Commons of the Mind

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In these lectures I shall look at three of the activities we take to be quintessentially mental ones: reasoning, intending, and moral reflection. In each case I will be concerned with the extent to which we all, as minded beings, share in what John Locke called "one Community of Nature," and with whether this mind community can be understood merely as a matter of our "being furnished with like Faculties," or whether a closer "community" is involved. Locke wrote "God, that hath given the World to Men in common, hath also given them Reason to make use of it to the best Advantage of Life," and I shall be asking whether reason, and other aspects of mind, are also possessed "in common," in Locke's strong sense in this passage—shall be concerned with the commons of the mind.

3. I do not take "mind" to be something to be contrasted with "nature" or with "world," as if minds and their commons were not part of nature and of the world, were somehow supernatural or otherworldly, spectators not participants in nature and the world. Nor do I take mind to be essentially "inner" and private, in contrast to what is out there in the public world. Our expressed reasonings and our intentional actions are publicly accessible, yet just as mind exhibiting as our private daydreams and secret motives. Arthur Collins, in The Nature of Mental Things (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), has argued persuasively against the notion that the real "of the mental is that of "inner states," but the view lingers on. It is found, for example, in Michael Bratman's claim "We use the concept of intention to characterize both our actions and our minds. You believe (correctly) that I have intentionally written this sentence... Perhaps you also believe that when I wrote it last January I intended to discuss it in the symposium in March. In the former case you use the concept of intent to characterize my action; in the latter case you use the concept to characterize my mind." (What is Intention? in Intensions in Communication, ed. Philip R. Cohen, Terry Morgan, and Martha E. Pollack [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990], p. 15.) The implication is that my "prior intentions" are "in" my mind in a way that my intentions-in-acting are not. Bratman had drawn the same sort of distinction in his book Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987). See for example p. 3: "our commonsense psychological scheme admits of intentions as states of mind, and it also allows us to characterize actions as done intentionally, or with a certain intention."
Descartes in his *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason* writes "As regards reason or sense, since it is the only thing that makes us men and distinguishes us from the beasts, I like to believe that it exists whole and complete in each of us" (*AT*, 6:2). Since Descartes, it has seemed natural for philosophers to take reason to be complete in each individual human reasoner. Yet if, like Descartes, one begins with the conviction that, since one can find oneself rejecting what one has been taught, and reasoning in solitude, reason is complete in one, then one almost inevitably faces skeptical problems when asked for one's grounds for believing that there really are any other reasoners besides oneself. Descartes's own suggested tests, of appropriate verbal response and versatile intelligent problem solving, are notoriously unconnected, or unconnected by him, with what they are supposed to test for—the presence of a sequence of conscious self-critical thoughts, reason as he manifested it to himself in, say, the *Second Meditation*. There, having as the outcome of his skeptical arguments decided to proceed as if there were "no sky, no earth, no minds, no bodies," he famously finds that he cannot suppose that he himself, as a doubter and so a thinker, does not exist. Having reasoned his way to this self-certainty, he makes the interesting claim that the terms he now uses to characterize himself, *mens*, *animus*, *intellectus*, *ratio*, are terms whose meaning was previously unknown to him. This, I take it, is partly because, in his earlier precritical uses of them, he had taken them to be what the Aristotelians who taught him had taken them to be, possessions that a human being could have only as far as it had sense organs, since nothing could be in intellect if not first in sense, so that one who still doubted his body’s existence would not be sure of his mind, intellect, or reason. But it is also because, on the story the meditator tells about himself, he has only in the last two days really used his critical reason, as distinct from his ability to take beliefs on trust from various unexamined sources. If reason is the ability to think in the way that Descartes's meditator did in the *First and Second Meditations*, then one does not know for sure that one has such a reason until one finds oneself reasoning in such a manner, that is until one demonstrates reasoning, in the sense of "gives a demonstration of" it.

