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Paul Russell

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Hume's *Treatise* and the Clarke-Collins Controversy

PAUL RUSSELL

There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blameable, than in philosophical debates to endeavour to refute any hypothesis by a pretext of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality. When any opinion leads us into absurdities, 'tis certainly false; but 'tis not certain an opinion is false, because 'tis of dangerous consequence. (T 409)

The philosophy of Samuel Clarke is of central importance to Hume's *Treatise*. Hume's overall attitude to Clarke's philosophy may be characterized as one of systematic scepticism. The general significance of this is that it sheds considerable light on Hume's fundamental "atheistic" or anti-Christian intentions in the *Treatise*. These are all claims that I have argued for elsewhere.¹ In this paper I am concerned to focus on a narrower aspect of this relationship between the philosophies of Clarke and Hume. Specifically, I will consider Hume's views on the subjects of materialism and necessity in relation to Clarke's enormously influential debate with Anthony Collins on these topics. I begin by describing the nature and context of this controversy; I then examine how Hume's positions on questions of materialism and necessity stand in relation to the positions and arguments taken up by Clarke and Collins; and finally I explain the deeper significance of these specific issues for Hume's wider "atheistic" or anti-Christian objectives in the *Treatise*. Hume's views on the closely related subjects of materialism and necessity, I maintain, constitute

core elements of his "atheistic" project in the *Treatise*, and they manifest his basic antipathy to the theistic metaphysics of the Christian religion in general, and to the Newtonian cosmology of Clarke in particular.²

Materialism, Necessitarianism, Atheism: Clarke *Contra* Hobbes

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries British philosophy gave rise to two powerful but conflicting philosophical outlooks. On the one hand, it was a major concern of divines at this time to show that the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Religion could be defended as true and reasonable.³ In opposition to this Christian rationalism, however, there existed a sceptical tradition of which the great representative was Hobbes. Hobbes's reputation in this period was that of an "atheist," and his philosophy was viewed as an attack on the basic tenets of Christianity.⁴ Hobbes's scepticism concerning natural and revealed religion and his egoistic, Epicurean theory of morals were particular targets of his Christian critics. There were two other aspects of Hobbes's philosophy that were also widely regarded as being especially "dangerous" and destructive of religion and morality: these were the (closely related) doctrines of materialism and necessitarianism.⁵ These doctrines served as the basis of Hobbes's secular and naturalistic account of human nature. A whole range of Christian critics stepped forward to argue that Hobbes's mechanistic view of man was inconsistent with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and with moral accountability (both in this world and in a future state). In short, it was widely held that it was necessary to refute these "atheistic" doctrines of Hobbes and his followers in order to defend the Christian Religion and the moral fabric of society. In order to refute these doctrines it was necessary to prove the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and free will.

In the 1690's the Boyle Lectures were instituted for the purpose of "proving the Christian Religion" against "notorious Infidels" and "Atheists." The general significance of the Boyle Lectures is summarized by Margaret Jacob as follows:

The lecture...series set the content and tone of English natural religion during the eighteenth century. By 1711 the reading of the Boyle Lectures formed a part of an educated man's knowledge.... The lecturers were carefully chosen by the trustees, and they marshalled their arguments in defence of natural and revealed religion with the conviction that their efforts were critically important to the maintenance of the Church's moral leadership and political influence in a society threatened at every turn by atheism. (Jacob, *Newtonians*, 162-163)

Of the Boyle Lecturers, the most admired and influential was Samuel Clarke.⁶ Indeed, throughout the early eighteenth century he was recognized as the most able defender of the Newtonian philosophy and its theology, and after Locke's death he was widely regarded as the foremost of living English philosophers. In his Boyle Lectures of 1704 Clarke endeavoured, on the basis of what he describes in his Preface "as near to mathematical [method] as the nature of such a discourse would allow," to demonstrate by "one clear and plain series of propositions necessarily connected and following from one another" the "certainty of the Being of God, and to deduce in order the necessary attributes of his Nature," so far as by our finite reason we are enabled to discover and apprehend them" (*Works*, vol. 2, 517; 524). This "demonstration" is described in the subtitle of his work as an "Answer to Mr. Hobbes, Spinoza, And their Followers"—their followers being various other deniers of natural and revealed religion.⁷ In his second series of Boyle Lectures, given in 1705, Clarke uses the same "mathematical" method to demonstrate "the unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the certainty of Divine Revelation." Once again Hobbes's philosophy serves as the main target of Clarke's reasonings.⁸

Two of Clarke's particular objectives in his first series of Boyle Lectures were to prove—in opposition to Hobbes and his followers—the immateriality of the soul and that man possesses free will (i.e., human action is not subject to causal necessity). These doctrines, he holds, are essential to religion and morality (for example, *Works*, vol. 2, 559; compare *Works*, vol. 3, 904–907 and vol. 4, 735).⁹ Accordingly, in the Boyle Lectures Clarke is concerned to establish, not only that God created the (material) world, but also that God created immaterial, intelligent souls which enjoy free will (*Works*, vol. 2, 543–564).

Against the materialists he argued that it is impossible to conceive how matter and motion could ever give rise to thought and perception. Perception or intelligence, he claims, is a "distinct quality or perfection" and thus it could never be "a mere effect or composition of unintelligent figure and motion." The reason for this, says Clarke, is "because nothing can ever give to another any perfection, which it hath not either actually in it self, or at least in higher degree." He continues further below:

...whatever can arise from, or be compounded of any Things; is still only those very Things, of which it was compounded.... All possible Changes, Compositions, or Divisions of Figure, are still nothing but Figure: And all possible compositions or Effects of Motion, can eternally be nothing but mere Motion. (*Works*, vol. 2, 545)

Clarke suggests that Hobbes's view that matter in motion may give rise to thought and volition is simply absurd. Such objects have no resemblance

whatsoever and thus the former can never give rise to the latter (*Works*, vol. 2, 561). Having shown that “thinking and willing are powers entirely different from solidity, figure and motion; and that if they be different, that they cannot possibly arise from them, or be compounded of them,” Clarke concludes that it “certainly and necessarily” follows that thinking and willing are “faculties or powers of immaterial substances” (compare *Works*, vol. 2, 555–556; 561).

There is, according to Clarke, an intimate connection between the question of whether or not the soul is immaterial and the question as to whether or not man is a necessary or free agent.

