FORMS AND VALUES
OF SELF-INTEREST (2):
APPROBATION, ESTEEM AND PRIDE

"Nor Virtue, male or female, can we name,
But what will grow on Pride, or grow on Shame."—POPE

THERE WAS one congeries of ideas, centered around the notions of esteem and self-esteem, that acquired particular importance, in the eighteenth century interpretation of human nature and its moral components. Pride, the desire for approbation and self-approbation, and their more special forms, such as the search for reputation, glory and immortal fame, are present in most of these evaluations. They appear sometimes as a generalized concept, sometimes as a commentary on one of the more particular manifestations. By a few, this impulse was treated as one of the passions; by many more, it was held to be a form of self-love, or of affirmation of the self, peculiar to the human species.1 As Delisle de Sales was later to express it, the desire for fame, reputation, wealth and other forms of distinction is related "to an innate love of greatness; it is as essential to the soul to extend itself as to exist: that is what distinguishes man from the Supreme Being, and from the lowest elements of matter." 2

1 See, for instance, "Note O" in Rousseau's Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité. Those who made the distinction between amour de soi and amour-propre identified it with one or the other of these, according to their approval or disapproval of it in human nature.
Whatever its origin, this desire was universally judged to be an irrational, or a pre-rational spring of action. And since it was, simultaneously, marked as a chief distinguishing feature of mankind, the obvious conclusion (often but not always drawn), was that human conduct is not governed by human rationality. Yet, at the same time, there is a curious complexity of thought involved here, since the esteem motive could only have arisen—this was implied, to be sure, more often than it was stated—from the development in man of a certain kind of rationality. I refer to the objectifying activity of the mind, from which all essentially human traits are derived; that is, the continuous process of objectifying both the outer world, and the ego and all its states, with the result that man is aware of his own ego, of his opinions and feelings concerning it, and of the attitudes of other egos towards it.

If we may for a moment jump to the latter part of our period, we shall find Kant bringing to a focus the full implications of the subject we are about to investigate. Kant recognized the esteem motive as belonging to man's "humanity as a living and at the same time rational being"; and as involving a necessary comparative activity "which requires reason." This comparative process impels us to estimate ourselves as happy or unhappy only in comparison with others. Its result is "the inclination to obtain a worth in the opinions of others, and primarily only that of equality: to allow no one a superiority over oneself, joined with a constant apprehension that others might strive to attain it, and from this there ultimately arises an unjust desire to gain superiority for ourselves over others."

Let us now return to the beginning, and trace the course of this concept and its role as an active factor in eighteenth century thought. The recognition of our deep need for approval and for self-approval, or for praise and distinction, as a powerful and omnipresent motive in human behavior was bound to exercise a profound influence on ethical speculation.

Here again we must distinguish the traditional, Christian atti-

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*From The Philosophical Theory of Religion, in Critique of Practical Reason and other works on the theory of ethics, translated by T. K. Abbott, p. 332–334. Italics in the original text. Kant makes it clear, in the Preface to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics, that man's power to objectify himself is the source of his conscience and his moral life. (Ibid., p. 322).*
tude from the new, secular analysis. The first, of course, did not cease at once to exercise a continuing impact on the second; but, as we have already had several occasions to observe, it was itself, to a larger degree, affected and modified by the upsurge of rational analysis. In the Christian view, the group of motives we are studying was generally summarized under the name of "pride"—a word that in itself conveys the disapproval that was bestowed on it. Some of the earlier eighteenth century deists, notably Pope and Voltaire, prolonged this moral condemnation of individual pride; they were, however, more interested in censuring the "generic pride" of mankind. Medieval Christianity had condemned pride in the corrupt individual, but had, within limits, fostered the idea of man's dignity in the universe. The heliocentric theory, and the chain of being concept (as well as the other intellectual developments of the late Renaissance to which we have already referred) were blows to this comforting illusion. In a sense, the censure of pride in the species amounted to a return to the Old Testament tradition of the Fall of Man, the tower of Babel, and the revolt of Job. A few lines from Pope's *Essay on Man* will serve to characterize this outlook:

> What would this Man? Now upward will he soar,  
> And little less than Angel, would be more, . . . (I, 173-4)  
> While Man exclaims, "See all things for my use!"  
> "See man for mine!" replies a pampered goose. (III, 45–6)

Voltaire, in the sixth section of his *Discours sur l'homme*, reflects both the thought and tone of Pope's *Essay on Man*. Mice and donkeys replace the geese, and the analogy is drawn out; but the conclusion is the same:

> 'D'un parfait assemblage instruments imparfaits,  
> Dans votre rang placés, demeurez satisfaits.'  
> L'homme ne le fut point.

These eighteenth century denunciations of pride express, then, a disillusionment with mankind, even more than the traditional

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4 In the seventeenth century, according to Paul Bénichou, "The worth attached instinctively to glory, far from saving the honor of man, is . . . the most striking sign of his wretchedness." (*Morales du grand siècle*, p. 108.) Even in the eighteenth century, Père Joly preaches humility, the love of abjection, hatred for one's own excellence. (*Dictionnaire de morale philosophique*, 1771, I, 224 f.)

5 See also Formey, *Le philosophe chrétien* (1752), I, 159–170, II, 100–115. For the best discussion of this phase of the subject, see A. O. Lovejoy, "Pride in Eighteenth Century Thought."
castigation of a cardinal sin. This disillusionment largely con­cerned man's rationality, as regards his behavior; and implied the consequent unlikelihood of his improving, or of his impelling himself to a nobler destiny. It became customary "to berate and satirize all forms of intellectual ambition, and to ascribe to it a great part in the corruption of the natural innocence of mankind."  

Trace Science then, with Modesty thy guide;  
First strip off all her equipage of Pride;  
Deduct but what is Vanity or Dress,  
Or Learning's Luxury, or Idleness;  
Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,  
Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain;  
Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts  
Of all our Vices have created Arts;  
Then see how little the remaining sum,  
Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come!  

(Pope, ii, 43–52)

Voltaire preferred to satirize the pretension to know beyond our power. The primitivist literature seconded this whole tendency; so that Rousseau's *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750) was, in one of its central ideas, a commonplace by the time he wrote it. Ethically, too, man was warned not to attempt to transcend the limits of his nature—not to seek perfect virtue, or perfect happiness.

Contentons-nous des biens qui nous sont destinés,  
Passagers comme nous, et comme nous bornés . . .  
Et sachant qu'ici bas la félicité pure  
Ne fut jamais permise à l'humaine nature.

"Moderation in everything" is the title of Voltaire's fourth *Discours*.

This phase of the question of pride is not, however, our concern here, although it does reflect a general view, which we have previously analyzed, of man's position, rationality and possibilities. Let us, then, turn to our principal subject: that need for approval, self-esteem and distinction (or, using the modern terminology, for "prestige"), which was outlined at the opening of

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6 Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, p. 35.  
7 *Discours sur l'homme*, "Quatrième Discours."  
our discussion, and which so arrested the attention of Kant. We are faced with two questions: the analysis of this complex drive, and its import for ethics.

Once again the eighteenth century writers found the ground already broken and well cultivated by several of their seventeenth century predecessors. The first important challenge had been issued by Hobbes, particularly in the seventeenth chapter of the second part of *Leviathan* (1651). In his picture of a state of nature, he represents men as at war with each other, precisely because of unique qualities which set them apart from other social animals. Among bees and ants, for instance, "the common good differeth not from the private; and being by nature inclined to their private, they procure thereby the common benefit. But man, whose joy consisteth in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent." Add to this, a sense of injury that beasts do not possess, language (which permits deception), critical reason, the lack of a natural social agreement—and war among all men becomes inevitable. To this we must add what Hobbes had said in the thirteenth chapter of the first part of *Leviathan*. Men soon learn there is a pleasure in conquest, beyond the mere requirements for security. Each desires that "his companion should value him at the same rate he sets upon himself." The result is war; "and such a war as is of every man against every man."  

With Hobbes, then, the need for approbation turns into a compulsive power-urge, with no trace of a requirement to accommodate the demands of the ego in order to effectuate a conciliation. As in so many other matters, Hobbes aroused the ire of his contemporaries and successors. Richard Cumberland was to point out, quite correctly, that he had not shown why comparison and the desire for eminence are necessary. Later, Rousseau was to assert

\begin{quote}
That, Virtue's ends from vanity can raise,  
Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise. (II, 245-246)
\end{quote}

Pope's statement of our need for approbation does not relate it to pride (iv, 39-49).

9 Pope, it should be stated, was not unaware of this aspect of the question, as the following verses attest:

\begin{quote}
That, Virtue's ends from vanity can raise,  
Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise. (II, 245-246)
\end{quote}

10 See also, *De Cive*, ch. 5, par. 5.

11 Hobbes also gives a pithy description of what is now known as "cold war."

12 *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature* (1727), p. 137-141. Cumberland also protests that men know that their private good depends on the public weal. He believes that man is eminently a rational being. Agreement from reason is, then, properly called natural.
that Hobbes was entirely mistaken in painting as the state of nature what was really a primitive social state. In the true state of nature, he declared, men have no language with which to communicate and deceive, and no companion with whom to vie and to quarrel.

In France, it was Pascal who, briefly, but with a deeper perceptive ness than Hobbes, crystallized the psychological phenomenon and its ambivalence. The ego, he writes in *Pensée* 100, in its self-love, wants to be great and perfect, but sees itself small and imperfect. It therefore craves love and esteem, and even prefers esteem based on falsehood to the truth that diminishes it. In *Pensée* 404, he declares that the pursuit of glory is both a mark of baseness and of excellence; the need for esteem is "the most indelible quality of man's heart." Elsewhere, without referring to this motive, he enlarges on its psychological basis; "description of man: dependency, desire of independence, need" (*Pensée* 126).

And in *Pensée* 131, he emphasizes man's "nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness . . . [his] despair." The result of this striving of the ego is inevitably an effort to secure power over others. Each self, Pascal concludes in *Pensée* 445, making itself the center of everything, "would like to be the tyrant of all others." Pascal's concentrated analysis contains the seeds of all the ensuing developments, even of moral nihilism.

After Hobbes, Locke stated what he called "the law of opinion or reputation." 13 Virtue and vice are words which are supposed to stand for actions "in their one nature right or wrong." But in actuality, they are everywhere given

to such actions as in each country and society are in reputation or discredit. . . . I think I may say that he who imagines commendation and disgrace not to be strong motives on men, to accommodate themselves to the opinions and rules of those with whom they converse, seems little skilled in the nature or history of mankind: the greatest part of which he shall find to govern themselves chiefly, if not solely, by this law of fashion; and so they do that which keeps them in reputation with their company, little regard the laws of God or the magistrate. . . . There is not one of ten thousand, who is stiff and insensible enough to bear up under the constant dislike of his own club.