One would not know for sure that anyone else had reason, unless one found them reasoning in a similar fashion, seeing reasons for doubt, reasons for restricting the doubt, reasons for drawing out new conclusions from any certainties already established. On the face of it, there should be no problem in getting such assurance—if when one sends one's manuscript off to one's friend, Mersenne, whom one has, in one's precritical phase, taken to be a reasoner, one gets back several sets of objections, exhibiting different styles of thinking, and finds most of those objections worth replying to, one would seem to have sufficient grounds to be sure that there are at least as many other reasoners as there are authors of the intelligible and appropriate *Objections*. And the face of it is surely not a false face. But if it is as easy as that to establish the existence of reasoners, then Descartes could have assured himself of his own existence as a reasoner simply by conversing with Mersenne, or any other friend. He did not need to find "a serene retreat in peaceful solitude," to "converse with myself alone." And it is striking that, even given that he *did* make that solitary retreat and think that his reason manifested itself then more strikingly than in any of his previous intellectual ventures, such as his mathematical investigations, he almost immediately populates his solitude. He invents an imaginary adversary for himself, a clever deceitful demon, someone against whom to match his...
wits. And even in doing this, he employs more than one voice—the doubting voice, and the more confident voice of the successful certainty-attainer, so that the style of the thinking in the Meditations is itself a kind of "objections and replies," all enacted in one meditator. The meditator has to become his own objector and commentator, as anyone must, if she resolves to "converse with herself alone," yet expects the conversation to count as a search for truth. So the reason that he finds complete in himself, in his solitary retreat, is a sort of microcosm of the reason that exhibited itself, later, in the objections his correspondents made to his writings, and in his replies to them.

Should we take reason to be complete in each individual, but also incipiently social, easily able to adapt itself to actual social interchanges, and capable, in advance, of imagining such exchanges? Or should we take it to be essentially a social skill, but one that can adapt itself to temporary solitude, by turning its monologues into pretend dialogues or pretend many-personed discussions?

Despite his recognition that thinking is conversing, Descartes notoriously took the former view, and showed a striking lack of any sense of indebtedness to those (parents, nurses, educators) with whom he had initially matched his wits, and honed his powers of reasoning. In the Third Meditation he dismisses the suggestion that his existence as a thinker might depend, or have depended, upon the parents who engendered him. And as for his early partners in conversation, the nurse-maids appointed by his father and grandfather to care for him, they merely fed him the beliefs that his reason later rejected. Nor did his school teachers, including his philosophy teachers, do very much better. Their role was mainly negative—to produce in him the felt need to "set aside all the opinions I had previously accepted and start again, from the beginning." Still, it is striking that when he does attempt this new start, he does it by imagining powerful deceiving influences from whom he must guard himself, by voicing objections to his own tentative conclusions, and by reeducating himself, in the sense of bringing himself along, step by step, by instructive questions and replies, even by occasional playtimes or recreations, when he lets his vagabond mind wander off for a little, before recalling it to its vocation of disciplined thinking in its search for truth.

How are we to decide whether to take reason to be an essentially private thing that can, however, turn on a public display when it chooses to do so, or, like conversing, to be an essentially social skill, which can, however, be retained a while through periods of solitary confinement? Is this an empirical matter, to be decided by looking to see if reasoning power atrophies in long solitary confinement, or fails to develop in children deprived of normal human company? Or might we decide the question without inhumane experiments by looking to see how those of us who experience the normal mix of sociality and solitude treat such stretches of thinking as purport to be reasoning? When are we confident that some such stretch, of which we take ourselves to be more-or-less sole author, really is a piece of reasoning? Usually only when some other reasoner can follow it, and reassure us that commonly accepted standards of reasoning are minimally met. Do we feel the need to apologize for multiple authorship, as if that might be a prima facie count against the coherence of a multiply authored piece of reasoning? Descartes would think we should. He writes, in his Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, that he was frequently struck by the realization that "there is not usually so much perfection in works composed of several parts and produced by various different craftsmen as in the works of one man." Cities planned by one city planner are "better arranged" than those that have grown slowly, with many builders contributing to the end result. "Crooked and irregular" streets typify those ancient towns that lacked one guiding planning mind. As in architecture, so also in legal systems—better, he thinks, to