Mr Hobbs therefore, and his Followers, are guilty of a most shameful Fallacy in that very Argument, wherein they place their main and chief strength. For, supposing Matter to be capable of Thinking and Willing, they contend that the Soul is mere Matter; and, knowing that the Effects of Figure and Motion must needs be all necessary, they conclude that the Operations of the Mind must All therefore be Necessary. (*Works*, vol. 2, 563)

The problem of free will, claims Clarke, is “the question of the greatest concern of all, in matters of both religion and human life” (*Works*, vol. 2, 559; compare 555). If man is simply a material being, he argues, then all his actions and activities would be the necessary outcome of the mechanical laws which govern the material world. That is to say, if man were a material being then he would not enjoy “liberty of choice.” His actions, Clarke suggests, would all be as necessary as the motions of a clock (*Works*, vol. 2, 559). Only immaterial substance, Clarke claims, has active power, the power of beginning motion or initiating action (*Works*, vol. 2, 697 and 698). Experience and observation show that we have “a power of self-motivation.” Indeed, the arguments based on experience and observation “are so strong that nothing less than strict demonstration that the thing [sc. free will] is absolutely impossible...can make us in the least doubt that we have it not” (*Works*, vol. 2, 558; compare vol. 3, 726–729). What motivates Clarke’s assault on “clockwork man” is, clearly, his belief that if man does not possess free will then he cannot be justly held accountable for his actions. That is to say, Clarke takes the view that without free will man cannot be accountable either to humankind here on earth, nor to God in a future state (compare *Works*, vol. 3, 905–906, and vol. 4, 735).¹⁰

The Clarke-Collins Controversy: 1707–1717

Clarke’s efforts to refute demonstratively the (Hobbist) doctrines of materialism and necessitarianism were vigorously challenged by Anthony Collins.¹¹ Along with John Toland, Collins was the most significant and influential member of a circle of radical freethinkers who arose in England

during the first three decades of the eighteenth century.¹² All the members of this circle were very active and hostile critics of Newtonian philosophy and theology in general, and particularly critical of the philosophy of Clarke. The radical freethinkers were viewed by Clarke and other prominent Newtonians as nothing more than "atheistic" followers of Hobbes and Spinoza. In this judgement the Newtonians were, generally speaking, well justified. The philosophy of this circle was thoroughly anti-clerical and critical of established religious dogma in both tone and substance. Both Collins and Toland rejected the fundamental tenet of Clarke's Christian metaphysics—i.e., that there is (necessarily) an Immaterial, Intelligent Agent that is distinct from, and ontologically (i.e., causally) prior to, the natural or material world. The Newtonians and their Christian allies regarded all philosophies which deny this thesis and suggest that the natural realm is self-existent (i.e., not a dependent being), self-ordering, and self-moving as essentially "atheistic" in character.¹³ In this way, it would not be incorrect to describe this extended important conflict as one between defenders and critics of the Christian Religion. Nor can the historical importance of this general debate be doubted. On the contrary, as Margaret Jacob notes, "the antagonism between the free-thinkers and the Newtonians stands as one of the main themes in the intellectual history of the early eighteenth century" (Jacob, *Newtonians*, 208).

Among the many exchanges that took place between the freethinkers and the Newtonians, the most influential and philosophically significant were the series of exchanges between Clarke and Collins on the subject of materialism and necessitarianism.¹⁴ The immediate occasion for their first exchange was Clarke's attack on Henry Dodwell's claim that the soul was naturally mortal but was immortalized by Baptism. This was a thesis which Clarke believed lent itself to scepticism and irreligion. Clarke's reply to Dodwell was published in 1706 and Collins replied in the same year. In the space of less than two years there followed from Clarke four "defences" of the original letter and from Collins three further "replies" to Clarke. T.H. Huxley comments on this debate in the following terms:

[In the year 1700] it was thought that it conduced to the interests of religion and morality to attack the materialists with all the weapons that came to hand. Perhaps the most interesting controversy which arose out of these questions is the wonderful triangular duel between Dodwell, Clarke, and Anthony Collins, concerning the materiality of the soul, and—what the disputants considered to be the necessary consequence of its materiality—its natural mortality. I do not think that anyone can read the letters which passed between Clarke and Collins, without admitting that Collins, who writes with wonderful power and closeness of reasoning, has by far the best of the argument, so far as the possible materiality of the soul goes; and that, in this

battle, the Goliath of Freethinking overcame the champion of what was considered orthodoxy.¹⁵

Nearly a decade later Collins published his influential *Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty*—a work in which he defends and explains at further length his necessitarian position. In the same year, 1717, Clarke replied to Collins in his *Remarks on Collins's Inquiry*.¹⁶

The discussion and presentation of arguments in this debate—especially in the first series concerning Clarke's *Letter to Dodwell*—is often repetitious and fragmented. Nevertheless, the basic issues dividing these two thinkers are very clear. They can be summarized in terms of the following questions:

- (1) Is it impossible that matter can think or produce thought?
- (2) Is a person a simple, indivisible immaterial substance?
- (3) Is man a free agent with a power of producing motion without being subject to causal necessity?

Clarke, as his Boyle Lectures make plain, believes that these questions are all inseparably related, and that the answer to each of them is (demonstratively) YES. Collins maintains, by contrast, that the answer to each is NO. I will briefly review their respective positions on each issue.

(1) In his *Letter to Dodwell*, Clarke argued that if matter were conscious every particle of matter would have a distinct consciousness and that, therefore, the system made up of such particles could not have individual consciousness, but must be a complex of consciousnesses. Consciousness, however, is unitary and therefore cannot reside in the particles of the brain. Accordingly, Clarke argues, consciousness must be a quality of some immaterial substance.

Collins's reply to Clarke is that it is possible that a system of matter, considered as a conjoined whole, may become a subject of thinking. It is possible, Collins says, that the whole system may possess qualities or powers which its individual parts do not possess. In support of this thesis Collins points out that the arcs of a circle may together form a circle without each being circular. Clarke claims that this is absurd. A distinctive quality such as consciousness can never arise from any combination of qualities that are without consciousness. That is to suppose that something comes out of nothing (*Works*, vol. 3, 798).¹⁷

(2) The gap between Clarke and Collins on the subject of personal identity is, as several commentators have noted, akin to the gap between Butler and Locke on this subject.¹⁸ Clarke holds (as Butler does) that the soul or the self is simple and indivisible. Personal identity based on a transient, impermanent series of conscious states is a mere illusion, and no basis upon which the distribution of rewards and punishments can be justified (*Works*, vol. 3, 852).

