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**The Subject of Freedom in Republican Thought: Habit, Virtue  
and Education in the work of John Brown (1715–66)**

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## **The Subject of Freedom in Republican Thought: Habit, Virtue and Education in the work of John Brown (1715–66)**

**Francis Dodsworth**

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the political thought of John Brown, a well known clergyman and author active in mid-eighteenth-century England who is associated with the ‘commonwealth’ or ‘classical republican’ tradition of political thought. This paper explores Brown’s concept of freedom, locating his work in relation to various interpretations of the classical republican tradition and also in relation to Duncan Ivison’s account of the emergence of a ‘self at liberty’ in early modern political thought. Ivison identifies the self at liberty with the genealogy of liberal government, but in this paper I argue that although the two may be genealogically related, Brown’s conception of freedom and its relation to government is quite distinct from the liberal mentality of rule that dominated the nineteenth century. What characterises Brown’s definition of freedom is his emphasis on the importance of establishing the correct manners in the population, particularly in the governing class. These manners were to be determined by the state and should be defined so as to make the desires and interests of the individual consonant with the common good. The principal mechanism used to achieve this was habituation. For Brown, habit was the fulcrum around which the freedom of the subject revolved, being both the means of developing the dispositions and reforming the conduct of the subject. Habit figures as both the site of embedded vice and luxury, which would enervate the body politic, distract the citizen from their public duty or enslave the individual to their passions, but it also figures as the medium through which change takes place, with education and the law mobilised to reform the individual away from their settled patterns of action and into new habitually virtuous modes of conduct.

## **The Subject of Freedom in Republican Thought: Habit, Virtue and Education in the work of John Brown (1715-66)**

The question of what it meant to be ‘free’, to live in a ‘free society’, and the conditions under which that were possible, were fundamental to political and social argument in England’s long eighteenth century, from the collapse of the English republic in 1660 to the Great Reform Act of 1832.<sup>1</sup> It is generally accepted that one of the most important and influential ways of discoursing on freedom in this period was the ‘commonwealth’ or ‘classical republican’ tradition which sought to apply classical principles, refracted through the intellectual lens of the Italian Renaissance, to the political problems of early modern England. This tradition emerged from the writings of the ‘commonwealthmen’ of the late seventeenth century, such as Harrington, Milton and Needham and was developed through the exclusion crisis of the 1680s and the Glorious Revolution in the work of Sidney, Moyle and Trenchard, before being modified by the ‘patriot’ Whigs and ‘country’ Tories of the Walpole era such as Fielding and Bolingbroke and finally being transmitted to the American colonies, figuring prominently in the work of Adams, Jefferson and Madison.<sup>2</sup>

Classical republicanism has been the subject of intense scholarly debate among both historians and political theorists, who have drawn on these early modern discourses as a means of intervention in contemporary politics. Although some see republicanism as the ancestor of liberalism (for example Isaac 1988; Kalyvas and Katznelson 2008; Sullivan 2006), there is a tendency to view republican values as sidelined by liberalism in the nineteenth century. Much analysis of republicanism has therefore focused on the recovery of forgotten values, which are seen as useful for the reinvigoration of a procedural liberalism that focuses on the divisive issue of individual rights, predicated on an unsustainable concept of the atomised individual. Most prominent in this regard have been the identification of classical republicanism with participation in government and communitarianism (Oldfield 1992; Pocock 1975; Sandel 1996) and the definition of republicanism in terms of a particular concept of freedom as independence rather than non-interference (Pettit 1999; Skinner 1998; Maynor 2003).

Duncan Ivison (1993, 1997) takes a rather different approach to the subject and sees in classical republicanism the first emergence of a ‘self at liberty’ in modern political thought. This concept arose through the tension between the concept of ‘natural liberty’ and the idea of autonomy. It was essential for the Whigs and commonwealthmen of the late seventeenth century to claim that people possessed natural liberty (on which see Ward 2004) in order to argue that monarchs were not owed obedience simply due to their natural superiority, but because they carried out the task of governing successfully, fulfilling their part of the contract of government. At the same time, it was necessary to refute the accusation that in denying the natural right of monarchs to absolute authority the only consequence would be a state of anarchy. Therefore authors such as Locke and Sidney formulated a definition of liberty that encompassed both contract and authority, in which freedom was a condition of autonomy, produced through the act of government.

Drawing on recent literature on ‘governmentality’, which defines liberalism as an approach to government rather than a political philosophy (Dean 1999; Joyce 2003; Rose 1999), Ivison pinpoints this discourse as the moment at which the autonomous self at liberty emerged, distinguishing modern political thought from its humanist predecessors. Ivison (1993, 1997: 79–133) demonstrates that Locke and Harrington might both in different ways be said to be ancestors of the liberal tradition with their focus on contract, consent, property and the rule of law, but they were also concerned with detailing interventionist modes of government concerned with social ordering and the government of virtue, which were perceived to be necessary to civil liberty.

Such interventionist modes of government, the aim of which is to shape the body politic according to an idealised vision of the social order and the common good, are commonly termed ‘police’ and are generally defined in contrast to liberalism. The task of the governor here was not to promote autonomy but to establish the proper disposition of men and things so as to foster the appropriate modes of circulation between them, increasing national wealth and population while habituating people into virtue and maintaining the social hierarchy (Iverson 1993; Knemeyer 1980; Pasquino 1991). However, because Locke’s thought (and that of Harrington) contains powerful ‘dispositional’ elements comparable to systems of ‘police’, and because Locke was one of the ‘pre-eminent theorists of juridical liberalism’, Iverson (1993: 27, 44–5, 46) argues that the liberal rationality of government contains elements of police in its ‘early modern precursors’. He therefore terms this rationality of government ‘early modern proto-liberalism’ (Iverson 1997: 80).

In many senses this is supported by recent work on liberalism, both from the perspective of ‘governmentality’ and in more traditional historical studies. For example Rose (1999: 15–97) and Joyce (2003) detail the ways in which liberal government concerned itself with shaping autonomous citizens capable of acting freely so as to produce the conditions under which economic government were possible. David Burchell (1995) has also drawn out the ways in which early modern conceptions of citizenship remained active agents in shaping the liberal subject. Likewise, other authors have emphasised the degree of continuity between the Whig and republican intellectual traditions and their liberal successor, both in terms of political argument and in terms of their concept of government.<sup>3</sup>

My aim in this paper is not to deny these obvious continuities, rather it is to interrogate more closely the concept of a self at liberty at one point in its trajectory through English political thought in the period between the seventeenth century, where Iverson identifies its emergence, and its manifestation in Victorian liberalism. The focus of my study is the work of John Brown, a clergyman and writer who rose to a position of considerable prominence in the middle of the eighteenth century. Brown is an ideal subject of study not only because he is seen by Canovan (1978), Miller (1993: 105–17) and Pocock (1975: 484–5) as emblematic of the classical republican tradition in the modified form it took after the fall of Walpole, but also because he engages so directly and at length with the question of how to shape the free subject and thus perpetuate the free state.<sup>4</sup>