8. Descartes, Discourse, pt. 2; AT, 6:11.
have Sparta's laws, which may have been "contrary to good morals," but at least had the coherence of purpose which is to be expected only if the laws stem from one legislator, than to have a slowly accumulated collection of laws dating from different periods. And in a system of beliefs, especially one pretending to the title of a science, it is, Descartes writes, even more essential to have the shaping guidance of one "man of good sense" than "the opinions of many different persons," accumulating little by little.

This prejudice in favor of one person's unprejudiced reasoning over the product of many reasoner's combined efforts was a healthy attitude in an authoritarian culture, and none of us really regret Descartes's determination to go it alone. But if we ask not just what view was a salutory corrective in a society that demanded conformity to traditional dogmas, but ask rather what is in fact the nature of our truth-seeking and truth-recognizing capacity, then other less individualist conceptions of reason have a claim to a hearing. For we need not be authoritarians, simply because we are skeptical of the single and solitary thinker's chances of recognizing truth should she find it, or of displaying any capacity which can proudly be advanced as that which obviously displays our human difference from, and superiority to, the other living things with whom we find ourselves sharing a planet, let alone of "stripping off outward forms" and getting at the naked truth.

As Descartes was well aware, one obvious difference between human and nonhuman beings is that we human beings converse, and when sufficiently motivated can get to understand and speak each other's native languages. Descartes pro-motes this linguistic capacity to the status of a sign, to a reason-possessing being, of the presence of another reason-possessing being. Yet he does not tell us why this linguistic capacity is a reliable indicator of the presence of reason. As Hobbes\(^9\) and Berkeley\(^10\) emphasized, the possession of a shared language enables us to become bullies and bullied, indoctrinators and indoctrinated, entertainers and entertained, insulters and insulted, as well as communicators of reasoning and evaluators of each other's reasonings. So it is understandable that Descartes, intent as he was on distinguishing the light of reason from the darkness of inherited master-doctrines, would not want simply to equate the possession of reason with membership in a language community. For the term "reason" is an honorific title, reserved, in Locke's words, for "that faculty whereby man is supposed to be distinguished from the brutes."\(^11\) Dugald Stewart agrees with Locke when in the early nineteenth century Stewart surveyed varying conceptions of "reason," ranging from broad ones that included the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to combine suitable means to ends in addition to discursive or inferential ability, to narrower ones, such as that which Hume adopts in the Treatise, which restricted reason to inference. The one shared element in all the conceptions he surveyed, he writes, is that reason includes "those principles, whatever they are, by which man is distinguished from the brutes."\(^12\) Depending on what mental distinguishing marks we choose to pride ourselves on, the term "reason" will shift in its sense and in its scope. "Reason" is a title, reserved for what distinguishes the chosen species from all oth-

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ers. The term refers, in Kant's words, to what has a "stately guise and established standing." As we become aware of the existence of languages, of a sort, in species such as dolphins, whales, and song birds, we will be less inclined to take any display of linguistic prowess to indicate the possession of reason, more inclined to restrict the linguistic expressions of reason to those that link with the problem-solving ability which was Descartes's second proposed test. Only such speech as seems to be employed to state and try to solve some epistemic problem, not just to greet, to express emotion, to communicate simple information, to attract a mate, to soothe an infant, to warn a competitor, to chide an offender, gets counted as the sort of speech that expresses reason.

Dugald Stewart self-consciously avails himself of this tendency to equate reason with whatever it is that enables us to engage in one particular estimable activity, namely reasoning, where this is taken to be inference, either deduction or else some such "logical process" essentially connected with "the discovery of truth, or the attainment of the objects of our pursuit," and is taken not to include memory, perception, imagination, fancy, and wit, even though some of these (memory and perception) are closely connected with the discovery and retention of truth. Locke had adopted this usage, equating the reason that distinguishes us from the brutes with the "sagacity" to find and the "illation" to rightly order ideas that enable us the better to discern truth, seen as a matter of the agreement and disagreement of ideas. Reason is what "enlarges" our knowledge and "regulates" our assent. Locke takes it to cover probability estimation as well as "proof" and "demonstration."

13. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A710, B738. Kant is in the passage emphasizing what he sees as the essentially disciplinary (and self-disciplinary) character of reason. "That reason, whose proper duty it is to prescribe a discipline for all other endeavours should itself stand in need of such discipline may indeed seem strange."

and so takes it to cover all "discursive" thought in which some already assented to ideas lead us to other ideas, and serve as warrants for giving assent to them. "Reason," in effect, comes to stand for our inferential faculty or faculties, seen to be what gives us superiority over other living things.

Perhaps in reaction against this decision of his tutor, Locke, to confer the title "reason" exclusively on our inferential capacities, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, in his Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour, takes a broader view. He tells us "That according to the Notion I have of Reason, neither the written Treatises of the Learned, nor the set discourses of the Eloquent, are able of themselves to teach the use of it. 'Tis the Habit alone of Reasoning, which can make a Reasoner. And men can never be better invited to the Habit, than when they find Pleasure in it. A Freedom of Rallery, a Liberty in decent Language to question every thing, and an Allowance of unravelling or refuting any Argument, without offence to the Arguer, are the only Terms which can render such Speculative Conversations any way agreeable. For to say truth, they have been render'd burdensom to Mankind by the Strictness of the Laws prescrib'd to 'em, and by the prevailing Pedantry and Bigotry of those who reign in 'em, and assume themselves to be Dictators in these Provinces." Shaftesbury keeps the Lockean assumption that reason is what enables us to engage in reasoning, but extends the range of what counts as reasoning. Where Locke contented himself with freeing reasoning from the strict rules of the syllogism, but left it still within the confines of serious argument and inference, Shaftesbury opens its borders to let in wit and gentlemanly raillery. He takes it for granted that the habit of reasoning is a habit of conversing—the only issue in dispute is whether the conversation must be solemn, grave, and deferential to some set of strict rules, or can be diverting, mocking, free and sometimes disrespectful of received views. The diverting conversation Shaftesbury is here in the process of

reporting, as an exemplar of his notion of true reasoning, concerned morality and religion, and ended in inconclusiveness and laughter. "The Humour was agreeable, and the pleasant Confusion in which the Conversation ended is at this time as pleasant to me on Reflection; when I consider that instead of being discourag'd from returning to the Debate, we were so much the readier to meet again at any time, and dispute upon the same Subjects, even with more Ease and Satisfaction than before." Shaftesbury even cites biblical example, in God's dealing with Jonah, to establish the place of teasing, wit, and humor in the dealings of reasonable persons. So reason, on his version of it, is the capacity for all sorts of conversations, in the spoken and the written word. As he blesses "The Soul of that Charitable and Courteous Author, who for the common Benefit of his Fellow-Authors introduced the ingenious way of Miscellaneous Writing!" so he stretches the Lockean concept of reason to include a great miscellany of forms of conversational reflection—soliloquy, dialogue, treatise, letter, essay, philosophical rhapsody, and, of course, miscellanies. Few of us professional philosophers today would dare try chapter summaries as wide ranging as Shaftesbury's. Chapter 2 of Miscellany 1 is summarized thus: "Of Controversial Writings: Answers: Replys—Polemick divinity; or the Writing Church-Militant;—Philosophers, and Bear-Garden.—Author's pair'd and match'd;—the Match-makers.—Foot-Ball.—a Dialogue between our Author and his Bookseller." And the contents live up to this preview. The sequence of reflections in such a chapter is not what we would give a beginning student as an easy sample of inference, yet no reasonable reader has trouble following Shaftesbury's train of thought, nor of seeing the relevance of bear gardens to the sort of philosophical debate that he claims delights booksellers. It is indeed in this chapter that Shaftesbury terms one popular style

of philosophical writing, definitely not his own favorite, that of "these Gladiatoreal Pen-men." The "gladiator theory of truth" was clearly alive and well in Shaftesbury's time, and Shaftesbury is with contemporary feminists and others in wondering if we cannot conceive of reasoning and of truth in less aggressive terms.