Personal identity depends upon strictly identical and unchanging substance. If consciousness were merely a mode of matter in motion, then a constant alteration of that matter would lead to an accompanying alteration in the identity of the person (*Works*, vol. 3, 844; 851–852).

Collins, in line with Locke, takes the contrary view (see especially *Works*, vol. 3, 875–881). He compares the identity of a person with that of an oak tree or an animal, as such identity “consists in a Participation of a continued Life, under a particular organization of Parts” (*Works*, vol. 3, 875).¹⁹ Personal identity does not depend upon a continuity of an unchanging substance. Rather, it depends solely on consciousness and extends through memory. The self is complex in nature and it is subject to continual change—like the system of matter which supports it (*Works*, vol. 3, 807). Clearly, then, contrary to Clarke, the identity of the self does not depend on “the same numerical Being, with the same numerical consciousness” (*Works*, vol. 3, 877). We have no idea or experience of a simple, unchanging self of this kind (*Works*, vol. 3, 811; 820; 876–877; 878–879) and, thus, the self must be understood in terms of a succession of conscious states (i.e., “acts of thinking”) connected through memory.

(3) On the subject of liberty and necessity Collins follows Hobbes very closely.²⁰ Man is not a “free agent” if this is understood to imply that his actions are not determined by antecedent causes. Contrary to what Clarke suggests, experience shows that people are necessitated to act as they do and could not act otherwise. The reason why many people believe that they are “free” in this sense is because they “attend not to, or see not the causes of their actions” (*Inquiry*, 12–13). Liberty, properly understood, is to be found where a person can do as he wills, free from “outward impediments” or “violence.” It does not involve the absence of necessity (*Inquiry*, 14–15; *Works*, vol. 3, 872). Finally, Collins points out that the effectiveness of rewards and punishments depends on the fact that human action is determined by the motives of pleasure and pain. The doctrine of necessity, therefore, in no way destroys morality, but is rather essential to it (*Inquiry*, 87–89).

In reply to Collins's arguments, Clarke for the most part repeats his own arguments to the contrary, as presented in his Boyle Lectures. There is, however, one point which he develops in more detail and places some stress on. That is, he criticizes Collins, as he had previously criticized Hobbes, for failing to distinguish between “physical necessity” and “moral necessity.” It is a mistake, he argues, to interpret moral motives or reasons for acting as (physical) efficient causes that necessitate action (*Works*, vol. 4, 725; compare vol. 2, 553). To say that motives or reasons determine a man's actions is to speak metaphorically. It is, Clarke claims, the man *himself* who acts and, therefore, man is not governed by any necessitating antecedent efficient causes (*Works*, vol. 4, 723, 728).

These, in sum, constitute the fundamental points of difference between Clarke and Collins. In the *Treatise* Hume considers each of these issues in some detail. Two questions therefore arise: (1) What position(s) does Hume take on these questions? and (2) What, if anything, is the wider significance of his views on these matters?

Materialism, Necessity and Hume's *Treatise*

There is plenty of detailed evidence of Hume's deep interest in the philosophy of Clarke. In the first place, Hume's own comments, and the comments of his contemporaries, make it very plain that Clarke was a prime target of Hume's general sceptical attack in the *Treatise* on the use of demonstrative reason in the spheres of both metaphysics and morals.²¹ Given the enormous importance and prominence of Clarke's philosophy at this time, this is in no way surprising. Beyond this, there is also considerable evidence relating to the strong interest in Clarke's philosophy in the circles to which Hume belonged. Hume's thinking in the *Treatise* began to take shape in the late 1720s and early 1730s while he resided with his family in the Borders area of Scotland. At this time there were several philosophers in very close proximity who had a significant interest in Clarke. These include Andrew Baxter (who was something of a follower of Clarke) and William Dudgeon (who was something of a follower of Collins).²² More importantly, however, it includes Lord Kames (Henry Home), who might well be described as Hume's mentor at this time. Kames had a long-standing and deep interest in Clarke's philosophy. So strong, in fact, that in 1723 he corresponded with Clarke concerning certain "difficulties" he found with Clarke's doctrines in the Boyle Lectures.²³

There is even more striking evidence of Hume's close relations with those who were directly in contact with Anthony Collins. When Hume was in London in the late 1730s, preparing the *Treatise* for publication, he was in personal contact with Pierre Desmaizeaux, with whom he seems to have enjoyed good relations.²⁴ Desmaizeaux was a prominent and active member of Collins's pantheistic, freethinking circle. Indeed, he was Collins's closest friend and collaborated with both Collins and Toland on a number of philosophical projects.²⁵ In short, both the textual and contextual evidence indicate that Hume had every reason to be deeply interested in the detail of the Clarke-Collins debate and aware of its wider (religious) significance. A casual examination of the detail of Hume's discussion of the issues raised in the Clarke-Collins exchange—the immateriality of the soul, personal identity, and liberty and necessity—make plain that Hume was indeed familiar with these debates and was in no way reluctant to take sides.

When we consider Hume's discussion of the immateriality of the soul, personal identity, and liberty and necessity, a common pattern or structure begins to appear: the critical or sceptical arguments advanced serve to

undermine or discredit the positions taken by Clarke, and the constructive arguments he presents are consistently in broad agreement with the doctrines defended by Collins. Indeed, on the issues of liberty and necessity and personal identity the parallels are quite striking.

(1) Consider, first, Hume's discussion of liberty and necessity. Hume begins with a defence of a thesis which Collins was particularly concerned to establish: namely, that experience shows that our actions are subject to causation and necessity. (The whole of *Treatise* II iii 1 is devoted to establishing this point.) It is evident, then, that Hume rejects Clarke's claim that experience shows that our actions are not subject to (efficient) causation and necessity. Hume's original contribution in this context, as his remarks in the *Abstract* suggest (T 644), is his "new definition of necessity." When explaining his alternative conception of necessity in Book I of the *Treatise* Hume was careful to reject explicitly the supposed distinction between "moral and physical necessity" (T 171)—i.e., a distinction which is vital to Clarke's defence of the "free will" position. Hume maintains that this distinction is "without any foundation in nature." In general, it is Hume's thesis that the necessity that we discover in the material world holds no less in the moral world (compare T 406–407). Most importantly, however, Hume rejects Clarke's conception of liberty, understood as "a negation of necessity and causes" (T 407) and embraces Collins's conception, understood as an absence of violence and constraint. The general tenor of Hume's discussion is an uncompromising refutation of "the doctrine of liberty" (T 407; 409; 412) and a defence of the thesis that "we can never free ourselves from the bonds of necessity" (T 408).²⁶