John Brown’s literary output was considerable, ranging from moral tracts to poetry, plays and essays. His life and career is detailed at length in Roberts (1996) and need not detain us here, except to sketch out its principal contours and point out the circumstances in which his main works were written. Brown is not a sympathetic figure. Despite his attempts, detailed below, to encourage civic virtue in the nation, he was not a frequent visitor to his parish in Morland during his time as their vicar; in general he seems to have been more concerned with developing his career as a literary figure than with the salvation of his flock. If this apparent hypocrisy gives us pause for thought in the face of his moralising texts, then further questions are raised by their content in relation to his own actions. Despite his moral hectoring, he was renowned by Horace Walpole and others for his addiction to cursing and swearing and also for his frequent visits to the opera (Roberts 1996: particularly 44–5). There is, then, good reason to view Brown’s work as populist and opportunistic rather than deeply principled. Nonetheless, little that Brown said was unique and his work was popular, clearly playing to well established fears in a language that he felt likely to mobilise opinion. On that level it is exemplary as a source for prevalent sentiment.

In my analysis of Brown’s thought I draw principally on his moral and political argument in two sermons, published after his experiences at the siege of Carlisle by the Jacobites in 1745; on his *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, the text that made his name (ever after being referred to as ‘Estimate’ Brown) which was published following the loss of Minorca in 1757 at the outset of the Seven Years War; finally, his *Thoughts on Civil Liberty*

emerged in 1765 as the development of a series of sermons published in part as a response to Rousseau's *Emile*, but also as a refutation of Mandeville. The aim of the *Thoughts* was to encourage the establishment of a national system of education based on the principles of Sparta; this is the work in which his argument for shaping a self at liberty is at its most radical.

Brown's basic purpose in much of his writing on freedom was to legitimise the government of morals and manners in the name of national liberty. In making this argument he was drawing on a long tradition of moral discourse of this kind which was common in political sermons, discourses delivered in court, and in moral tracts. However, the focus in most of these texts was on using the law to direct public morals. Brown's argument was that this was necessary but insufficient as a mechanism of government and that it was also necessary to shape the manners and opinions of British subjects: 'Salutary Principles and Manners will of themselves secure the Duration of a State, with very ill-modelled Laws: Whereas the best Laws can never sustain the Duration of a State, where Manners and Principles are Corrupted' (Brown 1757–8: vol. ii, 20). He was by no means alone in making this argument, but he did develop it to its fullest extent, which makes him an ideal source for the study of this concept.

For Brown, in addition to the law, education was fundamental to shaping the citizen. The purpose of these tools was to habituate the subject into the virtuous manners necessary to maintain their liberty. For Brown, habit was the fulcrum around which the freedom of the subject revolved, being both the means of developing the dispositions and reforming the conduct of the subject. Habit figures as both the site of embedded vice and luxury, which would enervate the body politic, distract the citizen from their public duty or enslave the individual to their passions, but it also figures as the medium through which change takes place, with education and the law mobilised to reform the individual away from their settled patterns of action and into new habitually virtuous modes of conduct.

James Tully (1988) identifies habituation as a fundamental mechanism in what he calls the 'juridical' mode of government, which he sees emerging in the early modern period. For Tully, a new emphasis on voluntaristic and probabilistic forms of knowledge and the erosion of the idea of innate mental principles in the work of Locke and others is associated with a new approach to governing that focused on breaking down established forms of thought and behaviour and habituating the subject into new ones in their place. Habit replaced the conscience and the concept of innate morality as the chief determinants for human action. As Brown put it: 'Habit is allowed to be a second Nature; and on Examination it will probably appear, that what we call Nature is but the first Habit. Every moral Habit seems to arise from a View of Happiness, and every View of Happiness is a Principle of Action.' (Brown 1746?: 34).<sup>5</sup> The character, then, was formed through the accumulation of habits and it was therefore necessary that the governor habituate their subjects and dependants into the correct manners and principles.

Tully's work focuses on Locke and the emergence of this rationality of government in the late seventeenth century, however we can see it at work in Hume and Montesquieu, a great influence on Brown, and it resonates throughout the century. Indeed, as Hindess (2009) and Bennett (2009) have shown in companion studies to this piece, the subject of habit played a prominent role in the conceptualisation of government from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries and retains a significant role in our understanding of the interface between the individual and the social. Nonetheless, despite this considerable stability in the concept of a self at liberty, and in the use of habit as a mechanism for structuring such an autonomous, independent self, this is not a straightforward story of continuity. Although there is a clear genealogical relationship between the republican tradition of which Brown forms a part and liberalism, and it is evident that the idea of a self at liberty is fundamental to both, there are also considerable points of distinction between Brown's concept of government and his liberal successors. As will become apparent below, Brown's work has a strong emphasis on

shaping character according to established principles, religious and social as well as political, and therefore has a significantly different inflection from attempts to shape character in Victorian England and is difficult to reconcile with the principles of nineteenth-century liberal government. This is not to say that the self at liberty is not an important unifying concept for the genealogy of government, but it is also important to remember that within this broad continuity there can be many different kinds of self, formed in different ways and engaged in the practice of different kinds of freedom and we need to pay close attention to these distinct forms of free subjectivity.

## I

Of course, much has already been written about the forms of subjectivity favoured by the republican tradition and the relationship between persona, politics and political liberty defined in this literature. It is therefore worth reviewing the arguments made about this subject in order to situate the question of the self at liberty in relation to existing historiographical debate and to demonstrate the ways in which Brown's work might contribute to our understanding of these issues.

For Quentin Skinner (1998, 2002, 2008), the definition of liberty provided in republican thought was fundamentally Roman in derivation. The figures of Cicero, Livy and the other Roman moralists and historians are the basis what he terms the 'neo-Roman' republican tradition in which liberty is defined as a condition of freedom from dependence and is contrasted to slavery. To be free it was necessary to live in a free state, a condition characterised by the rule of law not men, laws to which the citizens had given their consent. To be unfree was not to be subject to interference, but to be subject to arbitrary power, regardless of whether the potential for arbitrary interference was ever exercised. Unlike earlier accounts, such as that of Pocock discussed below, freedom is not centrally related to virtue or defined in terms of attributes of character; however, the idea of freedom from dependence assumes that being subject to a master necessarily puts psychological limits on one's actions, so the constitutional condition of being subject to the rule of law not men has consequences for the kind of subjectivity established (see particularly Skinner 2008). Equally, in his work on Machiavelli (Skinner 2002: 160–212) the use of the law to shape public virtue figures prominently as a mechanism for securing liberty. Likewise, as Miller (1993: 21–87) demonstrates, the introduction of Cicero as a model for the governor signifies the importance of rhetoric, law and the full range of a humanist education for the governor.

