, led me insensibly to the discovery of these things which, if I mistake not, have no other tendency than to render not only my own country, but all mankind as happy as the imperfections of human nature will admit'.<sup>76</sup>

This, then, was a full-blown Harringtonian vision of a modern Oceana. It was a limited monarchy in which the balance of power between king and people would be underpinned by a balance of property and by a balance between court and country which would be maintained by regional parliaments and militias. It was this model to which ministerial politicians had to respond in the fascinating debate which took place between 1703 and 1707. As John Robertson has shown, that response offered a natural-jurisprudential analysis of the condition of Scotland, and, perhaps predictably, it called for a reformation of manners to create a 'friendly' relationship between two distinct nations.<sup>77</sup> During these debates, the case for such a reformation was set out by Defoe.<sup>78</sup> Thereafter, the reformation of manners became closely associated with Spectatorial politeness. What is more, Scottish politeness was to become associated with a new North British patriotism which was directed to 'compleating' and perfecting the union on which the preservation of liberty and independence depended. For in Scotland, completing the Union was to become as important to preserving liberty as perfecting the Revolution in England.<sup>79</sup>

These Scottish concerns with manners, politeness and patriotism were to be reinforced by philosophy and here the Presbyterian kirk was all-important. The abolition of episcopacy and the restoration of

<sup>76</sup> *Fletcher of Saltoun: Selected Political Writings and Speeches*, ed. D. Daiches (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 136.

<sup>77</sup> J. Robertson, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Question*. The Union was the subject of a major reappraisal in the Folger Institute's Seminar 'Union, State and Empire: the Political Identities of Britain, 1688–1750', directed by John Robertson. Its proceedings are forthcoming in J. C. Robertson (ed.), *A Union for Empire: The Union of 1707 in the Context of British Political Thought* (Cambridge).

<sup>78</sup> See J. Robertson's suggestive comments in 'Redefining Sovereignty: The Course of the Union Debate in Scotland, 1698–1707', presented to the Folger Institute Seminar 'Union, State and Empire: the Political Identities of Britain, 1688–1750'.

<sup>79</sup> See my *Hume*, esp. ch. 2 and the works cited there.



Presbyterianism in 1690 – which high flyers thought of as a Third Reformation – brought about a purge of the universities of Episcopalian and non-juring professors and regents, and precipitated an inquiry into the state of the curricula. This quickly developed into a protracted and intricate dispute between orthodox and moderate Presbyterians about the principles of clerical education, which revolved around the question of whether and how the natural jurisprudence of Grotius and Pufendorf could be adapted to suit presbyterian needs. Grotius, after all was Arminian and straightforwardly heretical according to the canons of the Westminster Confession of Faith; Pufendorf was dangerously Hobbist.<sup>80</sup> As James Moore and others have shown, this was an operation which involved a meticulous and sophisticated re-examination of the metaphysical principles on which natural jurisprudence was founded and of the moral and political thought which was derived from it. Here, then, was an intellectual enterprise which involved exploring the intellectual foundations of the political language in which ministerial defences of revolution principles were being articulated. It was an enterprise in which Francis Hutcheson, the Scots-Irish moral theologian, was deeply involved and it is one to which David Hume was exposed as a student, philosopher and historian and it is with his political thought that the last part of this essay is concerned.<sup>81</sup>

Hume's interest in the legitimacy of the Revolution, the Revolution Settlement and the Hanoverian Succession was deep and longstanding.<sup>82</sup> He addressed the question of election and divine right, resistance and passive obedience, as a philosopher in the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40) and in the *Essays Moral and Political* (1741/2/8). He addressed them as a historian in the *History of England* (1754–63). He devoted two of his *Political Discourses* (1752) to essays defending the Protestant succession and reflecting on the nature of a perfect common-

<sup>80</sup> See my 'The Pursuit of Virtue in Scottish University Education: Dugald Stewart and Scottish Moral Philosophy', in *Universities, Society and the Future*, ed. N. T. Phillipson (Edinburgh, 1983), pp. 82–100.

<sup>81</sup> See particularly, J. Moore, 'The Two Systems of Francis Hutcheson: Between Civic Moralism and Natural Jurisprudence', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 281–304, and the revised version 'The Two Systems of Francis Hutcheson: On the Origin of the Scottish Enlightenment', in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. M. A. Stewart (Oxford, 1990), pp. 37–59. But compare K. Haakonssen, 'Natural Law and Moral realism: The Scottish Synthesis', in the same volume, pp. 61–85.