What Shaftesbury has done with the term "reason" is to hold steady that part of its Lockean meaning which made it an honorific title, reserved for what we think makes us superior to other animals, while varying the descriptive meaning of the term "reasoning," letting it include everything he especially valued in our human mental capacities. Since he valued all sorts of reflections, and reflective conversations, including those that were witty, irreverent, and miscellaneous in their topics and logical structure, Shaftesbury's "reason" comes to include all of this. No particular priority is given to arguments that force a conclusion on us, nor even to reflections that arrive without any coercion at some conclusion, over those that are more tentative, and raise interesting questions. What is more, Descartes's preferred unity, the imprint of one thinker's logical mind, is replaced by a delight in variety, miscellany, crooked mental streets, and entertaining byways. The art of the agreeable digression becomes an exercise of reason.

What Hume at first does with the Lockean concept of reason is the reverse of Shaftesbury's move. He holds fast to the descriptive content of Lockean "reason" as that which enables us to be reasoners, in the sense of discoverers of truth and falsity, inferers of new truths from old truths, while refusing to honor this capacity above others that we possess, in particular over taste, including a taste for wit, or over the moral sentiment. So inferential reason is toppled from its Lockean throne and made into a servant of human tastes and reflective sentiments. But Hume does not keep up this strategy for very long. In his later writings, especially the History of England, he

15. Ibid., sec. 6.
17. Not everyone blessed the soul of whoever made miscellanies popular. By 1723 Jonathan Swift could sourly write, in Of Poetry, "And when they join their pericranies, Out skips a book of Miscellanies."
switches to the Shaftesburian tactic of letting the term "reason" serve as a sort of title to be conferred on whatever human mental capacities are deemed of greatest value. Hence he can write, in the first appendix to the *History*, of virtue as "nothing but a more enlarged and cultivated reason." This is no late conversion to the views of Samuel Clarke, but rather a capitulation to the established honorific force of the term "reason," an alliance in terminology with Shaftesbury, with whose substantive views he had always been in fairly great agreement. What unites them is the emphasis on the social or conversational nature of the reason they honor, their latitudinarian tolerance for a great miscellany of forms of reasoning, and their shared appreciation of the preferability of enjoyable such forms over unduly solemn and rigidly rule-governed forms. In their singly authored "treatises" they treated of conversations, and of the various prerequisites for "conversing together on reasonable terms" (T, 581).

Descartes of course had engaged in written conversation not only with himself but with plenty of fellow philosophers (more, as far as the record goes, than Hume did), and did try his hand at writing in the dialogue form (the unfinished *Search for Truth*). As far as literary form, and actual practice of exchange of views goes, there is no real contrast between those who took reason to be an inborn capacity, complete in each person, and those who took it to be the socially cultivated out-

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20. Indeed the reasoning of Descartes's masterpiece, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, is best understood as a long conversation in which suggestions are made, replies that raise some worries are made to them, revised suggestions are then made, often embodying concessions, new doubts are expressed and answered, and new versions keep being offered of what had earlier been accepted as true. This exemplary piece of reasoning is anything but a deductive exercise in the sense that beginning students in logic engage in such exercises. Descartes's *Second Meditation* list of modes of thought (doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, being willing and unwilling, imagining, and sensing), obviously should be extended to include all the more obviously conversational things he acknowledges doing—putting claims forward, admitting, pretending, deceiving, challenging suspected deceivers, saying, declaring, asking, inquiring, examining, calling an intermission, taking careful note, affirming, denying, refraining, complaining and withdrawing complaints, recognizing rights and refusing such recognition, granting, acknowledging, hearing reports, calling into doubt, heedlessly accepting, accurately defining, making an observation, dismissing as laughable, receiving conflicting reports.