If we look at Brown's definition of liberty, we find that it broadly conforms to these principles. Brown states at the very outset of the *Thoughts on Civil Liberty* (Brown 1765: 1) that his concern is the survival of the 'free state' and it is clear that he subscribes to the understanding that to be free it was necessary to live in such as state, something Skinner sees as characteristic of the republican definition of liberty. Brown also defines liberty in opposition to slavery and tyranny, a figure which recurs frequently in his sermons on liberty alongside the threat of divine right and arbitrary power (Brown 1746?: 6, 9–10, 42, 45, 46, 48). But this does not exhaust Brown's definition of liberty, which is defined as a condition of restraint appropriate to human society, the chief threats to which were licentiousness and slavery to the passions and vices. Arbitrary power and tyranny were the ultimate consequence of these conditions, but the principal danger was no longer configured as parliamentary corruption or a standing army, but moral decline and atheism. Brown spoke, then, of civil liberty as a moral and social condition which depended just as much upon virtue as on the rule of law. As Brown put it, the history of all ages showed that 'Piety and Virtue *only* can make us *free* – that Infidelity and Licentiousness will certainly Enslave us' (Brown 1746?: 48).

Brown's discussion of freedom was explicitly about civil liberty, a condition of social life under the rule of law which stood in marked contrast to the 'natural liberty' of the state of

nature. As Brown put it: ‘The *natural Liberty* of Man, considered merely as a solitary and savage Individual, would generally lead him to a full and unbounded Prosecution of all his Appetites’, that is to say that natural liberty was complete freedom of action for the individual as far as they were physically capable of acting, to gratify their passions and desires (Brown 1765: 4). Freedom for man in society, however, was almost the polar opposite of this concept of natural liberty because ‘an *unlimited Indulgence* of Appetite, which in the *savage State* is called *natural Liberty*, in the *social State* is stiled *Licentiousness*’ (Brown 1765: 7). Brown, then, argued the conventional position that freedom was not ‘that Licentiousness which is the Off-spring of Vice, but that true Greatness of Mind which is the Parent of every Virtue’ (Brown 1746?: 15). Licentiousness is understood here as ‘no other than “Every Desire carry’d into Action, which in any Respect violates those equal Laws, established for the common Benefit of the Whole”, and ‘*Licentiousness*, when its immediate Object is That of “thwarting the Ends of civil Liberty,” is distinguished by the Name of *Faction*’ (Brown 1765: 7). Elsewhere licentiousness is defined as ‘private Will, opposing the Public’ (Brown 1765: 31). What constituted liberty in the natural state was the contrary in the social state because it directed man’s attention away from the common good.

The ‘brutal state of nature’ was therefore not one of freedom but of licentiousness and faction. In fact, few men lived in such a condition as it was part of man’s nature to be sociable and form political units: ‘Man is therefore formed for *Society*: That is, man is formed for Intercourse with Man: Hence, through the natural Development of human Powers, a Variety of new *Wants*, a Necessity for mutual *Aids* and distinct *Properties*, must arise: From these, a new *Accession*, as well as a frequent *Disagreement* and *Clashing of Desires*, must inevitably ensue. Hence the Necessity of *curbing* and *fixing* the *Desires* of Man in the Social state; by such *equal Laws*, as may compel the *Appetites* of each *Individual* to yield the *common Good of all*’ (Brown 1765: 5–6). So for Brown it was necessary to act upon men so that their desires and appetites were fulfilled in ways conducive to the common good, in direct opposition to Mandeville’s assumption that personally-defined and -orientated desires would ultimately entail public benefit.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, for Brown it was this act of government that actually produced freedom in society: ‘From this salutary *Restraint*, *civil Liberty* is derived’ (Brown 1765: 6). When asking what the foundations of civil liberty are, we are therefore asking ‘in other Words, “What are the effectual Means by which every Member of Society may be uniformly sway’d, impelled, or induced, to sacrifice his private Desires or Appetites, to the Welfare of the Public”?’ (Brown 1765: 8).

Here, Brown is arguing that government should be formed so as to structure a ‘patriotic’ subjectivity.<sup>7</sup> Civil liberty depended upon defining the mechanisms of government to ensure that the desires of the subject were structured so as to be fulfilled most effectively by service to the common good: ‘*This* will give Stability to civil Liberty, if the social Passions of Individuals can be so far extended, as to include the Welfare of the *whole Community*, as their *chief* and *primary* Object. This Affection is distinguished by the Name of *public Spirit*, or the *Love* of our *Country*; the highest Passion that can sway the human Heart, considered as a permanent Foundation of true Liberty.’ (Brown 1765: 24). I would argue that it is in this dimension, the constitution of liberty as a civil condition dependent upon mechanisms of character-formation, that the self at liberty is made manifest.

It is clear, then, that Brown (1765: 17–20) saw licentiousness, the pursuit of self interest, as the greatest threat to the free state and liable to destroy public liberty; equally, subduing the selfish passions and desires was the only secure foundation for freedom. Brown felt this was recognised by Britain’s enemies, hence the desire of the papacy and the French to see Catholicism, supposedly characterised by superstition and licentiousness, reintroduced to England: ‘They know how natural the Transition is from Licentiousness to Slavery; they know that the outward Form of a Constitution cannot long subsist, when its Vitals are Corrupted; and they know that the Vitals of every State are the *Principles* and *Morals* of a People’ (Brown 1746?: 43, 46). These morals and principles would hold the vicious passions

in check. Indeed, Brown went so far as to define the freedom of the state in terms of the existence of these manners: ‘while virtuous Manners and Principles clearly predominate in their Effects, a State may still be justly called *free*’ (Brown 1765: 31).

For Brown, it followed that careful attention must therefore be placed on the cultivation of the first principles which defined the character because ‘No free People were ever *long* atheistical and corrupt, because no corrupt and atheistical People could ever *long* continue free. Irreligion and bad Morals are a Distemper of such Malignity to a State, that unless they are timely expelled, they at once effect *its* Ruin and *their own*. They dissolve all those natural Principles on which Societies are built – Sincerity, Temperance, Justice: They introduce abandoned Luxury and deadly Corruption ... These cruel Destroyers level all the Barriers of Freedom, private Benevolence and publick Spirit; and deliver up an abandoned devoted People an easy Prey to the Inroads of Ambition and Tyranny’ (Brown 1746?: 41–2).