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13 *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1731 ed.), 1, 326–331 (Bk. II, ch. 28, Sec. 10–12.)
Contrary to Hobbes, then, Locke emphasizes the accommodating, or socializing effect of the need for approbation; although the moral relativism to which it is conducive does not win his approval.

Spinoza (like Pascal) supplied the metaphysical, and in part, psychological, substructure that Cumberland later found lacking in Hobbes. Throughout the third and fourth parts of his *Ethic*, he develops a ramified concept of negative emotions, which diminish our being and which he deplores. He sees in man the need to increase or augment his being, and he encourages those impulses which lead, in this sense, to greater perfection. Thus we seek to increase our power of action, which is to increase our being.\(^{14}\)

We are disturbed when others hate what we like, or like what we hate. We tend to overestimate ourselves, and to underestimate those we dislike. Emulation is a correlate of sympathy; it is "nothing else than the desire which is engendered in us for anything, because we imagine that other persons, who are like ourselves, possess the same desire." \(^{15}\) Consequently, we are moved to do what others will look upon with approval, and to avoid doing what they hate; this impulse is related to ambition, praise and blame. Furthermore, when we have so acted, we also look upon ourselves with joy, as we imagine the joy felt by others. "We will call this kind of joy which is attended with the idea of an external cause *self-exaltation*, and the sorrow opposed to it we will call shame." \(^{16}\) The former experience leads to contentment with oneself, and thence to pride. It follows that everyone endeavors to make others love what he loves, and to hate what he hates; this is ambition, which is the natural desire "that other persons should live according to his way of thinking." \(^{17}\) Man's nature is to envy those who are in prosperity.\(^{18}\) Apprehension, anger and vengeance are inevitable, and cruelty may follow. The contemplation of our weakness yields only humility and sorrow, which feelings the

\(^{14}\) For Spinoza this involves increase in the rational power which approaches us to God; but again, this part of his doctrine was disregarded in the eighteenth century.

\(^{15}\) Part III, Prop. xxvii and Scholium.

\(^{16}\) Prop. xxx.

\(^{17}\) Prop. xxxi.

\(^{18}\) Prop. xxxii.
mind must endeavor to remove, either by diminishing the value of others or by "giving as great a luster as possible" to its own. "It appears, therefore, that men are by nature inclined to hatred and envy." 19

Spinoza's picture is one of an irrational creature. But man's nature, he believes, is rational. Many of our affects, when properly guided, are in entire accord with reason. Reason, after all, demands that a person should seek what leads to his true profit and perfection. But fickle and false is the hunger for fame and the praise of others. It was doubtless in the following lines that Rousseau found the clue for one of his powerful criticisms of society, in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité*:

As every one, moreover, is desirous to catch the praises of the people, one person will readily destroy the fame of another; and, consequently, as the object of contention is what is commonly thought to be the highest good, a great desire arises on the part of every one to keep down his fellows by every possible means, and he who at last comes off conqueror boasts more because he has injured another person than because he has profited himself.20

The Jansenist theologian, Nicole, too often neglected by historians of ideas, also has an important place in the development of our concept.21 Beginning with a distinction between proper and corrupt self-love, he denounces the latter as exclusive and cruel, and the father of "pride." That, he cries, "is the monster we harbor in our breasts." The worst of the matter is that we hate the same feeling in others, because it opposes and limits ours. Therefore, as Hobbes had said, men tend to destroy each other. And yet, *amour-propre* is productive of good, as well as of ill. It enables men to live together in peace, for though they love domination, they love life and comfort even more. Here Nicole draws an important conclusion. Through this effect of self-love, all the needs of social life are taken care of, without charity (i.e., altruism) having a hand in it. In fact, men can live with as much peace, safety and comfort—even if they have no religion—"as if they were in a republic of saints." 22 (This latter statement is

20 Part IV, Prop. xvii, Scholium.
22 P. 116.
particularly significant as a possible source of Bayle’s paradox.)

None the less, what Nicole calls the “tyrannical inclination” subsists in our hearts, and produces a rivalry for power within society. Everyone pushes himself towards the top. In every occupation, in every rank, one always strives to acquire some sort of preeminence, authority, command, consideration, jurisdiction, and to extend one’s power as far as possible. But here, too, the effect is ambivalent. The “most general inclination” inhering in *amour-propre* is the desire to be loved, though it is often less powerful than pleasure or other forms of interest. On the one hand, we want others to satisfy our thirst for domination by treating us as great and powerful, and exhibiting their own abasement; on the other hand, we want them to admire and love us. We dislike people who have an aversion to us, as much as we dislike their having contempt for us. The desire to be loved is more easily satisfied than the desire for power. This is most fortunate. Because of it, pride and self-love are transformed into *imitations* of charity. We avoid crimes out of fear, and do good to please men; but we do neither for love of God.

For the uncompromising Jansenist this is only another sign of man’s utter depravity. Human honesty, he remarks, conceals *amour-propre*; while “Christian virtue destroys and annihilates” it. But he does admit that “enlightened *amour-propre* could correct all the exterior faults of the world, and form a well regulated society.” Men, imperfect beings, must count on enlightened self-love to take the place of charity, and to show itself in its guise, even while “within, and in God’s eyes,” all would still be corruption.

Analysis of the desire for prestige and self-esteem was carried a step further by Malebranche, in his principal work, *De la recherche de la vérité* (1675). Admitting both the universality and the value of well directed self-love, he separates that feeling into two branches, love of greatness and love of pleasure, that is, love of being and love of well-being.²³ His analysis of the former is strikingly modern. It produces in us, he says, a desire for power, elevation, independence, and for our being to subsist by itself. We desire in some way to have necessary being; we

²³ He holds the love of well-being to be stronger than that of being, since lacking the first, we sometimes desire non-being.
want, in some sense, to be like gods. For it is only God who truly has being, and who exists necessarily, since all that is dependent exists only by the will of him on whom it depends. Men therefore wish for the necessity of their being, wish also for the power and independence that makes them safe from the power of others.  

It is obvious that Malebranche, like Spinoza, but quite independently, has built partly upon Hobbes and attempted to account for this powerful “drive” in us. Malebranche foreshadows Rousseau in two of his ideas: that greatness and independence do not make us happy in themselves, and that they are learned reactions, acquired from “the relation we have with the things that surround us.” The workings of this impulse are thus described by Malebranche, in terms which were doubtless also to make an impression on Rousseau:

All things which give us a certain superiority over other men, by making us more perfect, like knowledge and virtue, or which give us some authority over them, by making us more powerful, like honors and wealth, seem to make us in some sort independent. All those who are beneath us respect and fear us; they are always ready to do what pleases us for our self-preservation, and they dare not harm us nor resist us in our desires. Thus men always strive to possess these advantages which raise them above others. . . . But men do not desire only the effective possession of knowledge and virtue, honors and wealth; they also bend all their efforts to making others believe at least that they really possess them. . . . So men hold to their reputation as a good which they need to live comfortably in society.

Malebranche warns men that they are embracing a phantom, since all being, well-being and true greatness depend on God, and not on other men’s imaginations; but this part of his discourse was not to strike a responsive note among eighteenth century thinkers.

Abbadie, writing not long after Malebranche, seems more troubled about the deeper origins and effects of this complex of motives. He agrees with Malebranche’s division into two forms of self-love, that of pleasure and that of greatness. Doubtless the latter is desirable to us, he speculates, because it produces the

24 De la recherche de la vérité, p. 401.
25 The Ethic was not published until two years later.
former; yet it is really somewhat different, and we seem actually to desire it for itself. "At least it is certain that it is not easy to find the first and most ancient reason why we like to be esteemed." Why does this esteem, "which is something foreign to our selves," cause such satisfaction? It is not a principle of utility, or else men would not sacrifice their lives for it. "Someone," says Abbadie (who does not care, or perhaps dare to mention the name of Spinoza), has written that our self-love likes to think of our perfections; it cannot bear what disturbs this idea (scorn or insult), and passionately seeks what flatters and augments it (esteem and praise). The utility of esteem would thus lie in its confirmation of our self-approval. However, to Abbadie this explanation appears to be quite insufficient, inasmuch as men almost always care more for "the apparent merit which the esteem of others confers on them than for the real merit which earns this self-esteem." Abbadie thus clearly separates the need for approval from that of self-approval. Doubtless he underestimates the force of rationalization in the mind. Apparently he sees the relation of self-esteem to the need for security, but not that of self-respect to the moral conscience.

Abbadie next proceeds to cast doubt on a second explanation, the desire to raise ourselves above others. (It is probably Hobbes whom he has in mind now.) This is really to put the cart before the horse, he argues. It is not because we want to distinguish ourselves that we seek esteem; but rather, we desire distinction because we have a need of esteem. Abbadie here touches on the deepest point. But he only skirts it, and proceeds to a denial of a third explanation, which, apparently, is that of Malebranche. Our motive is not that self-idolatry "which makes us seek to be eternal and immense like God, creating an imaginary eternity for ourselves in the memory of men to save ourselves from the shipwreck of time . . . and striving to stretch ourselves and fill the world." Finally Abbadie deigns to reveal the "real explanation." God uses our love of esteem to prevent us from falling into vice and to impel us to praiseworthy actions. If men were reasonable beings, this recourse would not be needed. But since men use their reason to justify their pleasure, God has given us another judge, the reason of other men. This was, in fact, the traditional

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theory of an irrational motive instilled by God in his irrational creature, to make him behave the way his fellows wanted him to behave.

Abbadie’s “real explanation,” although it will be extensively utilized, is psychologically less interesting than his other analyses. Later writers were to realize that he had himself reversed matters, and discerned the effect, and not the cause. In another part of his analysis, Abbadie does indeed describe the forms and effects of “pride,” in a passage that amplifies certain ideas of Spinoza and Malebranche, and that was destined to exercise a deep influence on Rousseau. He divides it into five branches: love of esteem, presumptuousness, vanity, ambition, and arrogance. Since there is in each man, Abbadie now concedes, an instinct “that makes him sensitive to whatever shocks the idea he has of his perfections,” we pretend to qualities, fear to have faults, build a false image of ourselves, puff up our idea of our value. Vanity, pomp and display assume endless forms. We are possessed by ambition, rivalry, scorn for others. “Our superiority demands preference of consideration and esteem for ourselves.” So we aspire to public recognition and honors, we like our rivals to court us and become dependent on us. We are delighted by the power that submits them to us. They, in consequence, feel hatred towards us. In fact, we desire so much not to be confused with others, that we naturally tend to despise them, and to lower them, “in order to appear the greater by their abasement.” When we do not succeed, we are filled with envy, “an implacable sentiment.” Abbadie thus finds that the excess of the needs which God had given us as a moral mechanism becomes highly immoral and injurious to society. It is, he says, “a reversal of nature.” But his distinction between the natural, good love of esteem, and the “unnatural,” harmful love of distinction is most tenuous, and in fact, untenable.