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come of a certain inborn intelligence and capacity for language, so that it was incomplete until actual conversations on reason-able terms were going on. The disagreement between a Cartesian or Lockean individualist notion of reason and a Shaftes- burian-Humean social concept of it may be largely a philosophical disagreement. But those of us holding a social view of reason need not undervalue a disagreement simply because, without a conversation between philosophers, it could go unnoticed.

Locke famously believed that "God has not been so sparing to man to make them barely two-legged Creatures, and left it to Aristotle to make them Rational." He, like Descartes, preferred to see reason as something we needed no other human person, Aristotle nor anyone else, to enable us to possess. But because we are, as Aristotle himself emphasized, ones who associate with others, who speak and who laugh, as well as ones who infer, and because our sense of humor, our speech, and our understanding of reasonable terms for our conversations, do pretty obviously depend on the presence of other people, and on the cultivation of standards of inference, of speech, of con-duct in conversations, of wit, of moral evaluation, of ways of arriving at agreed terms in a variety of our mutual dealings, then we are none of us really self-sufficient in our reason and our rationality, however capable we may be, in maturity, of composing meditational handbooks in our solitude, or in making our own lists of the god-given individual rights that no community should deny us. Such individualist input into the continuing conversation of beings who pride themselves on their possession of reason can be of enormous value. One who rejects Descartes's or Locke's individualist conceptions of reason need not reject their challenge to particular social authorities who claim to be the arbiters of right reason. In agreeing with Hobbes that "no one man's Reason . . . makes the Certaintie" we need not agree with him that we must, therefore,

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"set up for Right Reason, the Reason of some Arbitrator or Judge," some actual social authority.\textsuperscript{22} We must have social standards of relative rightness of reasoning, but no one authority need be acknowledged as licensed to "make the Certaintie." We can live with uncertainty, and indeed one of the striking things about Shaftesbury's defense of his latitudinarian notion of reason is how accepting he is of the inconclusiveness and open-endedness of the "reasonings" he celebrates. Locke rightly associated "positive assertions" with "the magisterial air,"\textsuperscript{23} and Shaftesbury is with his teacher in preferring both the skeptic's suspense of judgment and the skeptic's refusal to defer to would-be masters of doctrine.

A social view of reason does not doom one to undervaluing independent thinking, nor to overvaluing deference to the thought-community in which one grew up. But it does incline one to a proper gratitude to those who taught one all the miscellaneous arts of reasoning, and it does give one pause before demanding (in Hobbes's words), "that things should be deter-mined by no other men's reason but their own . . . bewraying their want of right Reason by the claym they lay to it."\textsuperscript{24} Indeed, one can be grateful even to those who indoctrinated one in the views one later comes to reject. One good stimulus to independent critical thinking is an offensive demand for conformity. Descartes and Locke may have owed more than they acknowledged to those who taught them the styles of thinking that they repudiated. As Descartes made very clear, a crucial move in reasoning, even in its narrowest sense, is negation or denial, and the denier needs some affirmer to supply her with material for her negating moves. Occasional independent thinkers go on to reject the given agendas, not just to oppose what others have proposed, but the normal progression of dissi-

\textsuperscript{22} Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, chap. 5.
\textsuperscript{23} John Locke, \textit{Some Thoughts Concerning Education} (Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1970); sect. 145.
\textsuperscript{24} Kant, in the \textit{Anthropologic}, bk. 1, sec. 53, echoes Hobbes's words when he says that it is typical of the mad to show \textit{Eigensinn} rather than \textit{Gemeinsinn} or \textit{sensus communis}. 