Brown therefore called for a system of education which would ensure the virtue of the governing class. By invoking the example of Sparta he was suggesting that the education of youth was a subject that should be taken out of the hands of the private individual and instead be conducted according to principles laid down by the state. The logic of this was that ‘The natural Appetites, Passions, and Desires of Man, are the universal Foundation of his Actions: Without the Impulse which he receives from *those*, he would be at once unfeeling and inactive. Consequently, according to the State and Character of his Desires, his Actions will *naturally* be good or evil; innocent, useful, or destructive’ (Brown 1765: 17). He continued that ‘Whatever Means, therefore, are most effectual in curbing and *subduing* the selfish *Desires* of Man, are the most effectual Means of *regulating* his *Actions*, and establishing civil Liberty on its most permanent Foundations’ (Brown 1765: 18). It was necessary to establish certain principles and dispositions in the gentry, the ‘internal’ power for self-command that defined the capacity for public action. The precise definition and prescription of character through education was necessary to generate the public virtue that was the foundation of the free state.

## II

The term ‘virtue’ and its relation to republican freedom has already been subject to considerable debate in the history of political thought. For J. G. A. Pocock (1975, 1985) ‘virtue’ implied devotion to the public good, which he defined as the essential element of the republican mode of discourse. Pocock’s definition of the republican tradition is characterised by the Aristotelian assumption that the only truly free man is one who participates in the practice of ruling and being ruled. Liberty depends on engagement in public (political) life and is threatened by ‘corruption’ and luxury. Particular concerns were the development of commercial society, systems of public credit, the manipulation of parliament through placemen and a standing army. All of these had the potential to erode the virtue of the free citizen by offering him (and the citizen was necessarily male) inducements to draw away from active engagement in politics and to trust its conduct to others in order to concentrate on the accumulation of commercial wealth or enjoyment of the luxuries provided by it.<sup>8</sup> It was the possession of landed wealth that enabled the members of the governing class to remain independent and free from the corrupting influence of commercial society by insulating them from the threat of bribery, the demands of work or the likelihood of conflicts of commercial interest.

Pocock (1985: 37–50, 103–23) argued that over the course of the eighteenth century the concept of virtue was displaced by the idea of ‘manners’ and agrarian martial values were sidelined by the rise of ‘politeness’. Shelley Burt (1992), however, contends that the idea of public virtue did not decline simply due to abstract factors like the emergence of commercial society; rather, it was transformed through re-descriptions of ancient virtue for the modern



age of commerce. This re-description of virtue often involved a secular justification for the government of morality. In fact, she contends, this attempt largely back-fired and these re-descriptions and the activities associated with them in several cases weakened public support for this programme. The consequence of this was not, however, the death of civic virtue as a concept as Pocock argued, but the translation of virtue from the public to the private domain: rather than public virtue depending upon the independence provided by landed property, it was argued that national wellbeing depended upon the moral virtues of prudence and temperateness, which enabled even those without landed wealth to avoid luxury and live within their means and thereby not become dependent on others and open to corruption by them (Burt 1992, particularly 39–63, 110–27).<sup>9</sup> For Burt (1992: 23–4, 27) the argument that liberty depended upon civic virtue had declined by the 1740s and did not feature prominently in political argument.

However, the subject of virtue, public and private, is obviously central to Brown's work from the third quarter of the century, figuring particularly strongly in the *Estimate*, but also in various forms in almost all his published output. The virtue that the *Estimate* is fundamentally concerned with is essentially martial and masculine, Brown ascribing the loss of Minorca to this feature of life in modern, commercial society. In line with Pocock's argument, Brown bases the survival of national liberty on virtue, defined in terms of military valour and devotion to the public good, which were threatened by luxury, effeminacy and private interest.

In Brown's work virtue had elements which were both public and private, the two being necessarily intertwined. Public virtue depended upon personal morality and self-command, cultivated through the mechanism of habit. Brown defines virtue as follows: '*VIRTUOUS Manners* I call such acquired Habits of Thought and correspondent Action, as lead to a steady Prosecution of the general Welfare'; '*VIRTUAL Principles* I call such as tend to confirm these Habits, by superinducing the Idea of *Duty*' (Brown 1765: 22). The virtuous manners Brown supported were central to freedom because they led the passions and desires towards conformity with the law, fixing the desires on fulfilment in ways conducive to the public good. Brown argued that the 'spirit of national union' or a concern for the public good was naturally weak in free countries 'unless supported by the generous Principles of Religion, Honour, or public Spirit' and 'if the great Principles of Religion, Honour, and public Spirit are weak or lost among us, what effectual Check can there be upon the Great, to controul their unbounded or unwarranted Pursuit of lucrative Employments, for the Gratification of these unmanly Passions?' ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 102–3, 118).

The principles of honour and religion, which provided the capacity for self-government in the masculine, rational mind, were the basis of virtue, but these were being undermined by the condition of manners at the time, which he considered, 'will probably appear to be that of a "*vain, luxurious, and selfish EFFEMINACY*"' ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 29). The rise of effeminacy, of course, constituted a decline in courage and masculine self-command, implying an inability to master the self, a submission to the indulgence of the passions. Luxury and vanity led on to an 'unmanly Delicacy' ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 37). This also affected martial valour on the battlefield. Although Brown accepted that, as regards the lower ranks, there were no better fighting men than the British, the national spirit of defence was 'compounded of the national bodily *Strength, Hardiness, Courage, and Principle*', and for the commanders 'the present false Delicacy of the fashionable World effectually disqualifies them from *enduring Toil, or facing Danger*' ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 88, 90). This is contrasted to 'the *Ambition* of an old *Roman*', which was not to satisfy his concern for fine dress, but 'to excel in *military Virtue*' ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 95). These military values 'must either be natural, or they must be infused by an early and continued Discipline' ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 97). Once again, habit appears as the means of embedding the required virtues in the self.

For Brown the most damaging source of the luxury that was undermining masculine virtue was the system of commerce that had advanced to a new stage. Commerce constitutes ‘Superfluity and vast Wealth; begets Avarice, gross Luxury, or effeminate Refinement among the higher Ranks, with a general Loss of Principle’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 153). This new stage of society was commonly considered to produce the greatest challenge to the mixed state and seemed to undermine the principles of antique virtue as ‘exorbitant Trade and Wealth tend naturally to turn all the Attention of Individuals on *selfish* Gratification ... Therefore they must of course generally tend to destroy the Principles of public Spirit’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 174). Further, ‘Avarice naturally tends to the destruction of active religious Principles; because this is chiefly a Matter of *habitual Impression*’ and the pursuit of commerce left little time for religious practice ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 163). The principles of frugality and generosity were destroyed by the love of wealth: passion for money ‘founded, not in Sense, but Imagination, admits of no Satiety, like those which are called the natural Passions’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 155). Love of novelty and fashion were seen to be characteristics of the feminine mind and

Nothing is so natural to effeminate Minds as *Vanity*. This rouses the luxurious and debilitated Soul; and the Arts of pleasurable Enjoyment are now pushed to their highest Degree, by the Spirit of delicate Emulation’, which contrasted poorly with the independent, masculine spirit that was above the vagaries of fashion or opinion ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 158).<sup>10</sup>

Commerce, then, had introduced a new and powerful passion to supplement the ‘natural’ versions, and which must be controlled by masculine self-command.