Abbadie may be considered one of the transition writers whose thought flows into the mainstream of eighteenth century rationalism. In the same group we may place Fontenelle, Bayle, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, and several lesser names.

Fontenelle’s *Dialogues des marts* (1683) actually preceded Abbadie’s book. In several subtle and witty dialogues, Fontenelle emphasizes the pervasiveness of vanity and fame as the sources of human works. “That chimera is the most powerful thing in
the world.”^28 He finds human nature such, that we are made unhappy by the good qualities of another, and we are not happy unless others are witnesses to our joy. Fontenelle’s importance, however, is not in his contribution to the psychological exploration, but rather in his explication of the ethical import of this side of human nature. Like Nicole, he points out that the esteem motive compensates for our deficiency in rational and moral behavior. “At the end, all duties are performed, although not out of duty.” Since imagination is stronger than reason, “what Nature would not have obtained from our reason, she obtains from our folly.” In a word, virtue would not in itself attract men. “Morality also has its chimera; it is disinterestedness, perfect friendship. We shall never reach it. . . .”^29 From this, we arrive at a more general conclusion: man’s good qualities derive from his bad ones. The delightful dialogue on love and vanity, “Soliman et Juliette de Gonzague,” leads up to this thought: “Is it difficult for you to conceive that a man’s good qualities depend on others which are bad, and that it would be dangerous to cure him of his faults?” J. R. Carré has pointed out that Fontenelle was the first to see in vanity, ambition and greed the source of activity, creative emulation and wealth. He had a marked influence on Mandeville and on Voltaire (Le Mondain).^20 To Bayle, too, he was important, enabling him to account for the enigma of how moral evil and anarchy did not produce (as they logically should) universal destruction. Although Fontenelle wrote several years before Abbadie, he already belongs to the eighteenth century. He uses the word “Nature” instead of “God.”

Bayle was brought to our question by the need to justify his scandalous assertion (inspired perhaps by Nicole) that atheists could be moral, and form an orderly society. His Continuation des Pensées sur la comète (1707) reflects his reading of Fontenelle. More incisive and outspoken, Bayle formulates clearly a concept that was to be important throughout the century. “Human nature itself produces the repressive principle which they [men] need.”^31 Reputation plays this essential role: “a man without faith may be

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^28 “Lucrèce, Barbe Plomberge,” “Hérostrate, Démitrius de Phalère,” “Candaule, Gigès.”
^29 “Artémise, Raymond Lulle.”
^30 J. R. Carré, La Philosophie de Fontenelle, p. 62.
^31 Oeuvres diverses, iii, 358. Italics added.
very sensitive to social honor, very avid for praise and adula­tion. . . . The fear of passing in society for a villain and a knave will win out over love of money. . . . For it is to the esteem of other men that we above all aspire.” 32

Quite another subject, evil, leads Bayle to comment elsewhere on the power of our desire for glory. We must excuse conquerors, he says, for their illusion of universal renown and eternal fame; they would be intolerably unhappy if they were reduced “to the sole testimony of merit they would render to themselves.” It would be one thing if we could say that their only purpose was to serve humanity, to establish justice, peace and morality on earth—but this is characteristic of God, not of men, whose nature “is too limited to suffice unto itself.” Of course, continues Bayle, with a trace of irony, true merit loves virtue for its own sake; but we forgive the heroes their love of praise and fame, “because we know that our nature, inseparable from its imperfection, cannot itself fill up all its emptiness, nor tolerate itself without a foreign sustenance, and that the love of virtue would not be an active enough spring if the love of praise did not move it. . . . I need not add that experience shows that receipt of praise fills our hearts with joy, and its privation is an unhappy state (un état chagrinant).” 33

The weakness of Bayle’s theory is its failure to relate approval to self-approval, and its neglect of the latter. Its strength is in its realism. His speculations lead him to the important conclusion that our passions form a balance, or a system of counterpoise, in which the factor of reputation, or the need for praise and esteem, plays a vital part. Society, to be sure, increases vices of all sorts. But it also imposes “a greater necessity to have a care for the qu’en dira-t-on, and it excites a greater sensitivity for la belle gloire. . . . It would be easy to show you in detail that each thing has its counterweight in society, and that the difficulties are met by the very constitution of governments and the opposition of private passions. I need not add that in one and the same person vices quite often work against each other.” 34

32 Ibid., p. 110.
33 Réponse aux questions d’un provincial, Oeuvres diverses, III, 650.
34 Continuation des Pensees diverses, III, 354. We need give only brief mention to one of Bayle’s adversaries, La Placette, who advanced a traditional Christian view. To have pride is “to establish oneself as the center of everything. It is to wish to be
In England, too, the theme of pride and prestige was soon to be taken up anew. We must give a short account of the views of three writers, Shaftesbury, Mandeville and Hume, who were widely read in France.

One has the impression that Shaftesbury was uncomfortable about the whole question. While recognizing the force of these universal motives, he was, perhaps, apprehensive that they might not fit well into his system. Were they “natural affections,” leading to public good, “self-affections,” or “unnatural affections,” productive neither of public nor of private good? He groups envy and excessive pride or ambition with tyranny, treachery, ingratitude and cruelty. The joy experienced from the suffering, blood or torture of others is for him “wholly and absolutely unnatural, as it is horrid and miserable.”

Indeed, it is only an appearance of joy, one that ends with fears, aversions, insecurity. These last emotions, which Shaftesbury terms the consequences of emulation and pride, were considered by the earlier writers we have discussed to be the causes of those phenomena. There was as yet no complete theory to unite both concepts into a linked, or unitary form.

A quite different position was taken by Shaftesbury’s contemporary, Bernard de Mandeville. Building upon Hobbes, Fontenelle and Bayle, he advanced a view of human nature, the candid and naked pessimism of which was the greatest shock experienced by eighteenth century moralists. It is doubtful whether, without the preparatory work of Mandeville and the further developments of certain of the French materialists, the marquis de Sade, at the terminus of the Age of Enlightenment, could have plunged man to the bottommost pit of the lower depths, and enveloped him

the final, or more exactly, the only end of all things, relating all to self, and relating self to nothing else.” It is self-love without grace, an illusion—as is worldly reputation. *Nouveaux Essais de morale* (1697), i, 1–43.

*An Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit, Characteristicks*, ii, 163–164.


In another part of his essay Shaftesbury warmly accepts the desire for admiration and esteem, and accounts for it, in a way that was outside of the main stream of ideas, as one of the natural affections leading to fellowship, the need for “sharing contentment and delight with others,” a need which enters even into our vices, such as vanity, ambition and luxury. Shaftesbury thus puts together, in a unique fashion, two reactions: the “community or participation in the pleasures of others,” and “the belief of merit being well from others.” These two branches of “social love” account for nine-tenths of life’s pleasures. *Ibid.*, ii, 108.
in utter moral and metaphysical nihilism. In Mandeville's doctrine of "private vices, public benefits," we have a theory of human nature, a theory of society, and a theory of morals. Man's vices, instead of being the signal of his depravity, are made the fount of his virtues—provided we give to the latter word a purely social, utilitarian value. Chief among these beneficial vices is self-esteem, or pride. Because of it, praise and contempt are the legislator's chief support. If private passions can be subordinated to the general good, it is through the desire (which distinguishes man from beast) to believe we are acting rationally. We need to think well of ourselves, and cannot easily do so without confirmation in the opinion of others. This is the way, from the time of early childhood, that morality is taught. Pride and shame are "the two passions, in which the seeds of most virtues are contained." Mandeville gives us a graphic description of the physical, rationally uncontrollable effects of these "passions." He concludes that pride, the faculty by which man overvalues himself, "is so inseparable from his very essence . . . that without it the compound he is made of would want one of its chiefest ingredients"; and that "we are possessed of no other quality so beneficial to society." The corollary of pride, riveted with equal firmness in the depths of human nature, is envy, which Mandeville also considers a salutary and cherished passion, for it relieves us from the uneasiness we necessarily feel when we see others possess what we should like. It produces emulation, and without it we should forego doing many things that require labor and pains. "As everybody would be happy, enjoy pleasure and avoid pain if he could, so self-love bids us look on every creature that seems satisfied, as a rival in happiness; and the satisfaction we have in seeing that felicity disturbed, without any advantage to ourselves but what springs from the pleasure we have in beholding it, is called loving mischief for..."
Mandeville's main ideas, it is obvious, were not original. His development of their psychological and social implications, however, was so brilliantly cynical and uncompromising, that he gave those ideas a new potency in the eighteenth century intellectual ferment.

Probably the most refined psychological analysis of the esteem motive was supplied by Hume, in his *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739). Pride and its adjuncts he deems original properties or impulses of the mind, that is, "such as are the most inseparable from the soul and can be resolved into no other." It is in our primary constitution (as "an original and natural instinct") that pride cannot look beyond self.  

Investigating the causes of pride or shame, Hume stresses the urge to power as central to his concept. Property, for instance, is an exclusive power; its possession by another is an implied threat to us. Wealth is a power for pleasure and comfort; with it we can satisfy our desires; without it, we are subjected to wants, mortifications and the will of others. Power over other beings—especially beings like ourselves—gives us deep pleasure and pride. "Comparison is in every case a sure method of augmenting our esteem of any thing. A rich man feels the felicity of his condition better by opposing it to that of a beggar. . . . There is a peculiar advantage in power, by the contrast which is, in a measure, presented to us, betwixt us and the person we command. The comparison is obvious and natural."

This is the original cause of pride and humility. A second cause, of equal weight, is the approbation of others. "Our reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and even the other causes of pride: virtue, beauty and riches, have little influence, when not seconded by the opinion and sentiments of others." Why should this be so? Hume's answer to the enigma is his principle of sympathy, which involves our receiving from others their inclinations, interests and opinions; an influence, most difficult to resist, which is founded on the universality of human nature, there being no passion or principle in others "of which, in some degree or other, we may not find

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44 i, 140 ff (Remark N).
45 In *Works*, iv, 76–92. I am obliged to omit the interesting analysis of the experience of pleasure through pride.
46 Ibid., p. 92–117.
a parallel in ourselves.” 47 When another person utters praise, it is natural for us to embrace his opinion.