In the context of his discussion of this issue Hume notes several reasons for "the prevalence of the doctrine of liberty" (T 407–409). The third and last reason that he mentions relates to "religion, which has," he says, "been very unnecessarily interested in this question." "There is," Hume continues, "no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blameable, than in philosophical debates to endeavour to refute any hypothesis by a pretext of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality" (T 409). Hume proceeds to explain, in line with Collins, that the doctrine of necessity is "essential to religion and morality" on the ground that it is required for effective use of rewards and punishments, and that in the absence of necessity no agent could be held accountable for his actions (T 410–411). Hume, however, would have been perfectly aware of the considerable interest which (Christian) religion has in these issues—an interest to which Clarke repeatedly and explicitly draws attention (*Works*, vol. 4, 735; also vol. 2, 559; vol. 3, 905–906). Indeed, when Hume came to present his position on this subject afresh in the first *Enquiry*, he did a very good job of explaining the embarrassing consequences which follow for the religious position if the doctrine of necessity is true (EHU 99–103).²⁷

(2) In his discussion of personal identity (T I iv 6), Hume begins by noting that there “are some philosophers, who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; and that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity” (T 251). He proceeds to try to demolish this notion of the self; arguing that he finds no such impression in himself but, rather, discovers only “a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement” (T 252). Hume’s particular concern in this section is to provide a psychological explanation of our *mistaken* belief in the existence of a simple, invariable soul or self (T 254–255). He concludes that “[t]he identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one, and of a like kind with that which we ascribe to vegetables and animal bodies” (T 259).²⁸ He suggests, famously, that the human mind or soul can be compared “to a republic or commonwealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons, who propagate the same republic *in the incessant changes of its parts*” (T 261, my emphasis).²⁹ Hume argues that memory is the principal (although not the only) means by which these discreet perpetually changing parts that constitute the human mind are bound together through the association of ideas (T 260–262).

It could hardly be more evident that Hume’s position, once again, accords closely with that of Collins and is flatly opposed to Clarke’s.³⁰ It is, of course, probable that the prime target of Hume’s sceptical arguments in this section was Butler rather than Clarke (Butler being the most eminent of the recent contributors to the ongoing debate concerning personal identity). Nevertheless, it is significant that in his Dissertation “Of Personal Identity” Butler cites Collins’s *Answer to Clarke’s Third Defence* as being the position that he [Butler] is especially concerned to refute.³¹ This makes plain that from any perspective the Clarke-Collins debate constitutes an especially important point of reference in terms of which Hume’s own contribution must be interpreted and judged.

(3) Hume’s approach to the question of the immateriality of the soul turns upon an important distinction between two questions. “We must,” says Hume, “separate the question concerning the substance of the mind from that concerning the cause of its thought” (T 248). Hume interprets the first question as concerning whether or not our perceptions inhere in a material or immaterial substance. His position on this issue is, quite simply, that we have no “satisfactory notion of substance” (considered as entirely different from a perception) and that this consideration provides “sufficient reason for abandoning utterly that dispute concerning the materiality and immateriality of the soul” (T 234). The general point that Hume is concerned to make in this context is that *both* the materialists *and* the immaterialists are mistaken in

their efforts to show that our perceptions require some (further) substance to support their existence. Some objects—such as a sentiment, a smell, or a sound—“*may exist and yet be no where*” (T 235). It is absurd to suppose that perceptions of this kind are capable of being conjoined “*in place with matter or body, which is extended and divisible*” (T 236, my emphasis).³² Similarly, it is also (equally) absurd to suppose that perceptions of sight and touch, which are extended, can be incorporated into a “*simple and indivisible substance*” (T 239). In this way, says Hume, “[t]he free-thinker may now triumph in his turn” (T 240). The fact is, Hume maintains, that any perception may exist by itself and may, in this sense, be regarded as a substance (T 233). Clearly, then, on the question of the *substance* of the mind, Hume accepts *neither* the materialist *nor* the immaterialist position.

According to Hume the *important* and *intelligible* question on this subject concerns, not the substance of thought, but rather the *cause* of our perceptions (T 246f). He begins by restating an argument which Clarke and others had put forward against the materialist position: *viz.* that it is impossible (i.e., absurd) to imagine that, for example, mere motion of a circle should produce a passion, or that the collision of two globular particles should become a sensation of pain (T 246). Hume states that while few “*have been able to withstand the seeming evidence of this argument*” yet, he says, “*nothing in the world is more easy than to refute it*” (T 247). Hume’s counter argument depends on his preceding analysis of causation. When we “*consider the matter a priori, any thing may produce any thing.*” Therefore, he argues, we shall never discover any reason why one object (for example, matter and motion) may not be the cause of any other (for example, thought) even though there may be “*little resemblance*” between them. These considerations, it is claimed, destroy the immaterialist’s reasoning concerning the causes of thought or perception. In light of these considerations, Hume argues that it is an empirical question whether we perceive “*a constant conjunction of thought and motion*” or whether “*a different position of parts give rise to a different passion or reflection.*” Experience reveals, he says, that “*the different dispositions of the body*” do produce a change in our thoughts and sentiments. Accordingly, Hume concludes that his account of the nature of causation “*gives the advantage to the materialists above their antagonists*” and shows that “*matter and motion may often be regarded as the causes of thought, as far as we have any notion of that relation*” (T 250, my emphasis).

A clear implication of Hume’s discussion of this issue is that our existence as thinking subjects depends on our bodily existence. When, therefore, our bodies die it seems reasonable to suppose that the mind will also perish. Although Hume does not explicitly draw these (obvious) conclusions in the *Treatise*, these implications of his position are openly stated in his posthumously published essay “*Of the Immortality of the Soul.*”³³ In the *Treatise* Hume concludes his discussion of this issue by noting simply that any object,

including an immaterial spiritual substance, can be “annihilated in a moment” (T 250). It is little wonder, therefore, that he repeatedly *pretends* that his arguments are in no way “dangerous to religion” (T 250).