For Pocock (1975: 423–505; 1985: 37–71, 103–23), the problem with commerce and credit from the republican perspective was their impact on propertied independence through a tendency to specialisation and diversion from public engagement on the one hand and conflicts of public and private interest on the other.<sup>11</sup> This may well be accurate but in Brown’s work the emphasis is much more on the damaging effect of commerce upon subjectivity and the psychology of freedom. Equally, what has not been frequently emphasised is the way that advocates of public virtue accommodated commerce within their schemes. The issue was not simply framed in terms of the abandonment of commerce for some kind of simple, agricultural lifestyle, for this was clearly both impossible and undesirable. The imperial and commercial aspects of the modern state were recognised to be interlinked: financial and commercial expansion were closely related to the extension of the military capacity and international interests of the nation by providing revenue, through taxation, that funded the army and the navy.<sup>12</sup> As Brown (1765: 1) put it: ‘There are two Causes, essentially distinct, though often interwoven, by which a free State may perish. These are, *external* and *internal* Violence: *Invasions* from Abroad, or *Dissentions* at Home: The Rage of foreign War, or domestic *Faction*’. These elements were interwoven because the capacity to resist foreign domination depended upon internal vigour and solidarity. His concern in these treatises was particularly with ‘domestic faction’, a term which he used to describe a variety of different features and which could contribute to the likelihood of successful invasion.

If commerce were curtailed, the state would become militarily weaker in relation to its competitors, who were unlikely to take the same path, and the nation would be conquered by a rival. Conquest or domination by another state would, of course, constitute an end to the condition of liberty as surely as internal conquest by a tyrant. Brown articulates the problem of the mid-eighteenth-century proponent of civic virtue very clearly: ‘we are fallen into a kind of Dilemma: if our Commerce be maintained or increased, its Effects bid fair to destroy us: If Commerce be discouraged and lessened, the growing Power of our Enemy threatens the same Consequence’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 217). The solution was to continue commercial growth, but to legislate to control its effects, for which he proposed ‘palliative remedies’,

‘those of the coercive Kind: which work by opposed Passions, or by destroying the Opportunities or Occasions of Evil’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 219). If the problem lay in the people, then solution was simple, upon which Brown gave the example of ‘the salutary Effects of a new Kind of Police, established by a useful Magistrate in the City of *London*’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 219).<sup>13</sup> However, when the problem affected the great, the problem was more difficult, because those that should administer the remedy were themselves the afflicted. They therefore had to await a crisis to unify them under the virtuous leadership of a great minister ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 221). In fact, by the 1760s Brown had lost hope with this and sought to establish a national system of education which would instil virtue in the governing classes.

Far from the concept of virtue being displaced by manners (in the sense of politeness), manners (in the sense of dispositions and character attributes) have taken the place of landed wealth in this schema. Nor has private virtue superseded public virtue as Burt suggests. Instead, public virtue depends upon private virtue, itself defined in terms of manners, of classical and Christian derivation. Brown characteristically relates the state of manners directly to the ‘*Duration of the public State*: So that the leading Question will be, “How far the present ruling Manners and Principles of this Nation may tend to its Continuance or Destruction”’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 24). These manners and principles together formed the ‘spirit of liberty’, which Brown considered so essential that

Wherever the Spirit of Liberty subsists in its full Vigour, the Vigilance and Power of impotent Governors are vain: A Nation can neither be surprised nor compelled into Slavery: When this is extinguished, neither the Virtue nor Vigilance of Patriots can save it

([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 18–9).<sup>14</sup>

The chief danger to the spirit of liberty ‘must arise from such Causes, as may poison the Root; or attack, and destroy the natural Spirit itself: These must be such Causes, as can steal upon, and subdue the *Mind*’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 20). The principles of religion, honour and public spirit were lacking and being replaced with the selfish passions ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 53). Brown therefore waged a personal war against luxury, effeminacy and the manners that threatened Britain with decline:

we all wish to continue free; tho’ we have not the Virtue to secure our Freedom. The Spirit of Liberty is now struggling with the *Manners* and *Principles*, as formerly it struggled with the *Tyrants* of the Time. But the danger is now greater, because the Enemy is *within*; working secretly and securely, and destroying all those *internal Powers*, from which alone an effectual Opposition can arise

([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 18).

Polished manners, then, had not replaced active public virtue, they were its antithesis. Brown’s aim was to replace effeminate manners with the promotion of martial virtue and public spirit. The terms consistent with this manly virtue were liberty, humanity and equity and were opposed to servility, which generated cruelty and oppression ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 28).

It is clear that this martial moralising was very specifically targeted. Recently Eric Nelson (2004) has drawn attention to the Platonic element in much republican thought and the ways in which the maintenance of the commonwealth depended upon the rule of the best men.<sup>15</sup> Again we can find support for this argument in Brown. It is clear that Brown is concerned with the virtue and manners of the governing class, not the common people as

the Manners and Principles of those who *lead*, not of those who *are led*; of those who *govern*, not of those who *are governed*; of those, in short, who *make* Laws or *execute* them, will ever determine the Strength or Weakness, and therefore the Continuance or Dissolution, of a State

([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 25).

In fact, if the people were corrupt, he argues, they might affect the constitution, however they were not in the state of ‘*abandoned Wickedness or Profligacy*’ of the ruling class ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 26).<sup>16</sup> Brown was particularly concerned that the decline occasioned by this disregard for proper training of the mind in noble pursuits would be brought about not merely because of the inability of the governor to govern, but because it would limit the rise of suitable candidates for the army, navy and clergy, the key guardians of liberty and virtue ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 79, 82).

By defining ‘patrician’ society as already corrupted by luxury, not simply bordering on incapacity to secure the liberty of the state itself, but requiring the extension of (virtuous) state activity to reform them (or at least their offspring), Brown was following a line of argument identified by Burt (1992: 110–27, particularly 119–20) with the ‘court’ faction in politics, particularly in the work of William Arnall and James Pitt. This mode of argument is generally defined in opposition to the ‘country’ concern for public virtue which Brown is thought to embody; however, it is clear that in Brown the two are complementary.<sup>17</sup>

But how was this virtue to be inculcated in the leaders of society? Brown argued that education was the way to encourage virtue in society as ‘the first Habits of Infancy and Youth commonly determine the Character of the Man’ and as such he proposed a to reduce luxurious, effeminate education, railing, amongst other things, against the unwholesome warmth of the nursery, mistaken tenderness and care in the upbringing of youth, lack of university education, travel, warm carpets and London ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 29–30, 36). Gaming, the great vice of the aristocracy, epitomised this as it was ‘established on the two great Pillars of *Self Interest* and *Pleasure*’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 40). Likewise, the rise of the novel meant that people no longer read to generate thought, but indulged themselves in diversions ‘as a preparatory *Whet* of *Indolence*, to the approaching Pleasures of the Day’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 42). Reading had turned away from the investigation of the principles of legislation, the history and nature of the constitution, the truths of liberty, the maxims of upright policy and the truths of philosophy, towards a concern for the best way to secure a borough, interest in novels, party pamphlets, irreligion, entertainment, dress and gambling, all of which established ignorance and directed the mind to private gratification and luxury rather than the public good ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 74). Likewise, ‘The great Works of *Antiquity*, the Monuments of ancient Honour and Wisdom, are seldom *opened*’ ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 86).