The same constitution and relationships produce envy. Since all objects appear greater or lesser by a comparison with others, and we so judge of their value, and since our satisfaction or uneasiness in reflecting on our circumstances varies

in proportion as they appear more or less fortunate or unhappy... it follows, that according as we observe a greater or less share of happiness or misery in others, we must make an estimate of our own, and feel a consequent pain or pleasure. The misery of another gives us a more lively idea of our happiness, and his happiness of our misery. The former, therefore, produces delight; and the latter uneasiness. Here then is a kind of pity reversed. . . .48

Thus another’s pleasure gives us, first pleasure, by sympathy, and then pain, by comparison. “His pain, considered in itself, is painful to us, but augments the idea of our own happiness, and gives us pleasure.” Similarly, as envy is excited by some present enjoyment of another, malice is “the unprovoked desire of producing evil to another, in order to reap a pleasure from the comparison.”

The analyses of these English writings were woven inextricably into the pattern of French thought. Mandeville was translated in 1740, Shaftesbury in 1744, Hume in 1759–1760; but many among the more advanced French thinkers knew their work in the original. Their full impact, to be sure, manifested itself during the great upsurge of scientific and rationalistic thought that took place in France between 1745 and 1770.

Several French and continental writers, in the meantime, had continued independently the line of discussion which had originated in France. Actually, with the possible exception of Rousseau’s theories, little remained to be said. The work to be done was rather one of diffusion, and most important of all, the incorporation of the consequences of the earlier speculation into the corpus of the new philosophies. We shall give only briefest mention, then, to the writers of the first half of the century. Rémond de Saint-Mard may have been known to Mandeville; he

47 Compare Spinoza, above.
48 Ibid., p. 158–162.
had earlier written that “glory is an artifice which society uses to
make men work for its interests.” Lesage de la Colombière
anticipated Shaftesbury’s theory that our need for esteem (our
“most deeply rooted” inclination) derives from the need for
others which we experience as social beings. Like children, we
imitate others, and like to be imitated. The offspring of this
desire is envy, jealousy and ambition. Levesque de Pouilly ex-
plained our desire for the esteem of others as a need for “a
security for our happiness.” We want to believe in our perfection.
Desire for glory, he concludes, is the source of great deeds, and
fear of scorn prevents vice. Vauvenargues, the sensitive and proud
epigrammatist, was enthusiastic about the desire for glory; but,
rather strangely, he condemns pride, after defining it in words that
paraphrase La Placette. Following a casual reading of Spinoza,
he insists on our urge to persist in being, at all costs. “Would the
weakest of beings be willing to die to see himself replaced by the
wisest?” All our feelings are related to that of the perfection
and imperfection of our being. Ambition is part of “the instinct
that leads us to enlarge our being,” and may be either laudable
or despicable. The counterpart is boredom. It comes from the
feeling of our emptiness, and of the insufficiency of our being.
Vauvenargues is content with a psychological analysis.

Mme de Lambert stands almost alone, in her linking of the
honor or esteem motive to that of self-approval, and consequently,

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49 Quoted in Fable of the Bees, p. xcii, nb. The editor, F. B. Kaye, goes with
considerable thoroughness into the background in the Renaissance and seventeenth
century. It must be remembered that only in the eighteenth century was there a
thoroughly developed theory of pride and esteem, integrated into a new moral,
economic and social philosophy.

50 Le Mécanisme de l’esprit (1700), p. 99, 263–264, 435. Among these earlier writers,
the older tradition is maintained by Protestant writers, such as J.-F. Bernard.
Bernard treats of pride as part of human corruptions and self-dupcry (op. cit.,
p. 158). In France, moral condemnation is to be found in Lemaître de Clavière
(op. cit., 1734, i, 103–104), and in Toussaint (Les Moeurs, 1748, Pt. II, ch. 1.)
52 “Glory fills the world with virtues, and like a beneficent sun, it covers the
whole earth with flowers and fruits.” Quoted by F. Vial: Une philosophie et une
morale du sentiment, p. 198. Glory impels us to make ourselves estimable, in
order to make ourselves esteemed. (Introduction à la connaissance de l’esprit humain,
Oeuvres, 1821, i, 54.
53 Ibid., i, 49, 78.
54 P. 51–53.
55 P. 74, and note. In Chapter XXIV, Vauvenargues brings out the fact that
nothing is more pleasing to us than ourselves, and since we esteem most what
pleases us most, we are always making unjust comparisons with others.
to the moral conscience. It is for this reason that she opposes the humility of Christianity. The more usual approach was that of d'Argens, who prefers the power of shame and infamy to that of conscience. "There always remains in men's heart, no matter how villainous they may be, an amour-propre which makes them sensitive to the horror they feel others have for them." In an obscure early piece, Morelly, foreshadowing his political system, bases justice on equality, and considers pride as its chief violator. Pride, he says, "leads us to pass beyond the prescribed bounds by raising ourselves above our equals." Morelly delves deeply into the origin of this impulse. "The feeling which the soul has of its weakness causes it to see in others something capable of counterbalancing its desires and re-establishing the original equilibrium between it and its fellows; this thought produces in it an impulse of hatred, a violent desire to see what equals or surpasses it depressed as low as it sees it enhanced." Fortunately, there is a limit to an individual's power over others. While the marquis de Sade was to see in the effort to attain this power the best goal of life, Morelly, like Mandeville, considers these vicious feelings to be of use only insofar as, by a reverse effect, they become the chief social bond. Men are certainly not held together by love of virtue. "They do each others service in order to acquire over them a degree of superiority and regard." Yet, by a curious paradox, we may say that Sade, almost despite himself, reaches a similar conclusion. His desire is for absolute independence and power; but these cannot be effective except in opposition to (and so, in conjunction with) other people, who must be the "victims." By the time Montesquieu publishes De l'esprit des lois (1748), the lessons of Mandeville and his predecessors have been well learned. Though Montesquieu condemns pride (from a political

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56 Avis d'une mère à sa fille, (1728), in Oeuvres, 1, 108 ff.
57 Lettres juives (1738), v, 232. Elsewhere he comments on the pain men experience on seeing others happier than they (11, 21-22). However he considers this "a preference for equality."
58 Essai sur le cœur humain (1745), p. 117 ff, 184 ff.
59 Rousseau realized this more clearly. He writes that hatred is conducive to social existence; the more inimical men feel towards each other, the greater their need for each other, in order to gratify their feelings. (See Charles W. Hendel, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, moralist, 1, 69.) For other passages expressing Rousseau's belief that men's psychological needs increase their need for each other, see ibid., D. 76-77, 126.
viewpoint), he eulogizes vanity as an excellent spring of government. He asks us to imagine "the innumerable benefits which result from vanity: luxury, industry, arts, fashions, politeness, taste." While pride, as Spain bore witness, produced idleness and poverty, vanity, as could be seen in France, stimulated activity and wealth. But we see the lesson strike deeper roots in an earlier section of the book, in the discussion of the principle of the three kinds of government. Virtue is the principle of democracy. While Montesquieu pays lip service to it, it is obvious that he regards the love of virtue (or public good) for its own sake, as a shaky and easily corruptible support. The honor principle of monarchy, less noble and idealistic, is a better, surer motive, since it realistically pretends to derive the public good only from private advantage. Honor "can inspire the loftiest deeds; joined to the force of the laws, it can lead to the ends of government just as virtue itself." This is because the nature of honor "is to demand preferences and distinctions." In a monarchy, then, ambition is what gives life to the government, gives motion to all its parts, and withal links them in harmony; so that it turns out that "each one works to the common good, believing he is working to his private interest." Philosophically speaking, this is, to be sure, a false honor. But what matters? "This false honor is as useful to the public as true honor would be to individuals who might possess it." And is it not a great deal, inquires Montesquieu in his parting question, "to oblige men to perform all kinds of different actions, and actions which demand strength, with no other reward than the report (bruit) of those actions?" Montesquieu was the first writer, in the eighteenth century, who envisaged the manipulation of individuals in a State through a deliberate use, by the government, of the drives for esteem, reputation and public distinction.

It was inevitable that the themes of prestige should thread their way through the pages of the Encyclopédie. That magnum opus, although it offers us no original developments on the subject, is none the less valuable for intellectual history, as the great reflector of eighteenth century French thought. We need not discuss one group of articles ("Orgueil," "Vanité," "Fierté," "Hau-

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60 Livre xix, ch. 9.
61 Livre III, ch. 6.
62 Ibid., ch. 7.
teur,” etc.) which are traditionally moralistic, and decry the vices announced in their titles. Under “Estime,” we have the scholastic type of analysis, apparently imitated from Pufendorf. Marmontel approaches our subject more closely, in the article “Gloire,” where he echoes Vauvenargues’ praise of that aspiration, and foreshadows the great development of this theme in Diderot’s epistolary debate with Falconet. “The desire to make our fame eternal,” he notes, “is an enthusiasm that magnifies us, lifts us above ourselves and our time.” Diderot, however, was to penetrate more deeply into the psychological foundation of our desire for immortality. He sees its relation to human distinctiveness—a belief that was, in his mind, in constant tension with some of the basic assumptions of his materialistic naturalism.

The animal exists only in the present moment, sees nothing beyond. Man lives in the past, the present, the future; in the past, to learn; in the present, to enjoy; in the future, to prepare a glorious one for himself and his descendents. It belongs to his nature to prolong his existence by views, projects, anticipations of all kinds. Whatever helps to raise the esteem in which I hold myself and my species pleases me, and should please me.

Jaucourt—to return to the Encyclopédie—can almost always be depended on to reflect accepted opinion. In “Renommée,” after endorsing reputation and shame as excellent levers of moral conduct and great deeds, he goes further, and condones them even when they are excessive or faulty in their “principle.” We must accept them as ineradicable springs of the heart, and animators of great men. In the article “Honneur,” however, Jaucourt criticizes Montesquieu’s theory, on the ground that honor may be attached to extravagant or wrong things. “We must remember here David Hume’s great principle of utility: it is usefulness that always determines our esteem. The man who can be useful to us is the man we honor; and among all people, the man without honor is the one who by his character is held to be unable to serve society.” As we shall doubtless again observe, there is more than a touch of naive optimism in this eighteenth century utili-

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63 Cf. Pufendorf, *op. cit.*, 1, 34, 269, 364.
64 *Oeuvres*, xviii, 175.
65 Jaucourt may be attempting here to refute Abbadie.
66 There is perhaps some confusion in Jaucourt’s mind between “honor” in the sense of the desire to be honored by others (a motive which is useful to society), and “honor” in the sense of a certain code of personal integrity.
tarianism. Jaucourt, putting everything into the stew, next turns to his still fresh recollections of Rousseau's second *Discours*. Society, he now tells us, changes the objects of our esteem from strength and courage to knowledge and talents. There are other ill effects.