<sup>82</sup> What follows summarizes and develops the argument in my *Hume and 'Propriety, Property and Prudence: David Hume and the Defence of the Revolution'*, in *Studies in Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, ed. N. Phillipson and Q. Skinner (Cambridge, 1993). The first sketch of that argument was presented to the Folger Institute Seminar under the title 'Politics and Politeness in the Philosophy of David Hume; in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Schochet, pp. 305–18.

wealth. In so doing, he addressed the neo-exclusionist agenda of Anne's reign so closely that Locke is made to appear, possibly for the last time, as a radical exclusionist. At one level, Hume's response to this agenda was that of a theorist of manners of Anne's reign who differed from Defoe, Addison and Steele only in approaching the subject as a religious sceptic. He was anxious to strip neo-Ciceronianism of its dependence on natural theology and to extend the discussion of conversation and discourse to questions about the origins of the citizen's ideas of justice, politics, morals, religion and taste. He showed that there were good reasons for believing that all our cognitive powers could be attributed to linguistic experience, gained, as he was fond of saying, in the course of common life. Thus, all human knowledge could be regarded as convention-based, gaining its authority from custom and habit. As such, he appeared as a self-confessed 'sceptical Whig' who showed that the Revolution, the Hanoverian Succession and the grubby machine politics of the Robinocracy could only be defended on *de facto* grounds as necessary for the maintenance of the political order on which justice and the progress of commerce depended.

There can be no doubt that Hume would have been content to have introduced the gist of this somewhat rudimentary line of thought into the existing language of politeness; his earliest essays suggest that he hoped for a popular Spectatorial audience. However, his engagement with contemporary discourse was more intricate and equivocal than this outline suggests. He understood the power of Mandeville's critique of politeness and he recognized the importance of pride and interest in shaping our understanding of justice, politics and morality and, explosively, religion. At the same time, he was a powerful critic of Mandeville, who had learned from Hutcheson to be wary of the language of self-love and to take note of the constraints of language in encouraging us to relate our own interests to those of the 'public' without continually indulging in prudential calculations. Hume was enabled to formulate a new, powerful and paradoxical theory of resistance which drew on two radical extremes, that of the Commonwealthman and the Jacobite. Since political conventions rested on considerations of interest, Hume was forced to conclude that the right of resistance was by its nature, universal and unlimited: 'Since 'tis impossible, even in the most despotic governments to deprive [the people] of it'. On the other hand, since the only reason we submit to government is to preserve the rules of justice on which life and property depend, the root of political obligation must lie in a 'natural' disposition to submit to establish authority.<sup>83</sup> All that

<sup>83</sup> D. Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. W. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. ed. P. H. Nidditch. (Oxford, 1978), pp. 563–64 and 545.

could possibly limit the exercise of that 'right' was, therefore, considerations of prudence. In other words, the test of what constituted legitimate resistance was enshrined in manners, language and culture.

This distinctive preoccupation with prudence made Hume an acute analyst of contemporary political culture and of party in particular. It also focused his attention on parties of 'principle', which were founded on mutually exclusive beliefs about the nature of the constitution and the rights and duties which were enshrined in it. At one level, as his *History of England* showed, it made him a devastating analyst and critic of the priestcraft which so often lay at the heart of 'principles'. It also made him a radical critic of Bolingbroke's spurious attempts to abolish party distinctions altogether; these were too deeply embedded in the political system to be eradicated without running the risk of political disorder. He recognized the historical necessity of party although with considerably less enthusiasm than Cato. Like Cato, he hoped for an *éclaircissement* to close the gap between interest and principle. It would ensure that party differences were contained by a recognition that the future of liberty depended on preserving a constitution which might not be the best system of liberty in the modern world but was certainly the most complete. As the measured Tacitean disdain of 'A Character of Sir Robert Walpole' suggests, any minister who was required to manage the affairs of an imperfect polity which was plagued with party and corruption was to be regarded with sceptical detachment rather than outright distrust.<sup>84</sup> This, rather than Spectatorial moderation or Catonic anger, was the hallmark of Hume's celebrated sceptical whiggery.