In the *Estimate* Brown had been content to warn and to moralise and to hope for the shining moral example of a great leader. However, by the time of the *Thoughts on Civil Liberty* he went on to argue that these educational principles should form a compulsory system of education for all members of the governing classes, disseminating the principles of virtue throughout society and habituating the patrician classes in their practice. The education of the young should not be carried out according to the whims of their parents, but should be determined according to particular principles laid down by the state, the purpose of which was to shape the young mind into virtuous form through the mechanism of habit. This involved structuring their character not simply by ensuring they could control their passions and were not tempted away from martial valour and public duty by satisfaction or indulgence of their private desires, it entailed the cultivation of a personality whose desires were fulfilled in service and the common good. Brown put it thus:

HERE, then, lie the first Foundations of civil Liberty: In forming the Habits of the youthful Heart, to a *Coincidence* with the *general Welfare*: In checking every rising Appetite that is contrary to This, and in forwarding every Passion that may promote the Happiness of the Community: In implanting and improving Benevolence, Self-Controul, Humility, Integrity and Truth; in preventing or suppressing the contrary Habits of Selfishness, Intemperance, Pride, Dishonesty, and Falsehood: In teaching the young Mind to *delight*, as far as is possible, in every Virtue for its own Sake: In a Word, in so forming the Pleasures and Displeasures of the opening Heart, that they may coalesce and harmonize with the Laws of public Freedom

(Brown 1765: 23–4)

### III

What, then, are we to make of these diverse definitions of the republican tradition and how do they help us understand Brown's argument? Conversely, what does analysis of Brown lead us to conclude about these different interpretations? Brown's work seems to contain elements of all these definitions of republicanism and yet to be exhausted by none of them. I find myself in agreement with Scott (2004) that it is difficult to reduce the republican position to one dominated by particular Greek or Roman models of political philosophy. Scott (2004: 5–10 and throughout) argues that attempts to define the commonwealth tradition in terms of the influence of one or two particular classical authors on patterns of discourse or adherence to specific meanings of terms such as 'liberty' or 'virtue' are misguided because the commonwealth writers drew on a variety of classical authors and inter-mixed these freely with different elements of the Christian and natural law traditions. In doing so, different authors chose to stress specific elements of these traditions and thereby configured 'virtue', 'liberty' and other elements of the republican tradition in distinct ways.

This is certainly true of Brown, whose work contains both Greek and Roman elements, not just in the sense that he cites Tacitus ([Brown 1757–8: vol. i, 28n\*), Plato and Cicero (Brown 1746?: 13n\*), but in his definition of liberty and avocation of public virtue and his clear overall aim to apply the principles of classical politics to the modern age of commerce.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, however, he also draws on a range of biblical sources (for example Brown 1746?: 10n\*, 26 and n†, 37 and n†) and modern authorities and clearly sees the state of modern, Christian liberty, underpinned by classical principles, as superior to anything achieved in antiquity (Brown 1746?:18–20).<sup>19</sup> There is nothing necessarily contradictory about any of this. Brown's work demonstrates that it was perfectly possible to articulate a position in which a neo-Roman understanding of freedom was articulated in relation to Greek conceptions of civic virtue and public education of the governing class, the content of which would be infused with Christian morality as much as classical public spirit. Indeed, what is striking about Brown's work is not that these diverse classical and Christian elements are all contained in the same arguments, but that they are necessarily and logically entwined in a way which makes assigning one precedence over the other almost impossible.

Scott (2004) develops this theme to argue that although it is difficult to ascribe any unity to the commonwealth tradition as a mode of political discourse, it is possible to identify a common political agenda: the reformation of manners and formation of a godly commonwealth. This argument is important because like Ivison's work it encourages us to see republicanism not just as a mode of political argument, concerned with disputing who should hold and wield power and the framework in which that should take place, but as a way of thinking about government concerned with how that power should be exercised and to what end. It might be argued that although Scott's argument applies to the seventeenth century, the attempt to establish a godly commonwealth surely floundered after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660? But as the work of Bahlman (1957), Burt (1992: 39–63) and Claydon

(1996) demonstrates, this project continued into the era following the Glorious Revolution, although the godly commonwealth may now have taken the form of a monarchical republic, or perhaps more accurately a commonwealth in the form of a mixed government with a limited monarchy (Nelson 2004: 140–3), a definition common in the literature of the period.

It is certainly clear that the dissemination of Christian principles lay at the heart of Brown's vision of the free state:

As the political Principles here laid down and inforced, will be found strictly connected with Religion and Morals; no Apology will be made for endeavouring to establish the public Happiness of Mankind on the solid Basis of *Virtue*, which is the *End of Religion itself*

(Brown 1765: 2–3).

Irreligion, in contrast, was closely associated with licentiousness and vice, because men needed to believe in the existence of a higher power in order to really feel the necessity of regulating their passions (Brown 1746?: 29). 'Religion, where-ever *sincerely* and *habitually* embraced, is the natural Parent of Integrity and Virtue: Whereas Atheism, at best, leaves a Man to the Impulse of Appetite and Passion' (Brown 1746?: 35).