As society gradually spreads and becomes polished, there arise a multiplicity of relations between an individual and others; rivalry is more frequent, passions clash. . . . Men, forced to fight perpetually, are forced to change weapons. Trickery and dissimulation become current; there is less aversion for falseness, and prudence is honored."

To complete Jaucourt's pattern of disintegrated reflections, it suffices to mention the article "Emulation," which sentiment, in contrast to envy, he lauds as courageous, sincere, inspiring and morally good.  

Finally, the abbé Yvon's article, "Athées," is in part a commentary on Bayle. Personal interest, reasons the abbé, working through hope and fear, is the mainspring of human actions; it should produce social disorder. Fortunately, it has provided its own remedy. Such a powerful passion could be combatted only by another of equal strength. The only recourse, then, is to turn it against itself, and to use it for a contrary end. It is certain that the moral sentiments are insufficient to control men. So society uses religion to stimulate both hope and fear. Bayle, continues Yvon, called on another motive, "supposing that the desire for glory and the fear of infamy would suffice to rule the conduct of atheists." Yvon is quite willing to admit "that the desire for honor and the fear of infamy are two powerful motives to induce men to conform to the maxims adopted by those with whom they converse." Unfortunately, it is possible to get this prestige almost as surely, and more easily, by clever hypocrisy. Consequently, the atheist, not bound by conscience and religion, will do it just that way.

Yvon's analysis cuts right to the heart of the eighteenth century

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67 The eighth volume of the *Encyclopédie*, in which this article appeared, was readied for the press in 1758, shortly before the revocation of the printing license. The *Discours sur l'inégalité* had been published in 1755.

68 Like Marmontel, Jaucourt exalts the urge to glory ("Temple de la Gloire"). The ancients, who did not believe in immortality, "regarded their actions as seeds sown in the immense fields of the universe, which would bring them the fruit of immortality across the flight of the centuries."
ethical dilemma. Can man be a rational and moral being? If not, what extra-moral means must be used to divert and to cheat his selfishness? The philosophes rejected religion partly because it was unreasonable. But they found it none the less necessary to make a purely natural passion serve a rationally conceived mode of judgment, or goal. Nature and reason must be brought into a functional harmony. So they proposed another "unreasonable" mechanism, instead, to control an irrational, or insufficiently rational being. But was this method good enough? Yvon lays bare its weakness; and his judgment was confirmed by the amoralism which was developed by the extreme materialistic school, and which permeates the eighteenth century novel.

This dilemma, and Yvon's justification, are seen in most dramatic form, in these middle years of the century, in Diderot's great dialogue, Le Neveu de Rameau, which pits the two viewpoints against each other. Diderot, the "I" of the dialogue, maintains that pride, reputation and the desire for immortality are sufficient promptings to virtue and sufficient rewards for self-sacrifice. Rameau (the "He" of the dialogue) paints a cynical picture of society, stripping the mask off men in a way that anticipates the uncompromising brutality of Sade. Esteem, reputation and power are indeed pervasive motives; but the first two come as the result of the third, and nowhere does virtue or morality enter into the equation. A virtuous man is a fool, and is likely to be a victim of the sharks.

Diderot sees the abyss, skirts its edge, but refuses to let himself be drawn in. To grasp the complexity of the problem in his mind, we must go back a few years, to the time when it first assumed concrete form, in his reply to the bitter moral nihilism of a friend, the lawyer and dramatist Paul Landois. Self-sacrifice, he assures Landois, brings its own reward. "We take on in our own eyes so much greatness and dignity. Virtue is a mistress to which we become attached as much by what we do for it, as by the charms we see in it." Here Diderot is significantly concerned with self-approval and self-esteem. He does not at the moment see, or does not indicate, its relation to the moral conscience. This is because he is drawing up a materialistic ethics, deprived of moral

69 The letter was written on June 29, 1756. Cf. Correspondance de Diderot, éd. Roth, 1, 209-217.
freedom, grounded on utility and social repression. Consequently he passes almost at once to the motive of reputation and self-interest. Virtue, he now tells us, is only a special kind of vanity, "and nothing more." We make a show of sacrifice, but we are only seeking a satisfaction. The question thus presents itself in a new light—precisely in the form that the Neveu de Rameau was to explore. "There remains to decide whether we shall give the name of madmen to those who have made for themselves a way of happiness which appears to be as bizarre as that of self-immolation." Diderot's answer is stoutly given. If happiness is the end, why should a way of happiness, which creates happiness for others, be insane? He next throws into the balance the heavy weight of esteem. "Do not forget to evaluate the esteem of others, and that of oneself—and for all they are worth." The punishment of bad actions is inevitable; they lead to "the contempt of our fellow-men, the greatest of all evils." In Diderot's mind, the relation between esteem and self-esteem is not clear. This is so, because he was never able to work out his concepts of virtue and self-interest into a unified ethical theory, clearly moralistic, or, clearly utilitarian and pragmatic. His weakness is the weakness of the pleasure theory, and it was widespread in his time. It is the failure to distinguish between the satisfaction of a pleasurable act, which is one kind of motive; and the living up to a model of oneself—and this is what is involved in self-esteem. The latter implies a quite different motive, often requiring an unpleasurable act of self-sacrifice. It may be productive of pleasure as a concomitant of the act; but that pleasure itself is not the motive. On this view, self-approbation is confirmed by approbation, but is prior and superior to it. Diderot, however, defends virtue as a system of prudence.  

Voltaire contributed no new ideas to the currents of discussion. He early adopted the views of Mandeville, and they go throughout his writings, alongside a persistent traditionalistic condemnation of pride which we have already noted in the beginning of this chapter. Typical of the latter is a statement such as this: honor is "an empty phantom which we take for virtue; it is the love of glory, and not of justice." But later, criticizing Montesquieu's

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70 For a more conventional statement by Diderot, see art. "Passions," Oeuvres, xvi, 215–216.

71 Alzire, Oeuvres, iii, 422.
separation of honor and virtue, Voltaire claims there can be no virtue without honor. It is true that “honor” means “glory” in the first instance, and that in the second, he seems to take self-approval as its chief component. But in another article, he again defends glory, defining it as “reputation joined to esteem.” And elsewhere: “Honor is a natural mixture of respect for men and for oneself.”

In his social thinking, however, Voltaire simply accepted Mandeville’s thesis. In the *Traité de métaphysique* (1734), he set forth a view he was not to change. This is his belief that the passions have led to social order. “Pride is the principal instrument with which this beautiful edifice of society has been built.” Men make a great pretense of sacrifice to social welfare, but pursue their own private good. “The desire to command, which is one of the branches of pride,” is universal. It is a powerful exciter of industry and leads men to obedience; it is almost as good a mechanism as their avarice. But most important and efficient of all is their envy, “a very natural passion which men always disguised under the name of emulation.” Voltaire concludes his treatise by stating that honor is a universal and inextinguishable feeling which is the pivot of society. “Those who would need the help of religion to be decent people are indeed to be pitied; they would have to be social monsters, if they did not find in themselves the necessary sentiments for that society, and if they were obliged to borrow elsewhere what should be found in our nature.”

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74 *Pensées*, xxxi, 123. This is not a unique instance of Voltaire’s variability. In one place he writes, “Si l’on dédaignait trop la gloire,/On cherirait peu la vertu” (iv, 276); and again: “La gloire n’est qu’une importune/Quoi fait ombre à notre bonheur” (xlv, 87). See also, xviii, 180 and x, 291.
75 *Traité de métaphysique*, ed. H. T. Patterson, p. 53–54. Later he states that the Roman republic was based on a balance of private interests, on a desire to dominate “which does not allow another to dominate” (xxxiii, 387). But cf. xxiii, 530, for a different view.
76 *Ibid.*, p. 69. Before leaving Voltaire, it is worth taking brief note of an observation in one of the refutations of his *Poème sur la loi naturelle* (1752), by Antoine Thomas. It attempts to account for man’s restless, never satisfied need for “glory,” The explanation, for Thomas, lies in “the frightful emptiness he experiences within himself; and, flattering himself that it (i.e., glory) will be able to fill up this emptiness, he looks upon it as a remedy for his ills and a resource for his needs. (In Réflexions philosophiques, quoted in Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, 1822, iv, 397–398.) Another disbeliever in glory was Chamfort. He sneers at the idea that love of glory is a virtue. “A strange virtue indeed, whose helpers are all the vices, whose stimuli are pride, ambition, envy, vanity, sometimes even avarice!” *Maximes* (ed. cit., p. 37–38).
Human Nature and Motivation

Probably the most important utilization of the esteem motif, by an eighteenth century French writer, was that made by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. As with several other notions, his originality lay in standing up against the mainstream of his time, returning first to the purest Christian tradition, but then making his own modifications and applications to society. In point of fact, however, there are two distinct and apparently opposing developments in Rousseau's writings.

The first of these contrasts man in the state of nature with man in society, and attempts to explain the vices and unhappiness of the latter condition. The focal point of the explanation is that the new relationship between men necessarily produces emulation, envy and pride. In the state of nature, contacts between men were few and fleeting. The situation was as Pope had described it:

Pride then was not; nor arts that pride to aid;
Man walked with beast, joint-tenant of the shade.\textsuperscript{77}

While I cannot here perform the task of a biographer, it must be noted in passing that Rousseau's personal revolt against society was in large part centered on the importance of esteem and the opinion of others. He desired fervently to be independent and to be his own judge, and not to have to think of anything he did in the light of how others might regard it. After his "change of life," in 1751, this is what he tried to do, as he tells us in the Confessions: "I applied all the strength of my soul to breaking the chains of opinion and to doing with courage whatever appeared good to me, without worrying the least about the judgment of men."\textsuperscript{78} To this, Diderot, at the height of their démêlé, took exception: "I know well," he wrote to Jean-Jacques in October of 1757, "that whatever you do, you will have the testimony of your conscience for you; but is that testimony, by itself, sufficient? Is it permissible to neglect to a certain point that of other men?"\textsuperscript{79}

Rousseau's theory of human nature is based on the assumption that in the state of nature the seeds of later developments were present. Pride, in fact, was already experienced, not towards other men, but towards animals; and thus, "considering himself first by his species, he was preparing himself from afar to aim for it as

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Essay on Man}, iii, 151-152; \textit{Discours sur l'inégalité}, in Vaughan, \textit{op. cit.}, 1, 169.
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Oeuvres}, viii, 257.
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Correspondance}, éd. Roth, i, 249.
an individual." 80 In the second pre-civil stage, Rousseau's "Golden Age," the very first social intercourse and games produced just this result.