All of Hume's understanding of the sort of prudence that was needed to preserve a far from matchless constitution stemmed from his understanding of property. For Hume, the universal desire to secure and enjoy our temporal possessions, rather than the prospect of the rewards of the life hereafter, provided a much more plausible explanation of our willingness to enter those conventions in which we recognized the need for justice and political authority and acquired the ability to conceive of a public interest. All ideas of modern prudence flowed from remembering these truths, and all ideas of liberty and happiness stemmed from the sense of security we enjoyed when political authority was secure. Like Defoe and Addison, but with more acuity than either, Hume saw that security in the terrene world would naturally generate curiosity, improvement and material and moral progress, restoring trust in government and furthering the course of virtue. In this analysis, the

<sup>84</sup> *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, pp. 574–6.

natural disposition of human beings to *forget* how they acquired their ideas of interest, their proneness to fantasy, their extraordinary vulnerability to priestcraft, constituted both the greatest strength and weakness of human nature. This was the great theme of the *History of England*. Hume's analysis of the disastrous history of the seventeenth century drew on Harrington and Clarendon to show how opinion and priestcraft had combined to obscure contemporaries' understanding of the historic changes which were taking place in the distribution of power and property as a result of the decline of feudal tenures. It was a demonstration of the depths of folly into which superstition and enthusiasm could plunge apparently prudent men. Only Humean prudence had the power to close the gap between the neo-exclusionist politics of party and a neo-Harringtonian perception of the changing patterns of power and property which were characteristic of the modern age. It was a sceptical language of manners, of great power and complexity, which would be developed with epochal consequences during the reign of George III by the great historical jurists of the Scottish Enlightenment, and it would be used by Burke to analyze the causes of the French Revolution, the catastrophe which brought about the destruction of the early modern state.

#### IV

The development of a language of manners marks a break in the continuities of early modern political thought in Britain. It was evident to Defoe and Hume, as it has been ever since, that the foundations of modern British political thought had been laid during the seismic upheavals of the seventeenth century. As they saw, it was a century which had seen the birth of the politics of 'principle', in which questions about natural and divine rights, resistance and passive obedience, had penetrated and fractured the political and ecclesiastical fabric of the British kingdoms. But it was also the century of Grotius, Pufendorf and Harrington, which had given birth to new and less radical theories of rights and obligations, and a new means of comprehending the shifts in the balance of power and property which had taken place in the modern era. Above all, perhaps, it was the century which had witnessed a massive examination of the history of the common law which linked the ancient and modern constitution of Britain. Clarendon, Rapin and Hume's 'impartial' histories provided worrying and controversial accounts of the circumstances in which the politics of 'principle' had been created. But the remarkable and understudied scepticism and Hobbism of the period had provided valuable polemical resources with

which to assail the epistemological authority of the claims about rights and duties on which those principles had been founded. This scepticism had threatened to reduce political knowledge to opinion, and opinion to the vagaries of the imagination and passions. It had demonstrated the power of priestcraft and the press to generate superstition and enthusiasm and to create the distrust of political authority which theorists of manners now feared would undermine revolution principles themselves.

We have already glanced briefly at the pressures to which defenders of the Revolution and the Hanoverian Succession responded in attempting to defend resistance in terms of conventional as well as natural rights, shifting the focus of political argument from ancient to modern sources of authority, invoking the changing interests of modern Britain rather than the increasingly tarnished example of Saxon antiquity. Indeed, we might have noticed the attempts of such High Church historians as Thomas Carte and, in the reign of George III, of that inspired fraud 'Ossian' MacPherson, to strengthen Tory claims to the ideological custody of an ancient patriarchal world regulated by the principles of pre-Saxon and Celtic feudalism. For it was not until the 'historical age' of George III, that Whigs from Catharine Macaulay to Fox and Millar would address the problem of recovering the Saxon past for Whiggery, in this way preparing the ground for the great Macaulay. The purpose of this essay has been to take a step towards advancing the claim that it was the language of manners, drawing eclectically on the resources of natural jurisprudence and Harrington, on natural theology and Shaftesburian aesthetics, that formed the cultural bridge which links the pre-Revolutionary party culture of an Exclusionist world to the post-Revolutionary world of war, empire and commerce. It was a development which reintroduced Cicero into the vocabulary of British politics as the author of a language of counsel designed for the city rather than the court and for a population whose opinions were now seen as not less important for the preservation of liberty than the advice of ministers.

This language of manners offered a *de facto* defence of an increasingly well-established political order, in which the balance of power and property was changing and the relationship between Crown, Parliament and people must change also. Hume had been able to show that, properly employed, it was a *de facto* language which sanctioned all evolutionary change, that is to say, all change which was underpinned by those patterns of consent and trust which had their roots in convention and culture. It was a language which aroused the hope that the rage of party would give way to a regular party system, that the politics of rights would give way to the politics of virtue, and that virtue would be

construed as a matter of preserving liberties which were enshrined in constitutional principles, and a common law whose roots were ancient but whose fabric had been refined by the progress of society and the spread of civility and culture.