Fear of the law was some incentive to virtue, but Brown argued that much would necessarily escape the sight of the law. Some exceptional individuals might be able to control themselves for the benefit of their reputation, or for their own satisfaction, but 'with regard to the Generality of Mankind, where the refined Passions are weak, and the selfish Appetites headstrong, *there* Irreligion must be attended with the most fatal Consequences: It must leave them to the Suggestions of their own Lusts' (Brown 1746?: 30). Indeed, the law was generally too remote to act as a barrier on action:

The Sanctions of future Rewards and Punishments, from which it derives its Force, must be very strongly impress'd on the human Mind, ere they can work their full Effects, because they are *distant* and *unseen*. The Senses and their attendant Passions are continually urging their Demands, so that nothing but a Habit of Reflexion thoroughly fixed, can possibly resist their Sollicitations [sic]

(Brown 1746?: 32–3)

So, the manners and virtues which made up the spirit of liberty would be secured by habituating people in religious principles through public education: 'where a *Habit* is gained of connecting this great Truth with every Thought, Word, and Action, – there it may be justly affirmed, that Piety and Virtue *cannot but* prevail' (Brown 1746?: 33). There was a direct connection between religious belief and the manners and principles that affected the state because just as 'Vice, evil Passions, and Cruelty, are the vile Materials of which the superstitious Man compounds his [concept of] God, so his Opinions and his Actions which regard either himself or Mankind, must be suitable to this absurd System of Belief' (Brown 1746?: 7). But it was not only irreligion or atheism that led to licentiousness: 'Superstition is no less connected with Licentiousness of Manners: Not only as it tends to produce Irreligion, but from its proper and immediate Operations. It generally inverts all the Dictates of Morality' (Brown 1746?: 39). 'Superstition' here signified Roman Catholicism and it was Brown's argument that there was an intimate link not only between freedom and religion, but between freedom and the 'rational' religion of the established Church of England, in contrast to the 'enthusiasm' of Catholics and Protestant dissenters: 'Enthusiastic Religion leads to *Conquest*; rational Religion leads to national *Defence*; but the modern Spirit of *Irreligion* leads to *rascally* and abandoned *Cowardice*' ([Brown] 1757–8: vol. i, 90).<sup>20</sup>

In his response to the Jacobite crisis of 1745, Brown went to great lengths to establish a link between Roman Catholicism and licentiousness, tyranny and servitude, linking ‘civil freedom’ to the ‘religious truth’ of Anglicanism. ‘Superstitious’ belief supported the delusions of tyrants ‘but its Operations would by no means be compleat, did it not qualify the Minds of Men to receive the Yoke which it has thus prepared for them’ (Brown 1746?: 9). He went on: This powerful *Enchantress* can indeed in one Sense work *Miracles* and *lying Wonders*, - can dress up *Sordid Fear* and Slavery in the Garb of *rightful Obedience*, can exhibit the most *diabolical Tyranny* under the Appearance of *divine Right*’ (Brown 1746?: 9–10). In short, Brown summarised:

Superstition renders a Monarch oppressive, a People slavish; Tyranny leads the Prince to Superstition, the Subject to Credulity. Religious Truth is the Parent of Civil Freedom ... Infidelity promotes Vice – Vice confirms Infidelity. Superstition and Tyranny beget Atheism and Licentiousness – and these (forgetting as it were their own Nature) establish Bigotry and lawless Power

(Brown 1746?: 42)

It is in this emphasis on the established faith and the direct link made between specific religious beliefs and practices and particular manners and dispositions, that the distinction between Brown’s concept of government and Victorian liberalism becomes most clear. Although many elements of the autonomous self at liberty promoted by Brown are recognisable in later liberal and neo-liberal values, from the emphasis on self control and reason to temperateness and civility, the rule of the best men and a concern to shape character through good government, it is nonetheless clear that many other elements are at odds with what were perceived by contemporaries to be fundamental facets of the liberal tradition. Despite Brown’s concern with promoting the autonomy of the governed and the clear genealogical relationship between these republican concerns and liberalism, his conception of the proper form of autonomy is quite different from his liberal successors. If Victorian liberalism can be characterised in terms of government through freedom, it might be more appropriate to see Brown, like many of his contemporaries, as concerned with promoting freedom through government. The aim here is not to promote economic government, but to prevent the spread of licentiousness and corruption throughout the state and thus offset the threat of tyranny, something that figured as a present danger in public argument in a way that would be unrecognisable in the era after the defeat of Napoleon.

According to the literature on governmentality, which Ivison uses as his definition of liberalism, the aim of Victorian liberals was to govern through freedom, shaping the character of the citizens so as to produce an autonomous subject. Autonomy was promoted in part for its own intrinsic moral and political good, but also with the aim of enabling the practice of economic government, allowing the spheres of economic and social activity to operate as far as possible without political interference. This liberal freedom was closely associated with religious toleration and *laissez-faire* economics. In contrast, although Brown was also concerned with shaping an autonomous subject, this involved a much more explicitly prescriptive approach to the shaping of social life. As Canovan (1978) has shown in her excellent juxtaposition of the ideas of Brown and Joseph Priestley, the liberal concept of progress through free enquiry is alien to Brown’s work. Brown’s focus was on creating a form of social establishment and mental conformity comparable to the religious establishment that he saw as essential to perpetuate the free state.

I think it is worth recalling at this point that one of the reasons for what J. S. Mill called the ‘revolt of the nineteenth century against the eighteenth’, which saw the re-shaping of republicanism into liberalism, was the link between this mode of discourse on freedom and the emphasis on social orthodoxy (Mill, cited in Bevir 2001: 321). The prescription of patterns of life and the precise disposition of attitudes and opinions was Mill’s specific target

in *On Liberty*. Recognising that the history of freedom originally meant establishing protection against the tyranny of rulers, he argued that this alone, while important, was not sufficient: ‘there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose ... its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them ... and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own’ (Mill 1991: 7, 9).

It would be easy to see Mill’s position as a logical, temporal development from Brown’s thought, which made sense in the era after the defeat of Napoleon in which British liberty faced no realistic threat from a foreign military power and in which the reform of the political system at both local (in 1835) and national (in 1832) levels had rendered the threat of internal tyranny obsolete. However, we can also find eighteenth-century commentators articulating positions close to Mill’s. For example, Brown quoted Bernard Mandeville as arguing that

the coercive Power of human Laws is sufficient to sustain itself: That the Legislator or Magistrate hath properly no Concern with the private Opinions, Sentiments, or Operations of the Mind: And that *Actions* alone fall under the legal Cognizance of those in Power

(Brown 1765: 9)

In essence, the cultivation of public virtue was outwith the concern of government, which should simply act to ensure that the law was maintained and otherwise allow people’s dispositions to develop in their own manner. The different, selfish and acquisitive ways this took place would ultimately, despite appearances, be in the public benefit. Likewise *Cato’s Letters* was quoted in the same vein: ‘every Man must carry *his own Conscience*: So that neither has the Magistrate a Right to direct the *private Behaviour* of Men; nor has the Magistrate, or any Body else, any Manner of Power to *model* People’s *Speculations*’ (Brown 1765: 11). Brown goes on to cite the following passage from the same volume, which could be taken as paradigmatically liberal:

True and impartial Liberty is therefore the Right of every Man, to pursues the *natural, reasonable, and religious* Dictates of his own Mind: to *think what he will, and act as he thinks*, provided he *acts not* to the *Prejudice* of another

(Brown 1765: 12)