The implications of Hume’s understanding of the relationship between matter and thought run much deeper than the immediate issue of the immortality of the soul. More specifically, Hume’s arguments directly challenge key aspects of Clarke’s Newtonian cosmology. Clarke argues that “the main question between us [i.e., defenders of the Christian Religion] and the Atheists” is whether “the self-existent and Original Cause of all things, must be an Intelligent Being” (*Works*, vol. 2, 543). It is Clarke’s view that the material world cannot “possibly be the First and original Being, Uncreated, Independent and Self-Existent” (*Works*, vol. 2, 534). The original, self-existent being must be (intelligent, immaterial) *Mind* and not (unintelligent) *Matter* (compare, for example, *Works*, vol. 2, 534, 543). Clarke provides several arguments for concluding that matter cannot be the “original, self-existent being.” He places particular weight on the argument that matter and motion can never give rise to intelligence (especially *Works*, vol. 2, 543–546). Granted this premise, the existence of thought and consciousness *proves* that the materialist hypothesis is false. This specific argument plays a crucial role in Clarke’s general effort to establish (demonstrably) the ontological priority of “Mind” in relation to “Matter”—this being the basic issue that separates Christians and “atheists” on Clarke’s account.³⁴

Clearly Clarke’s arguments leading to this conclusion (i.e., the ontological priority of mind) are directly challenged by Hume’s philosophical principles. Since “matter and motion may often be regarded as the causes of thought” there is no reason to suppose that this world *must* originate with immaterial substance. Hume’s remarks suggest, on the contrary, that we have every reason to believe that it is mind that depends on matter—and not the reverse.³⁵ In short, Hume’s argument that matter and motion can give rise to thought and consciousness strikes a direct blow at a particularly important aspect of Clarke’s Newtonian cosmology, and it provides considerable support for the opposing “materialistic” cosmology of the atheistic thinkers whom Clarke set out to refute (i.e., Hobbes, Spinoza and their followers—most notably, Collins and Toland).³⁶

The Metaphysics of ‘Atheism’ and Hume’s ‘Science of Man’

There can be no doubt that on the basic issues raised in the Clarke-Collins controversy Hume’s arguments are consistently in line with the general position and principles of Collins and wholly at odds with those of Clarke. Let me note a few points regarding the general significance of this.

(i) It is clear that there is an intimate connection among Hume’s discussions of these issues. Taken together they present the basics of Hume’s

general account of humankind and our place in nature. Hume's arguments suggest, contrary to Clarke, that we are part of nature and the causal order which governs it. In particular, we are subject to necessity and conditioned by the material order. In so far as we are agents in the world, so too we are acted upon by it. Like other beings in the natural order, our existence is temporary and subject to constant change and flux. We arise from the natural order, and disappear back into it.

(ii) The Clarke-Collins controversy was enormously important and influential at the time that Hume wrote and published the *Treatise*. There is every reason to suppose, therefore, that Hume would have considered these questions with a clear knowledge of Clarke's and Collins's divergent positions on these subjects. It is also reasonable to suppose that Hume's contemporaries would have examined his specific arguments and the positions that he takes with reference to this debate. From this perspective it is evident that Hume was fundamentally hostile to Newtonian philosophy and theology and that he was, by contrast, warmly sympathetic to several of the most basic doctrines of Clarke's freethinking, pantheistic critics (with some of whom he was in close personal contact).³⁷ Given Hume's positions on these subjects, and their significance in the context in which he was writing, it is quite clear why many of Hume's contemporaries reacted to the *Treatise* as the work of an anti-Christian thinker. Indeed, in the years that followed the publication of the *Treatise* the usual response to its contents was that they constituted undisguised atheism.³⁸ Our examination of those aspects of the *Treatise* that relate to the Clarke-Collins controversy goes a long way to explaining why this was so.

(iii) The religious significance of the issues which Hume takes up are quite apparent. Every one of the issues considered has a direct bearing on questions of fundamental importance to the Christian Religion. How, then, do Hume's (anti-Christian) views on these issues relate to his wider intentions in the *Treatise*? In a series of articles I have argued that Hume's fundamental intentions in the *Treatise* are best characterized as essentially anti-Christian or "atheistic" in nature.³⁹ Briefly stated, there are two particularly important historical components or aspects of this interpretation.

(a) The project of the *Treatise* is modelled or planned after Hobbes's very similar project in *The Elements of Law* and the first two parts of *Leviathan*. The structural parallels which hold between Hobbes's works and Hume's *Treatise* are indicative of the fundamental similarity of their projects. More specifically, both Hobbes and Hume agree that moral and political philosophy must proceed upon the same scientific methodology that is appropriate to the natural sciences (although they disagree about the nature of that methodology), and they agree that this scientific investigation of morals must begin with an examination of human thought and motivation. The metaphysical foundation

of this project is their shared naturalistic and necessitarian conception of man.

(b) Samuel Clarke was, as I have already indicated, one of the principal targets of the sceptical arguments of Hume's *Treatise*. That is to say, in the *Treatise* Hume undertakes a systematic attack on the Christian rationalism of Hobbes's most celebrated critic. Hume's criticisms of Clarke's philosophy reach well beyond the issues of the immateriality of the soul and free will. In particular, two of the most salient prongs of Hume's battery of sceptical arguments are aimed precisely against the two major prongs of Clarke's Christian rationalism: namely, his demonstrations concerning God's existence and concerning morality. In general, an important feature of Hume's sceptical intentions in the *Treatise*—one giving unity and direction to seemingly unrelated sceptical arguments—is an attack on the efforts of Christian thinkers (most notably Locke and Clarke) to use demonstrative reason in defence of the Christian Religion.⁴⁰

Putting these points together, it seems clear that there is a close relationship between these two aspects of Hume's *Treatise*. That is, in order to defend and articulate an essentially Hobbist, anti-Christian philosophical project, Hume found it necessary to undertake a sceptical attack against the leading light of the opposing Newtonian tradition. In more general terms, therefore, we may characterize Hume's fundamental objectives in the *Treatise* as an effort to refute Christian metaphysics and morals with a view to defending a secular, scientific account of moral and political life.

It seems evident that there is an intimate relation between Hume's specific positions on the issues raised in the Clarke-Collins controversy and his (wider) "atheistic" intentions in the *Treatise*. More specifically, as in Hobbes's philosophy, Hume's project in the *Treatise* rests on the foundation of a naturalistic and necessitarian conception of man. It was this secular perspective and the extension of scientific naturalism to the study of man that Clarke and other Christian critics of Hobbes found to be especially threatening to religion and morals. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find that in respect of these issues Hume vigorously defends the basic doctrines of Hobbes and Collins in opposition to Clarke. Clearly, these are matters that are vital to the success of Hume's entire anti-Christian (Hobbist) project.