Each began to look at the others and to want to be looked at, and public esteem acquired value . . . and that was the first step towards inequality, and simultaneously, towards vice. From these first preferences arose vanity and contempt, on the one side, shame and envy, on the other; and the fermentation caused by these new leavens produced at last compounds that were fatal to happiness and innocence.81

As metallurgy, agriculture, division of labor and property entered into and changed this pattern of life, all these vices became exacerbated. Only qualities esteemed by others were now of value. "To be and to appear became two different things; and from this distinction sprang imposing pomp, deceitful trickery, and all the vices which form their train." 82 They are summarized by the phrase "devouring ambition." After civil society is organized, comparison of prestige becomes a constant procedure. This would be less evil, if the comparison were made on the basis of real merit; but it was almost always made on the basis of wealth, which is most obviously useful. The result is our "prestige drive," which Rousseau describes in the following terms:

I should observe how much this universal desire for reputation, honors, and preferences, which devours us all, exercises and compares talents and strength; how much it excites and multiplies the passions; and how much, by making all men competitors, rivals, or rather enemies, it daily causes reverses, successes and catastrophes of all kinds, by making so many contenders enter into the same joust. I would show that it is to this eagerness to have ourselves talked about, to this rage to distinguish ourselves which keeps us almost constantly outside of ourselves, that we owe the best and the worst things there are among men; our virtues and our vices, our knowledge and our errors, our conquerors and our philosophers; that is to say, a multitude of bad things for a small number of good ones. I would prove, finally, that if we see a handful of the powerful and rich at the summit of greatness and fortune, while the masses crawl in

80 Discours sur l'inégalité, 1, 170. Rousseau himself shares this pride, in the Profession de foi, in his doctrine of man as king of the created universe and principal object of providence.
81 Ibid., p. 174–175.
82 Ibid., p. 78.
obscurity and misery, it is because the former esteem the things they enjoy only as much as the others are deprived of them, and that, without changing their position, they would stop being happy, if the people stopped being wretched.\textsuperscript{83}

Men, then, strive frantically to place themselves above others; they are filled with "a dark inclination to hurt each other," with a "secret desire to obtain their good at the expense of others." Hypocrisy follows.\textsuperscript{84} The power drive, to subjugate and command, rules all; for men become "like those famished wolves who, having once tasted human flesh, reject all other sustenance, and want only to devour men." \textit{Homo homini lupus}—yes, but only \textit{after} man has been corrupted by society!

We cannot doubt that Sade found food for his own conclusions in these lines, and in several other eloquent passages to which I can do little more than refer. One such passage is a frontal attack on the theory of Mandeville and his followers (among whom we must not forget to include the Physiocrats), that everyone advances the happiness of others in trying to secure his own. There would be a measure of truth in this, counters Rousseau, were it not that he gained far more by hurting others.

There is no profit so legitimate that it is not exceeded by the profit we can make illegitimately, and the wrong we do our neighbor is always more lucrative than the services [we render him]. It is only a question of finding the means of assuring oneself immunity; and it is to that end that the powerful use all their strength, and the weak all their ruses.\textsuperscript{85}

In still another passage, in the \textit{Preface de Narcisse} (1752), he continues the attack on Mandeville. Men cannot live together in our society, Rousseau again declares, without deceiving and hurting each other, for our good lies in others' hurt. "We must therefore take care never to let ourselves be seen as we really are." We must never reveal "all the horrors required by a state of things in which each, feigning to work for the fortune or the reputation of others, seeks only to enhance his own above theirs and at their own expense."\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 192.

\textsuperscript{84} P. 195–6. All is appearance, and we end by being proud of our very vices. Rousseau returns to Nicole's conclusion: we have honor without virtue.

\textsuperscript{85} "Note i," 1, 202–203.

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Oeuvres}, v, 105–106.
Rousseau's great aversion is to a competitive society, and in fact, to competition itself, in any form. We can see this clearly in the "Septième Promenade" of his *Rêveries d’un promeneur solitaire*. Speaking of the charm of botanical study, he declares that as soon as a motive of interest or vanity is mingled with it, "all this sweet charm vanishes; we no longer see our plants except as instruments of our passions . . . and in the woods we are only in the theatre of the world, occupied with the care of making ourselves admired." Personal pride and rivalry immediately enter into the game. "From them [come] the hatreds, the jealousies which competition for fame excites in writers on botany. . . ." While some might object to Rousseau that this excision of *amour-propre* is a denial or a shrinking of the self, to him it is the true self, or the best self, that can thus flower. For pride, in short, is the corruption, peculiar to human beings, of a simpler animal egoism and survival impulse.

There are frequent references in Rousseau's later writings to this point of view. But a new attitude makes its appearance when he works out his system of a good society, although it is, to be sure, far less emphasized or developed than the first. To build *Emile*'s structure of good habits, the tutor must utilize the child's desire to please and win approval. And in the *Contrat social* Rousseau not merely admits of "opinion" (a word which in the eighteenth century French usage signified "reputation"), but terms it the most important spring of government, "graven neither in marble nor in bronze, but in the hearts of the citizens . . . I am speaking of manners, customs, and above all of opinion." It seems clear that this public opinion is useful insofar as it exercises an unconscious coercive force through the mechanisms of esteem, approbation and their contraries. Even in *La Nouvelle*
Héloïse, the motive of winning or losing esteem is actually as decisive, in the two protagonists' behavior, as that of conscience, and finally becomes the recommended corrective to conscience—thus bearing witness to the rightness of Diderot's words in his letter to Rousseau.\textsuperscript{90} It is the desire to keep the esteem of Julie (and of Claire d'Orbe, or of Lord Bomston) that leads Saint-Preux to the greatest of personal sacrifices: it is Julie's esteem for Volmar, and the desire not to lose his, as much as her conscience, that conserves her virtue, despite her passion. In fact, certain passages of the novel have a touch that is almost mindful of Corneille.

It is not surprising to find statements of a similar tenor in Rousseau's personal correspondence. In 1763 he writes to his friend Ustéri that as men's vices make civil society necessary, so do passions alone conserve it: "take away all the human passions, the link immediately loses its spring; no more emulation, no more glory, no more ardor for distinctions, private interest is destroyed, and for lack of a proper support, the political State falls into decay.\textsuperscript{91} And later, he writes to M. de Saint-Germain, "One does not aspire to get through crime the reward that one can get through virtue. . . . Do we not know that a fine reputation is the most noble and sweetest reward of virtue on earth?" \textsuperscript{92}

There are, then, two currents in Rousseau's thought. The first utterly rejects the supposed moral value of pride and reputation, and sacrifices esteem in favor of self-esteem. This embodies his desire for independence from others, and reliance on conscience rather than on conformity. The second current evinces some distrust of self-approbation and lays weight upon the approbation of others, as a dike to the pitfalls and selfish tendencies inherent in self-esteem. Despite his own theory, then, that emulation, pride, reputation and the like are the chief causes of vice, hatred and corruption in society, Rousseau is forced at times to have some recourse to these same motives, both in self-justification, and in his plans for governing men. Conscience and self-approval are not enough; for as Saint-Preux shows, we are rationalizing beings far more than reasonable beings.

Writing at the same time as Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot,

\textsuperscript{90} Cf. iii, 3, 7, et passim.
\textsuperscript{91} Correspondance générale, x, 37.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., xix, 246–247 (26 Feb. 1770).
were two important materialistic theorists of social ethics, Helvétius and d'Holbach. The second is the less interesting of the two. He repeats the by now accepted position that pride is necessary to social virtue. With his usual polemical intent, he opposes it to Christian humility, but relates it instead to the self-approval of conscience which we find in Rousseau. What other motive does a man have to be virtuous, he inquires, especially in a society in which the virtuous are scorned as dupes, in which crime and vice are rewarded and esteemed?

To annihilate in him so just a feeling of legitimate self-love would be to break the most powerful spring that impels him to doing good... Man requires motives to act; he acts badly or well only in view of his happiness; what he judges to be his happiness is his interest; he does nothing gratuitously; if you withdraw the salary for his useful actions, he is reduced either to becoming as wicked as the others, or to paying himself with his own hands.93

In a later work, *La morale universelle*, d'Holbach is less bitter, and partly replaces the *amour-propre* of self-esteem with the esteem of others.

The desire for esteem and reputation is a natural feeling which cannot be blamed without madness: it is a powerful motive to excite great souls to apply themselves to objects useful to mankind. This passion is blameworthy only when it is provoked by deceitful objects, or when it uses means destructive to social order.94

Helvétius was interested in the particular aspect of the esteem complex which Nietzsche was to call the will to power. This component, which had been emphasized by Hobbes and Hume, was present in some degree in most of the current analyses. For Helvétius, it is simply a manifestation of self-interest, or the passion for pleasure. Power enables us to make others contribute to our happiness.95 Taking up this theme again in *De l'Homme*, Helvétius calls power "the unique object of men's search." The

93 Système de la nature, 1, 350–355.
94 1, 118. D'Holbach advises modesty for the same reason as Fontenelle: the opposite would affect the self-esteem of other men and draw their hatred (p. 116). But he also warns us, not without some inconsistency, of the imaginary needs created by accepted opinion; we can be happy only with needs we ourselves can satisfy (p. 21). See also p. 35–36.
95 De l'Esprit (1758), p. 380.
easiest and most obvious form of power is wealth; the second is glory. "The love of glory, of esteem, of respect, is then really only a disguised love of power." It produces envy, avarice, ambition and all other "artificial passions." Intolerance, which is ineradicable, is also a form of the impulse to power, since it is the desire to control opinions and minds. For others not to think like us is a limit to our authority. 96

Only in this last comment does Helvétius begin to touch on the deeper roots of the power drive, which others had seen before him—the need to affirm our existence. He did not have a deep enough understanding of it to realize that it is akin to what Sade was to call the desire for godhood—a desire to which Malebranche and Abbadie had long before alluded. The pleasure motive is surely a very limited explanation, especially when it envisages power only as a source of other pleasures, instead of being, as Sade was to see, a pleasure in itself. Helvétius does perhaps glimpse something like this, in what he has to say of envy. That most detestable of all passions, which causes us to find pleasure in others' ills, he terms universal. "Nature has made man envious. To want to change him in this, is to want him to stop loving himself." 97 In other words, love of self requires the lowering, even the hurting of others. But instead of whipping this up into a condemnation of man or of society, as a Christian, or a Rousseau, would have done, Helvétius declares quite blithely that this disposition is most favorable to virtue. If we had to love virtue for itself, few indeed would be virtuous (Diderot would say, only those who are "fortunately born"). Laws would be powerless. But the power drive and its accompaniments can be utilized. "Heaven, inspiring in all the love of power, has made them the most precious gift. What matters whether all men are born virtuous, if all are born susceptible to a passion which can make them so?" 98 This works out through the need for esteem, and according to the system of counterpoise. Like the other followers of Bayle and Mandeville, Helvétius finds that in society man escapes disaster and destruction, because opposing drives cancel each other out, and result in a contrary good.