Mill would doubtless have approved, but John Brown argued directly against this and set out

to prove, by Reasonings confirmed by Facts, that a free Community built on the Maxims above delivered cannot be of *long Duration*: That the mere *coercive Power of human Laws* is not sufficient to *sustain itself*: That there is a strong and unalterable *Connexion* between *Opinions* and *Actions*: That a certain *Regulation* of principles is necessary to check the selfish passions of Man; and prevent *Liberty* from degenerating into *Licentiousness*: And that ‘a certain System of Manners and Principles, mutually supporting each other, and pervading the whole Community, are the only permanent Foundation on which true civil Liberty can arise’

(Brown 1765: 16–7)

Given that Brown was engaged in contemporary debate with positions close to the classical liberal argument of Mill, it is difficult to see liberalism simply as a development of republicanism adapted to a new era (as Kalyvas and Katznelson 2008 do) or a new ‘phase’ of a the same concept of government. Instead, we might view these as two genealogically related but significantly different, partially conflicting rationalities of government. Rather than simply uphold formal equality under the law, Brown understood freedom to be a product of



direct intervention in order to shape the manners and opinions of British subjects and saw the task of government as cultivating public virtue by prescribing a precise mode of being for the citizens, essentially creating an Established code for education, just as there was for religion. He was aware that this might be seen as ‘servitude of the mind’, but was clear that cultivation of reason was as necessary to the successful growth of the mind as learning to walk was to successful negotiation of the world. Further, in an argument resonant with modern communitarian thought, he pointed out that if the state left the infant mind alone it would not really develop in isolation and according to its own opinions and impressions, it would simply be moulded by its social circumstance and its fellows and thereby would fall under the influence of a variety of ‘vague and random’ opinions which might draw them astray (Brown 1765: 32–9). The alternative, then, was not one in which opinion was freely formed, but one in which the manners and habits which formed the character were either left to chance, or were carefully nurtured by the state according to the best principles so far discovered. The most free mind, Brown argued, was one that adopted thoughts and actions founded on the wisdom of the society of which it was a part, consonant with the Stoic principle that ‘The wise man alone is free’ (Brown 1765: 36).

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<sup>1</sup> For a definition of this period as a coherent unit, see Clark (2000). Of course, that is not to say that questions of freedom were not central to political argument in the preceding and succeeding periods.

<sup>2</sup> Republican discourse was not confined to the Anglo-Saxon world, spreading across Europe during the Renaissance: see van Gelderen and Skinner (2002).

<sup>3</sup> See Bellamy (2000); Biagini (2003); Burrow (1988); Kalyvas and Katznelson (2008); Miller (2000); Parry (1993).

<sup>4</sup> I use the term ‘subject’ advisedly here, and in two ways. First, in the Foucauldian sense of a form of personhood produced through government and self-government. Although Brown clearly did not have access to this language, he certainly had access to similar concepts and his work constituted an extended exploration of precisely what forms of character formation were required to produce the kind of personality necessary to perpetuate the free state. But I also deploy the term in a second sense, the one that Brown and his contemporaries used to speak about the people of Britain as subjects of the reigning monarch. If Brown can be termed a classical republican, this does not mean he rejected monarchy, it simply implies an adherence to a particular form of constitutional monarchy in a mixed government in which the status of citizenship was defined in ways quite compatible with social hierarchy. Early modern Britain has been called a ‘monarchical republic’ (Scott 2004: 342-53; Collinson 1987; Goldie 2001) and [Brown] (1757-8: vol. ii, 21-2; 1765: 31, 32) was happy to use the term ‘commonwealth’ in relation to the state in general and by implication Britain in particular.

<sup>5</sup> Despite Tully’s (1988) emphasis on the undoubtedly significant role of Locke in popularising the concept of habit as formative of character, this quotation originated with Diogenes the cynic and was widely repeated in classical and modern literature. It also appears in Aristotle, from here entering English legal discourse on custom through the work of Fortescue: see Pocock (1975: 16). Interestingly a paraphrase also appears in Bolingbroke (1754a: vol. i, 42; 1754b: vol. iii, 381) which it seems likely that Brown had read: see below.

<sup>6</sup> On Mandeville’s social and political thought see Burt (1992: 58-63, 128-49) and Goldsmith (1985).

<sup>7</sup> Of course, Brown was not a ‘proto-nationalist’ in the modern sense. By ‘patriotism’ I intend the classical meaning of the term as devotion to the polity, on which see Viroli (2002: 79-103).

<sup>8</sup> On the gendered nature of this conception of citizenship, see McCormack (2005).

<sup>9</sup> On republican liberty and manners, see also Klein (1989).

<sup>10</sup> On the subject of effeminacy in relation to commerce, politics and novelty, see Barker-Benfield (1992: 104-53).

<sup>11</sup> See also Wootton (1994) and van Gelderen and Skinner (2002: vol. ii, 177-310).

<sup>12</sup> These dynamics are explored in Miller (1994).

<sup>13</sup> I have written about these schemes and their relation to the subject under discussion elsewhere: see Dodsworth (2007, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> This term, like much else in Brown's thought, appears to be taken from Bolingbroke: see Bolingbroke (1997: 91, and see generally 76-121, 162-8, 196-8, 206-7).

<sup>15</sup> Of course, there is much more to Nelson's argument than this one element. Nelson makes little mention of Sidney in this context, but as Scott (2004: 184-90) makes clear, he could have done so, because Sidney's vision of republicanism was ultimately a moral one, defined in Platonic and Aristotelian terms. If he endorsed a view of liberty as a condition of freedom from dependence, as clearly demonstrated by Skinner (1998), he nonetheless placed the selection of virtuous governors and moral education (principally through the law and moralising magistracy) at the centre of his political thought.

<sup>16</sup> For a comparable argument which deploys the same kind of conceptual scheme and similar language but which defines the problem as one of vice in the populace, see the work of Henry Fielding, discussed in Dodsworth (2007).

<sup>17</sup> On the discourses of the 'court' faction, see also Browning (1982).

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle is not an explicit point of reference, yet it would be easy to characterise Brown's thought as Aristotelian with its emphasis on forming the citizen through education, a subject given extensive treatment in the *Politics*.

<sup>19</sup> For his positive use of modern authorities, see, for example ([Brown] 1757-8: vol. i, 16; vol. ii, 27); Brown (1765: 3) and particularly his references to Machiavelli ([Brown] 1757-8: vol. ii, 22-3, 25), Montesquieu, 'the greatest of political writers' who held 'the highest Station in the political Scale' ([Brown] 1757-8: vol. i, 12-13; vol. ii, 18-19, 182), and Bolingbroke, who Brown describes as 'a capital Writer in Politics' ([Brown] 1757-8: vol. ii, 21 n\*) and author of 'so capital a Book' (Brown 1757-8: vol. i, 56). This book is a five volume work and therefore either Bolingbroke (1754a) or more likely (1754b).

<sup>20</sup> On the relationship between the 'enthusiasm' of Catholics and Dissenters and political argument, directly concerned with liberty, see Clark (1994: 147-51).

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