The general significance of Hume's views on the questions of materialism and necessity considered in relation to the Clarke-Collins controversy, and in relation to his more fundamental objectives in the *Treatise*, may be summarized as follows. Throughout the *Treatise* Hume presents arguments that systematically undermine the Newtonian philosophy and theology, and which support an outlook that has strong affinities with the "atheistic" tradition of Hobbes, Spinoza and their anti-Newtonian radical freethinking followers in early eighteenth century Britain—most notably, with the views of Anthony Collins. Hume's defence of naturalistic and necessitarian metaphysics draws

directly from this ("atheistic") tradition and must be interpreted in this light. When we consider Hume's arguments from this perspective, then, it is quite apparent that his views on these questions are intimately connected and that they constitute an important aspect of his overall anti-Christian project in the *Treatise*.

NOTES

A version of this paper was read at the twentieth International Hume Conference, Ottawa, June 1993. I am grateful to those who participated in the discussion which followed my presentation—especially my commentator Jane McIntyre, and Udo Thiel. I would also like to thank Jim Dybikowski and Don Garrett for further helpful comments and suggestions.

1 See, in particular, my "Skepticism and Natural Religion in Hume's *Treatise*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1988): 247–265. In this paper I briefly discuss the immediate relevance of the Clarke-Collins controversy for Hume's views on the questions of materialism and necessity, as well as in relation to Hume's wider "atheistic" (Hobbist) objectives (264, see especially n. 56). In the present paper I expand on these points. The relevance of Clarke and Collins, and their associates, for Hume's concerns in the *Treatise* is also discussed in my paper "Epigram, Pantheists, and Freethought in Hume's *Treatise*: A Study in Esoteric Communication," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54 (1993): 659–673.

2 In "Skepticism and Natural Religion" I suggest that commentators on Hume's philosophy have generally failed to pay adequate attention to the (systematic) importance of Clarke's philosophy in relation to Hume's basic concerns in the *Treatise* (see especially 258, n. 39). At the time of writing that paper no detailed discussion of the Clarke-Collins controversy considered in relation to the philosophy of the *Treatise* was available. This is no longer the case. In a recent paper ("Hume: Second Newton of the Moral Sciences," *Hume Studies* 20 [1]: 3–18), Jane McIntyre explores this material. McIntyre's discussion is principally concerned with "Hume's attack on Clarke's arguments for the simplicity and the immateriality of the self" (4). She points out, in line with my own view, that "many aspects of Collins's account of the nature of the self are also found in Hume" (10). In general, on the basic issue of where Hume stands with regard to Clarke and Collins on the issue of the nature of the self, McIntyre and I are entirely agreed. There are, nevertheless, some points of emphasis—if not substance—where I rather diverge from McIntyre's account (for example, concerning the significance of Hume's thought in relation to "Newtonianism"). In the discussion below I will draw attention to some of these points of divergence. However, my interest in the Clarke-Collins debate for Hume's *Treatise* is not so narrow or specific as McIntyre's concerns. Accordingly, given the (independent) nature of my own objectives and concerns, I will not directly examine the major contentions of McIntyre's interesting paper.

3 Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876) (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962), vol. 1 iv, 6):

The vigour of English theology at this period—and it was the golden period of English theology—is due to the fact that, for the time, reason and Christian theology were in spontaneous alliance.

4 Compare Stephen:

In England, the great representative of destructive opinions was Hobbes...a man whose influence in stimulating thought it would be difficult to overestimate. Whatever may have been Hobbes's real sentiments,...he was universally set down as an atheist...
(1 iv, 6)

Further useful information on the reaction to Hobbes's philosophy and the intellectual climate of the time can be found, for example, in Samuel Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962); Quentin Skinner, "The Context of Hobbes's Theory of Political Obligation," in *Hobbes and Rousseau*, edited by M. Cranston and R.S. Peters (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972), 109–142; and Margaret C. Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689–1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).

5 See Mintz's summary of the views of Bishop Bramhall, one of Hobbes's earliest and most influential critics: "To uphold belief in God. That was the fundamental motive behind all the attacks on Hobbes's materialism. The question was not merely philosophical; it was a matter of faith and public morals..."(153).

6 Clarke's Boyle Lectures were published as *A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God, the Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of Christian Revelation* (1705), reprinted in *The Works of Samuel Clarke* (London, 1738; reprinted New York: Garland, 1978), vol. 2; hereafter cited as *Works*. By the middle of the eighteenth century Clarke's *Discourse* had gone through ten editions. For further details regarding Clarke's philosophy and its impact, see James Ferguson, *The Philosophy of Dr. Samuel Clarke and Its Critics* (New York: Vantage, 1974).

7 By the end of the seventeenth century Spinoza was widely regarded as an atheistic disciple of Hobbes. See, for example, J.M. Robertson, *A History of Freethought* 4th ed. (London: Watts, 1936), vol. 2, 741–742; Mintz, 57–62; Rosalie Colie, "Spinoza and the Early English Deists," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (1959): 23–46, and Colie, "Spinoza in England, 1665–1730," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107 (1963): 183–210; and Jacob, *Newtonians*, especially 169–171. I note in passing that McIntyre discusses Clarke's criticisms of materialism entirely with reference to Spinoza (see especially 5–8). Hobbes is not mentioned in this context by McIntyre. This is something of an oversight, as Hobbes's (Epicurean) materialism is also an obvious and prominent target of Clarke's criticisms (for example, *Works*, vol. 2, 546; 559; 561–564). In general, it is important to keep in mind the significant linkage between the ("atheistic") philosophies of Hobbes and Spinoza for Clarke and his contemporaries—as Clarke's subtitle for the *Discourse* makes plain.

8 The first Boyle Lecturer was Richard Bentley, an influential Newtonian associate of Clarke. Bentley's lectures were published as *The Folly and*

Unreasonableness of Atheism (London, 1692). Jacob notes that Bentley's aim in these sermons "was to denounce the behaviour and philosophy that he associated primarily with Hobbism" (*Newtonians*, 160, and chap. 4). See in particular Bentley's criticism of (Hobbist) materialism in his second Sermon: "Matter and Motion Cannot Think." (On Bentley's subsequent controversy with Collins, see n. 14 below.)