97 P. 194–195.
98 P. 221. For further exposition of Helvétius' theories, see De l'Homme, pp. 85 ff., 190–194, 211–225.
Mirabeau, in the opening chapter of his *Essai sur le despotisme* (1775) seems to combine Rousseau and Helvétius. The desire for unchecked power he deems to be natural to man in society, where passions develop, that of domination being “one of the first to germinate in the human heart, as it is the fastest in growth.” After painting what we should today denominate “the master-slave complex” Mirabeau concludes: “The desire for superiority is the most active passion in the human heart. . . . The desire to lower others is then inseparable from that of raising oneself.” It would be interesting to explore the relation between these theories and Mirabeau’s activity during the French Revolution.

A subtler view of the power drive was expressed by Charles Leroy, in his *Lettres philosophiques* (1768). It is conditioned and limited, he affirms, by the feeling of powerlessness. Its consequences are harmful.

From it there results in each man only a restless desire to raise himself which stirs him, torments him, and often keeps him agitated all his life, although his deepest principle is the love of rest. The idea of distinction once established, it becomes dominant, and this subsequent passion annihilates the one that gave it birth. . . . His real needs are no longer the object of his attention or his acts.99

Under the influence of this drive, appearance and show assume overriding importance; those who are weak become envious and criminal. Clearly, Leroy follows Rousseau in assigning to the urge to power and esteem a negative origin and a baneful result. But he delves still more deeply into the psychological foundation. It would seem, he declares, that this desire to climb stands in contradiction to “an inclination to slavery that we notice in most men, which, however, is again only a consequence of the love of power.” Courtiers are an example of those who crawl in order to have security and rest.100


100 I can only mention rapidly several other figures. Saint-Lambert criticizes Hume and Helvétius for their praise of glory. Like Rousseau and Mably, he fears popular evaluations. Among the crowd, success is what wins esteem and respect, and they worship even those who oppress and deceive them. But glory founded on virtue is good, and is encouraged by the longing for esteem and fame and by fear of shame. Emulation is fine, if it doesn’t become jealousy. He decries calumny, whose purpose is “to deprive merit of the esteem of men, its due reward,” but, unlike Rousseau, fails to make a connection between envy, calumny and the other ideas. (*Le catechisme universel*, Oeuvres, ii, 368–378, 42–43, 29.)

In *De la législation* (1776), his most radical work, Mably follows Rousseau in
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The Physiocratic group, with its eyes fixed on other approaches to social problems, paid somewhat less attention to the various forms of the pride motif. Yet they did not neglect it entirely, since they also accepted the uniqueness of self-interest as a moving force. Le Trosne was particularly impressed by its value. "Although men are guided only by self-love and personal interest, which is the soul of society and the active principle that puts it into motion, they are capable of the most disinterested feelings, the most heroic devotion and sacrifices, and these generous actions are none the less dictated by love for themselves." This comes about, Le Trosne explains, because the individual is not isolated, in society; he places part of his existence in the mind of others, "in their esteem, in their opinion." This is a kind of moral existence, creating a type of self-interest which can surpass that of his physical existence. "What a treasure for society! . . . the most powerful and useful instrument of a wise administration." And Le Trosne goes on to claim the possibility, and the advisability, of the unlimited conditioning of human behavior—a most curious paradox, coming after the defense of self-interest as nature's mechanism for producing social good!

Ethical thought in England, as we shall several times have occasion to observe, was engaged in the same problems, but tended toward somewhat different solutions on a number of points. The theory of Adam Smith will serve as a good point of comparison with the French writers. Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments condemning artificial needs that create disorder and divide men. "When society is only an assemblage of envious, avid citizens, jealous and eager to hurt each other, because they cannot satisfy themselves except at each other's expense, can the legislator hope to restore unity . . . ?" The secret of government is to make laws that will control the private lives of citizens, "in such a way that we find our happiness without the help of avarice and ambition." (Oeuvres, ix, 26, 95.) In his Principe de morale, however, Mably seems to come closer to the more current view: emulation favors virtue, though envy hurts it; desire for esteem and aversion to contempt lead us to actions useful to all. We admire those who win such distinction without it hurting our amour-propre, because we identify ourselves with them. (x, 222, 234–235.) But then he excoriates those who urge manipulation of the passions for the public utility. This can only produce moral corruption, egoism, vanity, ambition, hatred, deceit and the desire to devour one another. (P. 261–276.)

Raynal urges the legislator, on the contrary, to utilize the precious instruments of honor and shame (Histoire des Deux Indes, 1781, 1, 76). Dupont de Nemours finds that wicked men are hated and therefore unhappy, and vice versa (Philosophie de l'univers, 1792, p. 91).

100a Le Trosne, De l'ordre social (1777), p. 290–296.
(1759) seems to have been widely read in France, and was twice translated, in 1764 and again in 1774. Yet it is difficult to find many traces of its having exerted an influence. A brief account of his theory will indicate why. Smith’s system derives from those of Shaftesbury and Hume, and the French had, for the most part, embraced Bayle and Mandeville.

Smith has a profound insight into the distinctiveness of man. One important manifestation of his uniqueness centers around the need for approbation. This need is connected with sympathy, which is a pleasurable projection of ourselves resulting from the observation of “fellow-feeling.” This is Smith’s explanation of emulation and the desire for luxury and wealth. All are forms of vanity, the desire “to be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency and approbation”—a desire which is conditioned by the fact that, because of the nature of the psychological phenomenon of sympathy, men sympathize with and approve of our joy, not our sorrow. In other words, we need a confirmation for our self-satisfaction. A man wishes to be the object of attention in order to feel that “mankind is disposed to go along with him in all those agreeable emotions with which the advantages of his situation so readily inspire him.” The poor man is ashamed and distressed for lack of this “fellow-feeling” and approbation, “the most ardent desire” of human nature. Thus far, Smith’s theory is not particularly original, but follows Hume (and probably Spinoza).

But why should we be so in need of approbation? Smith does not fail to reply to this basic question. The answer is the need for self-approbation. Because of the human trait of self-consciousness, we cannot form a judgment of our sentiments and motives except by projecting ourselves and viewing ourselves objectively, “with the eyes of other people.” Our judgment must always “bear some secret reference, either to what are, or to what, upon a certain condition, would be, or to what, we imagine, ought to be the judgments of others.” Adam Smith is thus in direct opposition to Rousseau, who urges that self-approval come from an independent conscience, and be separated from the approbation and esteem of others, which follow fashion and not right. For Smith, on the other hand, we are inseparable from our

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“mirror”—the faces, reactions, behavior of others. We are thus a double self: the agent and the spectator.\textsuperscript{102}

Smith seeks to avoid Rousseau’s argument by an optimistic postulate that Rousseau, a pessimist about men, was not able to make. Virtue is protected in this process, he thinks. We will love virtue, not for its own sake, but because it excites approval and love in others (since it is useful to them). “What so great happiness as to be beloved, and to know that we deserve to be beloved? What so great misery as to be hated, and to know that we deserve to be hated?” So that, by a slightly different route and with a different explanation, Smith arrives at the egoistic, utilitarian mechanism of social morality which characterizes the century.\textsuperscript{103} One difference, however, is that (contrary, for instance, to Abbadie), he optimistically declares that we desire not only praise, but praiseworthiness, and in fact, desire the former only for the sake of the latter. Similarly, we dread blameworthiness, as well as, and more than blame. This is the essence of self-approbation. Emulation is only another aspect of the same process.

Adam Smith’s reasoning involves a logical circularity. He began by arguing that we desire self-approbation because it assures us of approbation by others; he ends by reasoning that we need approbation because it is the only way we can confirm our self-approbation. He began by declaring, in effect, that we want praiseworthiness because it assures us of praise, and ends by asserting that we want praise because it marks our praiseworthiness. The love of self-approbation, writes Smith, “is the love of virtue.” But is it certain, from the demonstration, that it is anything more than the desire for the approbation of others, and an imaginary bestowing of it upon ourselves? To be sure, he indicates that self-approbation is more important than approbation, since we are not satisfied with unmerited praise. But if we want the self-approbation only in order to be really deserving of approbation, we are still within the circle.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102} Yet the possible source of Smith’s idea of the spectator may well have been “Note O” of the \textit{Discours sur l’inégalité}. The notion of requiring confirmation of our self-approval is found in Abbadie, Mandeville and Hume.

\textsuperscript{103} For utility, see p. 273–274. Smith, as we shall see elsewhere, does not accept Hume’s utilitarianism as a sufficient explanation of moral judgments.

\textsuperscript{104} For Burke’s reflections on this subject, see \textit{On the Sublime and Beautiful} (1757, translated in 1765); in \textit{Works} 1, 83–84. Adam Ferguson’s “theory of emulation” does not seem to have had much influence in France. It appears in the
We may fittingly close our discussion with a brief summary of Sade's position. As we should expect, it is logically consistent with the body of his doctrine. His anarchism is not concerned with either political mechanisms of control or a fictitious virtue. In his earlier novel, *Les Infortunes de la vertu* (1788), the unfortunate heroine is advised by Sade's *porte-parole* that ignominy cannot matter to one who has no principles, for whom "honor is no longer anything but a prejudice, reputation a chimera, the future an illusion," and for whom death is death no matter where or how it is met. One is either successful in the great desire [for power and absolute freedom], and all is gained, or else one fails, and death can bring no other loss.105 In the *Histoire de Juliette* (1791), the heroine's first lesson is that concern for the "opinion" of others must be overcome and totally destroyed in order to win and enjoy the freedom of vice.