Mary Wollstonecraft's revolutionary \textit{Vindication of the Rights of Women} followed on her earlier \textit{Vindication of the Rights of Men}, itself a contradiction of Edmund Burke's \textit{Reflections on the French Revolution}. She inherited the topic of equal rights, contradicted those who were contradicting the French revolutionaries' declaration, then inferred correctly that true equality must include women. She changed no agendas, and her radical moves were mainly a continuation of her earlier \textit{Advice on the Education of Daughters}, since the education of women, not their political status, is what she wanted reformed, and concentrated on, in her two \textit{Vindication}. To accept the old natural rights conceptual scheme, and a lot of the patriarchal preconceptions about daughters' destinies as child minders, and to wage a campaign to improve the status of women within those constraints, was to adopt a tacit policy that many feminists today still adopt, of letting the terms of the debate be set by the other side. And even when one tries not to do that, tries to set new agendas and forge new concepts, one is bound to be defining at least some of the new issues and new terms by contrasting them with the old. Some intellectual and moral inheritance seems inevitable, even for would-be revolutionaries.

The long exclusion of women from full participation in what Hume called "the feast of reason" was itself a stimulus to some women, such as Wollstonecraft, a stimulus to their reason and their thoughts about their own and their daughters' education. It may even have contributed to the extent of the variety of forms of reasoning that eventually go into the sort of miscellany of reason that Shaftesbury celebrated. Hume believed that including women in conversations would add a certain polish and refinement to them, and one need not accept any gender essentialism to agree with Hume that, if women have been educated and reared differently, and allotted different tasks from men, and then come to be included in what had been all-male conversations, they will then usually have a distinctive contribu-
tion to make. Today, when women in our culture are not so differently educated from men, nor restricted to a few occupations, women's contribution to public reasoning is likely to be less distinctive.\footnote{But some still discern gender-related difference in styles of thinking. A male former student of mine recently reported how, after a long discussion with a male colleague about a philosophical text he had studied with me, a discussion in which he quite properly insisted that the order in which the author made his claims be taken seriously, and the recapitulations examined for shifts in emphasis, his exasperated discussant protested "My God, you are thinking like a girl!" I am very pleased to be able to add that my former student accepted this judgment so thoroughly that, when he later saw the dedication I made of Moral Prejudices to my women students, he let out a hoot of joy, taking himself, he supposes, to be included. So should we say "vive la difference"? That way, we can get more and more honorary women. For if to be a careful reader of philosophical texts is to be an honorary woman, then we certainly need more.} But the inclusion of women (and men) from other and formerly excluded cultures will have the same sort of salutary effect as eighteenth-century women had in the conversations of their time, bringing new perspectives, and new styles of conversational procedure.

The inclusion of British, American, and European women in the conversations of intellectuals and the deliberations of reformers preceded by a long period their full inclusion in political life. Suffrage lagged far behind other kinds of inclusion in the activities of reason. As John Rawls uses the phrase "public reason," only political deliberation, at its various levels, counts as "public" reasoning. "Public" contrasts, for him, not with "private," since "there is no such thing as private reason,"\footnote{John Rawls, Political Liberalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 220, n. 7.} but with various associational or social reasons, which he terms "nonpublic." He writes "there is social reason—the many reasons of associations in society which makes up the background culture; there is also, let us say, domestic reason—the reason of families as small groups in society, and this contrasts both with public and social reason. As citizens, we participate in all these kinds of reason, and have the rights of equal citizens when we do. \footnote{Ibid.} I take it that by the last sentence Rawls is not extending the term "citizen" beyond the political sphere. He is not making the implausible claim that equal rights typify membership in every association from family to hierarchical churches. Rather, I take it, he is saying that, as citizens, as members of a political society, we have an equal right to be members of other associations, within which, however, our rights may be very unequal. Not all of these nonpolitical associations are voluntary ones. Membership in a family, in a school, and often in a church, is initially nonvoluntary. A child finds herself in a family, in a school, and perhaps in a church, and finds that her voice in its reasoning is anything but equal to that of the "head" or heads of family, school, and church. Nor, even when adult, may her recognized right be to a voice that is equally heard. Her participation in domestic, ecclesiastical, and other social reasoning may be far from equal, and not likely to be made more equal by state intervention. So it is not at all clear how one's status as citizen, even as free and equal citizen in a constitutional democracy, affects one's equality as a participant in the reasons, in Rawls's sense, that provide the "background culture" to public (i.e., political) reason. It is unlikely that formal equality of political opportunity, and of basic liberties, will be anything more than formal, if there is gross inequality in most of the back-ground associations within which reasoning goes on, in which young people learn to reason and to deliberate. Political reasoning is not, as an individual capacity, sharply separable from all other sorts of practical reasoning. There is a sense in which reason is a unity, however important it may be, in some contexts, to distinguish its political expression from its other expressions.