9 This was, of course, an entirely orthodox view among Anglican divines at this time. See, for example, Berkeley's remarks in his *Advertisement to Alciphron; or the Minute Philosopher* (London, 1732), reprinted in A.C. Fraser, ed., *Berkeley's Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), vol. 2, 24–25: "Whatever they pretend..." (Berkeley's remarks in this context allude to the views of Clarke's antagonist Anthony Collins—whom he refers to as "one of the most noted writers against Christianity in our times.")

10 Clarke's criticism and discussion of Hobbes's views on the subject of necessity is greatly influenced by Bramhall's replies to Hobbes as presented in *Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance* (1656), reprinted in W. Molesworth, ed., *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* (London: J. Bohn, 1839–1845), vol. 5, 450. On the relevance of this debate to the Clarke-Collins controversy, see Ferguson, chap. 4.

11 On Collins's life and work see James O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970); Robertson, vol. 2, 722–726; Stephen, vol. 1 iv, 19–35, and vol. 1 v, 5–7; and David Berman, *A History of British Atheism: From Hobbes to Russell* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 70–92. Among our own contemporaries Collins is perhaps best known as the author of a *Discourse of Freethinking* (London, 1713)—a work defending freedom of thought, and which contains strong undercurrents of anti-Christian sentiment.

12 Another prominent member of this circle was Pierre Desmaizeaux—which is, as I will explain below, a point of some importance considered with reference to Hume's *Treatise*. An interesting account of this circle and its activities is presented in Jacob, *Newtonians*, chap. 6; and Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), especially chaps. 5 and 6. Jacob claims that this group galvanized into a "college" or secret society called "The knights of the Jubilation," and she has linked this society with the "Socratic-brotherhood" which is described in Toland's *Pantheisticon* (1720).

13 On Collins's and/or Toland's pantheistic materialism, see Jacob, *Newtonians*, 230–240, and *Radical Enlightenment*, 60–61, 153; Colie, "Spinoza and the Early English Deists," 40–46; Stephen H. Daniel, *John Toland* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), chap. 7; and Berman, 78–82.

14 Collins participated in several other controversies with Newtonian colleagues of Clarke's; most notably, with Richard Bentley on the subject of freethinking, and with William Whiston concerning Collins's attack on prophecy. Bentley and Whiston, along with Clarke, were Boyle Lecturers, and also worked closely with Newton. For further details on Collins's other controversies see O'Higgins, *Collins*, especially chaps. 6 and 10; Stephen, vol. 1 iv, 19–35; and James E. Force, *William Whiston* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chap. 3.

15 Thomas Henry Huxley, *Hume: with Helps to the Study of Berkeley* (London: Macmillan, 1894), 249. For a different assessment of the relative merits of Clarke and Collins in this debate see Stephen, vol. 1 v, 6. *Clarke's Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, his defences, and Collins's replies are all reprinted in *Works*, vol. 2, 719–909. Six editions of a volume containing the complete exchange had been published by 1731, which is clear evidence of the contemporary interest in this debate.

16 Collins's *A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty* (London, 1717), is reprinted in J. O'Higgins, ed., *Determinism and Freewill* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976); *Clarke's Remarks* (London, 1717) is reprinted in *Works*, vol. 4, 719–735. The exchange between Clarke and Collins on the subject of liberty and necessity dominated much of the subsequent discussion of these issues in eighteenth century Britain.

17 A helpful description of the historical background to this issue can be found in Mintz, chap. 4; and John Yolton, *Thinking Matter: Materialism in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), especially chap. 1. Suffice it to say that Clarke's and Collins's arguments on this subject must be considered in relation to the earlier contributions of a number of important figures, including More, Cudworth, Bentley, and Locke.

18 See, for example, Howard Ducharme, "Personal Identity in Samuel Clarke," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24 (1986): 370 and 377; and John Laird, *Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature* (London: Methuen, 1932), 166. Compare also Stephen, vol. 1 v, 6–7.

19 The example of the oak appears in Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, edited by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II. xxvii.4, and also in Shaftesbury, *Characteristics* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964, reprint of 2nd rev. ed., 1714), V.3.1. Hume uses the same specific example of the oak (T 257) to make the same general point: namely, personal identity can be assimilated to the (complex) identity of plants and animals. (Hume's examples, and the uses to which he puts them, are a clear guide to the literature that he is concerned with and the position that he takes up.)

20 Ferguson states that, in respect of his position on the subject of human liberty, Collins "reproduces largely the views which Hobbes had put forward in his dispute with Bishop Bramhall" (141). See also O'Higgins general remarks in his introduction to *Determinism and Freewill*.

21 See, in particular, E.C. Mossner and J.V. Price, eds., *A Letter from a Gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh* (1745) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967). This is a pamphlet written by Hume in reply to certain accusations made against him while he was applying for the Chair of Philosophy at Edinburgh University. For further details see my "Skepticism and Natural Religion," especially 253–257.

22 For more details on Baxter and Dudgeon, see James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy* (New York: R. Carter, 1875), 42 and 111–113; Robertson, vol. 2, 762; and Berman, 124.

23 On this see Ian Simpson Ross, *Lord Kames and the Scotland of his Day* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), chap. 4; and Ferguson, 88–89.

24 In April 1739, shortly after Hume left London and returned to Scotland, he wrote to Desmaizeaux to ask for his opinion of the *Treatise*. Hume states in his letter that he regards Desmaizeaux as someone "whose Instruction and Advice he [Hume] depends on." (J.Y.T. Greig, ed., *The Letters of David Hume*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932], vol. 1, 29–30.) For further details on Hume's relationship with Desmaizeaux see E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 118–120. It should also be noted that while he was in London, Hume stayed at the Rainbow Coffeehouse, which only a few years before had served as an important meeting place for the circle to which Desmaizeaux, Collins and Toland all belonged.

25 Details are provided in O'Higgins, *Collins*, especially 237–241; and J.H. Broome, "An Agent in Anglo-French Relationships, Pierre Desmaizeaux, 1673–1745," Ph.D. Thesis, London University, 1949.

26 Hume's presentation of his position is modified in the first *Enquiry*. In this context, he presents his position as a "reconciling project" (EHU 95), rather than as a refutation of "the doctrine of liberty or chance." Nevertheless, the substance of his position remains unaltered, in so far as in both works he is concerned to show that human thought and action is subject to necessity (as he understands it) and that this is consistent with human freedom understood in terms of "liberty of spontaneity."