'Oh Juliette! remember this well: reputation is a possession of no value; it never recompenses us for the sacrifices we make for it. She who is jealous of her glory undergoes as many torments as she who neglects it. . . . If there are then as many thorns in the career of virtue as in that of vice, why should we torment ourselves so much over the choice, and why not rely fully on nature for the one she suggests?" 106

In fact, continues the wicked Mme Delbène, a bad reputation becomes itself a source of pleasure, far greater than the pleasure derived from a good one.

The latent irony in Sade's immoralism is that it unwittingly confirms the theory of the earlier materialists, that the motives of esteem and reputation—part of our pride—are deterrents to vice which the evil person must, as Sade makes clear, overcome. The irony is further carried forward in Sade's own career, which bears witness to the ill results of absolute and short-sighted egoism.

It was clear, in the minds of most eighteenth century writers,

*Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (1769, translated, Genève, 1775. See p. 93–105). He rejects the motives of emulation and pride, bases approbation on the quality, in a character or action, of being excellent and just. This is the principle of ambition: "it is an ultimate fact in the nature of men, and not to be explained by anything that is previously or better known. Excellency, whether absolute or comparative, is the supreme object of human desire. Riches, power, and even pleasure are coveted with extreme ardor, only when they are considered as the badges of eminence or rank, and become the subjects of distinction and emulation."

105 P. 174.
106 1, 15–16.
that passion, pride and self-love were the three interconnected vertices of a triangle which confined human behavior, self-love being the base. These might be considered simply as necessary motives, or else as vices; but to most, it seemed that they were, or could be made to be, in some measure, self-correcting vices, and thus, eventually, useful mechanisms of social life.

Psychologically, if we add up the sum of seventeenth and eighteenth century contributions, we must admit that the moralists of that age achieved a deep understanding of human nature, although the view of any one writer may appear quite limited. Esteem and self-esteem were found to be concomitants of an objective consciousness of the self, and to distinguish man from other animals. At the same time, these motivations represent deep needs. They are, moreover, essentially comparative in their nature; self-esteem was held either to exist as a means of self-assertion in the world, or as a feeling which needs external confirmation for its subsistence and enjoyment. This comparative quality was, in turn, viewed in two different ways. By a few, it was seen as a form of sympathy and natural sociability, involving almost a cooperative and mutual approbation. By most, however, it was seen as the source of rivalry, emulation and envy (not to mention intolerance and arrogance), which, initially at least, are divisive and disorderly.

One principal manifestation, viewed either as cause or as result, is a power or prestige drive, which a few writers properly understood to be a profound compulsion of the personality. The need to think well of ourselves, to increase or augment our being, to fill an inner emptiness, even to be like God, who alone has complete independence—all these are aspects of what was often called “pride.” 107 Still another conclusion resulted from this analysis. Although the very possession of this power of objectifying the self indicates attainment by man of the highest stage of animal rationality, this power is itself a highly irrational, “passionate” and rationalizing function.

In twentieth century psychology, the need for approbation and for self-approbation is viewed as a basic and complex part of the personality. It involves the need for affection, which in Freudian psychology includes the libido; the need for security, which em-

107 Another particular phase, luxury, will be discussed separately in a later section of this study.
braces the desire for safety and for power; and not least of all, the urge to self-fulfillment, or realization of the ego-image. Erich Fromm, in *Man for Himself*, emphasizes that the intensity of passions and strivings are not merely expressions of the life and death instincts. Many of man’s drives and compelling problems begin beyond the organic, including his need for love, fame and power, and his humane ideals. Other metaphysical writers of our day, often of the Existentialist school, have also been attracted by our need to feel power, independence, and our own importance. They, too, have often interpreted this as a drive to surpass the contingency or absurdity of our existence, as an aspiration to godhood.\(^\text{108}\)

The eighteenth century analysis of “pride,” brilliant though it was, had some notable shortcomings. It did not succeed in reaching a clear, integrated concept of the interrelated motives of approbation and self-approbation. The need to believe in our own worth, in accordance with a projected ego-image, and the need for approbation, esteem, praise or submission on the part of others are two manifestations of the same need to affirm our importance and our existence, and to achieve some security in the face of nothing-

\(^{108}\) Freud has related the drive for prestige and power to sadism. Distinguishing ego instincts and object instincts, he writes: “One of these object instincts, the sadistic . . . clearly allied itself in many of its aspects with the ego instincts, and its close kinship with instincts of mastery without any libidinal purpose could not be concealed.” The truth, writes Freud, “is that men are not gentle, friendly creatures wishing for love, who simply defend themselves when attacked, but that a powerful measure of desire for aggression has to be reckoned as part of their instinctual endowment. The result is that their neighbor is to them not only a possible helper or sexual object, but also a temptation to them to gratify their aggressiveness on him . . . to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. . . . This aggressive cruelty . . . also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals men as savage beasts to whom the thought of sparing their own kind is alien.” \((\text{Op. cit., p. } 85-86, 95,)\) Freud wrote these lines before the unparalleled sadism of the Nazis gave even more conclusive confirmation to his words than earlier episodes which he cites.

Of equal interest is the analysis of Hans Morgenthau \((\text{op. cit., p. } 13)\). “This lust for power manifests itself as the desire to maintain the range of one’s own person with regard to others, to increase it, or to demonstrate it.” Although related to selfishness, the two motives are not identical. The typical goals of selfishness are related to survival. The desire for power concerns itself rather with a man’s position among his fellows once his survival has been secured. “Consequently, the selfishness of man has limits; his will to power has none. For while man’s vital needs are capable of satisfaction, his lust for power would be satisfied only if the last man became an object of his domination . . . that is, if he became like God.” Sadism is a perfect example of “this limitless and ever unstilled desire which comes to rest only with the exhaustion of its possible objects.” As Blake put it, “More! More! is the cry of a mistaken soul: less than all cannot satisfy man.”
ness. Eighteenth century naturalism gradually turned aside from the deepest psychological and metaphysical implications, into which the earlier writers had begun to delve, turned more and more towards a functional and utilitarian exploration of the role of "pride" in ethics and social life. As a result, the eighteenth century naturalists were not able to integrate the analysis of pride into their world-view, except on the insufficient basis of the competitive struggle of egoistic vitalities, which seemed an aspect of the universal competition among living forms. Yet they did recognize that the manifestations of the prestige-power drive are natural in a uniquely human way, transcending and dominating the biological impulses which largely govern the egoistic vitalities of beasts. They may not have been unaware of the phenomenon of anxiety, which is basic to this whole complex of motives; certainly the seventeenth and early eighteenth century writers had glimpsed what Kierkegaard was to call "Angst," or the dread of nothingness. But, for the reasons we have noted, eighteenth century naturalism was as yet too narrow to grasp the full import and implications of the essential fact that the roots of pride, and of anxiety, are in a distinctive freedom, as well as in a distinctive rationality.

The psychological analysis became, then, a means; its social utilization, the end. Man being what this analysis indicates, the eighteenth century writers concluded that he is incapable of loving virtue and social good for their own sake. This is the important fact; and the chief ethical consequence of the long discussion was the complete divorce of morality from good will, and the frank acceptance of utilitarianism. Most writers, however, found the vices of pride to be self-correcting ones. In this they were unique vices, and performed a unique function. It was on this account that they engaged the attention of moral and social thinkers. Just what was the role of these vices—this is the question they set out to explore. A few, like Rousseau (in his major phase) and Mably, considered the divisive and corrupting effects of pride to be its terminal effect. This was particularly true in regard to the desire for power and for self-affirmation at the expense of others, a desire whose ultimate terminus was sadism. The majority did not concur with this opinion. They also disagreed with the few who, like Shaftesbury, thought that esteem, when properly limited,
was an *essentially* social feeling. They believed that the need for approbation and self-approbation, in all its forms, ultimately, but not intrinsically, is a force uniting men, and ministering to the general welfare.

This process of the reversal of the effects of egoism was conceived of as taking place in several distinct ways, which we shall now summarize. It could be looked upon as a social process of counterpoise among men. The Physiocrats, and other writers we have discussed, believed that as each man works for his private good, a process of mutual checks and cancellations prevents excessive egoism and assures the welfare of all. It was also conceived of as a moral process occurring within each individual: the passions (as we saw earlier) may form a harmony, while the need for approbation and the fear of ill-repute serve to correct motivation even before it finds expression in overt action. Again, from a different point of view, the process could be regarded as either an automatic and self-effectuating mechanism, or as one that could be manipulated by certain social institutions. The unique self-interest basis of motivation, and the power of the esteem or prestige drive could be used as a lever for government, legislators, and even for the Church and educators, to condition the behavior of individuals. In the latter view, the mechanisms of the self-interest reversal were conceived of as offering what we should now call an instrument of repression and manipulation, or of social control. Both processes accomplished the same eventual end. Reason perceived certain behavioral requirements from the viewpoint of social needs; nature, egoistic and irrational, was forced into an imperfect and unstable harmony with these needs. Thus pessimism about man was not exclusive of meliorism, which allowed the possibility that men could be made to obey moral laws despite contrary natural instincts—indeed, we may even say, because of them. Nothing is more characteristic of eighteenth century thought than this combination.

There was, however, the more pessimistic view, which we must not overlook in closing. It is present in Rousseau, and in some extreme radical works, such as the *Neveu de Rameau*, the novels of Laclos and of the marquis de Sade. Their pessimism stems partly from their answer to this question: To what does the world give its approbation, esteem and admiration? To follies, or to sheer success
and power, was the reply. Fame and esteem come only from pleasing others, in doing what they themselves would like to do, but cannot. In this view, the mechanisms of pride were not self-corrective, since esteem was accorded to people of vicious and anti-social character. Even beyond this, it seemed to the same group of writers (Rousseau, perhaps, excepted), that a man could have complete self-esteem and self-approbation without being virtuous and without having the esteem of others. In fact, he could derive pride, joy and affirmation of his being precisely through the development of his most vicious and anti-social qualities.

This was the latent weakness of the eighteenth century emphasis on pleasure and social utility as the criteria of moral judgment. Had the moralists of the Enlightenment been more rigorous in their thinking, they would perhaps have contented themselves with a less inclusive, and wholly different assertion: that it is only pride in the sense of moral esteem and moral self-esteem that is productive of moral virtue. But this is conscience; and we must await a later point in our investigation to determine the meaning and role of conscience in eighteenth century ethical thought.