Women came to be able to effectively campaign for suffrage, and so for equality of voice in political reason, only because some of them had already achieved some approximation to equality of voice in intellectual and literary circles. Maybe the voice that some had in domestic reason also helped—it gave them the will and assertiveness\footnote{Hume, in his essay "Of Love and Marriage," suggests that the notorious bossiness of wives in the home is due to their exclusion from other places where bossing went on.} that the suffragettes needed. It is a tricky question just what the relation is between political equality of status and equality of status in other associations within which reasoning goes on. Rawls may assume too great a
separability among the various reasons he distinguishes, and assume too readily that political reason, because it is reasoning about the proper use of the state's supposed monopoly of coercive force, dictates the terms for nonpolitical reasons. The state has not taken authoritarianism and coercive force out of homes, schools, churches, and other associations, and probably could not, even if it tried.

Public reason, in Rawls's sense, is limited in what it properly considers and deliberates about. But reason in its other social manifestations is typically not thus limited. Ecclesiastical reasoning has not restricted itself to deliberation about the salvation of souls, but ranged widely over all sorts of fields, metaphysical, moral, and physiological. Aquinas did not take his theological reasoning to have to recognize some topics as off limits, and if Rawls is right in thinking that political reasoning should observe some limits (in part to keep the separation of church and state), then that makes it atypical, not typical, as a form of social reason.

Reason has traditionally been thought of as an alternative to violence, not just because conflicts may sometimes be resolved by discussion, but because even when they are not so resolved, verbal aggression may serve as a less lethal substitute for armed aggression. Freud said that the bringer of civilization was the first person who hurled an insult rather than a spear at another. But only if the verbal exchanges, hostile or peaceable, are seen by all parties as being conducted on reasonable terms, will talk mitigate violence. Condescension of the powerful to the less powerful, or merely token inclusion of formerly excluded groups, can worsen rather than defuse the hostility. One recourse of excluded groups is separatism, setting up their own rival "feast of reason," but this move is against the spirit of reason itself, if this is taken to be what we pride ourselves united us. If miscellaneous versions of reason, from miscellaneous sources, including groups once denied full possession of the privileges of reason, really are to unite us in a way we can all take pride in, then reason will have to take the form of tolerant dialogue. Right reason is patient, attentive, good natured, very miscellaneous and not always very structured reasoning together. It is inclusive rather than exclusive in its tendencies. One thing it can include is backward glances at the attempts of earlier generations of reasoners to become conscious of just what this valued activity is, and how much disagreement about it we can live with. Only if reasoning does include such recollective digressions can this lecture count as reasoning. And that I would like it to count as reasoning itself confirms Locke's, Kant's, and Dugald Stewart's point, that reason is what we pride ourselves in possessing. Even the antirationalist, even the skeptic, wants to be seen as reasoning against some pretensions of reason. In Hume's famous words, reason's "enemy . . . is oblig'd to take shelter under her protection, and by making use of rational arguments to prove the fallaciousness and imbecility of reason, produces, in a manner, a patent under her hand and seal" (T, 186). One advantage of a social conception of reason is that debate about the proper pretensions of reason can be seen as a natural part of reason itself, and one that feeds on diversity of inputs, on miscellaneous mutually correcting conceptions of reason.

29. But of course there are some exclusions. I have explored one of them in appendix I.