27 The fundamental difficulty is, evidently, that the doctrine of necessity seems to lead to the conclusion that God, as the Creator of this world, is ultimately accountable for the moral evil that we discover in it. Hume, naturally, pretends to be embarrassed by the difficulties which his necessitarian principles pose for the theological view. The relationship between the problem of evil and the question of free will was, of course, widely discussed by many of the thinkers whom Hume would have read closely: including, for example, Hobbes, Bramhall, Bayle, King, and Leibniz. This makes it plain that Hume is entirely disingenuous when he claims that "religion... has been very unnecessarily interested in this question [i.e., free will]" (T 409).

28 As noted above in n. 19, Hume's use of the example of an oak tree in this context can also be found in Locke, Shaftesbury, and Collins. In this context Hume also uses the example of a river (T 258) and of a ship (T 257)—both these specific examples are also employed by Collins (*Works*, vol. 3, 844).

29 Hume's specific example of a "republic" appears in Bayle (*Dictionary*, "Pyrrho," Note F). The same general example, however, is also found in Hobbes. Hobbes says that it will be "the same city, whose acts proceed continually from the same institution, whether the men be the same or no" (*De Corpore*, chap. 11, sect. 7). In the same context Hobbes also cites the examples of a ship and a river, along with that of a city, in support of his thesis that "individuation" does not depend on numerically identical matter.

30 This is, as I indicated in n. 2, the same general conclusion reached by McIntyre, who examines these points of similarity and difference in useful detail. It is her basic contention that Hume advances on Collins's complex, relational view of the self by means of a ("Newtonian") theory of causation that can better explain the nature of the relations that unify the self (10–12). It is

not my concern in this context to comment on this specific thesis in McIntyre's paper.

31 Joseph Butler, *The Whole Works of Joseph Butler* (London: T. Tegg, 1839), vol. 1, 307.

32 Hume notes that objects that differ in this respect may nevertheless be "susceptible of many other relations." More specifically, he notes that such objects may co-exist and be "co-temporary in their appearance in the mind" (T 237). Because we find that certain qualities regularly appear conjointly (in time) with certain extended objects we are naturally inclined to add the further relation of conjunction in place in order "to compleat [the] union" (T 239). This, in essence, is the mistake of materialists, and it leads to obvious absurdities which are all a result of "our endeavouring to bestow a place on what is utterly incapable of it" (T 238).

33 In *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, rev. ed. edited by Eugene Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), 591–592; 596–598. The implications of the doctrines of the *Treatise* were entirely apparent to many of Hume's contemporaries when this work appeared. For example, in *A Letter from a Gentleman* Hume is "accused" of "denying the Immateriality of the Soul" and thereby threatening the doctrine of the immortality of the soul (13; 18). Hume's reply (29–30) to this "charge" is plainly evasive.

34 Cudworth anticipates important elements of Clarke's criticism of materialism. He argues, in particular, that

no effect can possibly transcend the power of its cause. Whereof it is certain, that in the universe things did not thus ascend and mount, or climb up from lower perfection to higher...Dead and senseless matter could never have created or generated mind and understanding, but a perfect omnipotent mind could create matter. Whereof, because there is mind, we are certain, that there was some mind or other from eternity without beginning: though not because there is body, that therefore there was body or matter from eternity unmade." (*The True Intellectual System of the Universe: Wherein, All the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted; and Its Impossibility Demonstrated* [London: R. Royston, 1678], vol. 2, 727–729)

It may be noted that the young Hume read Cudworth's *System*, and took careful note of his distinction between "four kinds of atheists." On this see Mossner, 78–79.

35 Compare Hume's more explicit statement of this position in his essay "Of the Immortality of the Soul."

36 Closely related to the issue of whether "matter and motion" can give rise to thought and consciousness, is the question of the activity and motion of matter. Clarke argues that "Unintelligent Matter" could never of itself produce motion and that the cause of motion must be "Something that is Intelligent" (*Works*, vol. 2, 547–548; 551–552; 697–699). It is, therefore, of some (further) significance that in this context Hume specifically argues that "[i]f nothing be active but what has an apparent power, *thought is in no case any more active than*

matter..." (T 249, my emphasis). (Compare Philo's remarks in the opening passages of Part VIII of Hume's *Dialogues*; and also Clarke's specific criticisms of Collins's colleague Toland [*Works*, vol. 2, 531].)

37 Clearly, then, in my view it is wholly misleading to characterize Hume's project in the *Treatise* as "Newtonian" in nature, or to describe Hume as aiming to be a "Second Newton of the Moral Sciences." For reasons briefly explained below (see in particular n. 39), I take the view that it is more appropriate to characterize Hume as the "Second Hobbes of the Moral Sciences." Suffice it to point out that the philosophy of Hobbes was anathema to the Newtonians and was systematically criticized and vilified by Newton's closest philosophical associates—specifically Clarke and Bentley.

38 See Mossner, especially chaps. 10 and 12. Note, in particular, that the first substantial review of Hume's *Treatise* to appear plainly suggests that Hume's philosophy has certain affinities with Collins's anti-Christian views. A hostile review of the first two books of the *Treatise* appeared in *The History of the Works of the Learned* in November/December 1739. In this context Hume is referred to as another "minute philosopher"—a label which, obviously enough, is taken from Berkeley's *Alciphron*. Berkeley understood the "minute philosophers" to be atheistic freethinkers (in the tradition of Hobbes and Spinoza) who, he says, write "against the dignity, freedom and immortality of the Human Soul, [and] may so far forth be justly said to unhinge the principles of morality..." (Fraser, *Berkeley's Complete Works*, vol. 2, 116; 24–25; see also 46–49; 57; 383). Collins is one of the prominent "minute philosophers" whom Berkeley has principally in mind in this context. (See Fraser's editorial notes, vol. 2, 23; 54; 384.) Clearly, then, the reviewer's reference to Hume as a "minute philosopher" naturally suggests that he has significant affinities with Collins and other like-minded anti-Christian thinkers.

39 Along with the two papers cited in n. 1, see my "Hume's *Treatise* and Hobbes's *The Elements of Law*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985): 52–63; "'Atheism' and the Title-Page of Hume's *Treatise*," *Hume Studies* 14 (2): 408–423; and "A Hobbist Tory: Johnson on Hume," *Hume Studies* 16 (1): 75–79.

40 These issues are discussed in further detail in my "Skepticism and Natural Religion," especially 257–260.

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