ADAM SMITH

The Theory of Moral Sentiments

THE GLASGOW EDITION OF THE WORKS AND CORRESPONDENCE OF ADAM SMITH

Commissioned by the University of Glasgow to celebrate the bicentenary of the Wealth of Nations

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THE THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS
Edited by D. D. RAPHAEL *and* A. L. MACFIE

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The Theory of Moral Sentiments

EDITED BY

D. D. RAPHAEL

AND

A. L. MACFIE

Liberty Fund

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Preface

THIS is the first volume of a new edition of the works of Adam Smith undertaken by the University of Glasgow. In editing *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* we have received a great deal of help from the introduction and notes to Walther Eckstein's German translation of the book, published in 1926. Dr. Eckstein kindly added one or two further facts in private correspondence and showed a warm interest in this project of the University of Glasgow. We were sad to learn of his death a few years ago.

We are indebted to a number of other scholars who have given us information or suggestions. They include the late H. B. Acton, W. R. Brock, J. C. Bryce, the late C. J. Fordyce, L. Davis Hammond, K. H. Hennings, Nicholas M. Hope, I. D. Lloyd-Jones, the late W. G. Maclagan, J. C. Maxwell, Ronald L. Meek, W. G. Moore, Ernest C. Mossner, Sylvia Raphael, James Ritchie, Ian Ross, Andrew S. Skinner, Peter Stein, David M. Walker, Derek A. Watts, and W. Gordon Wheeler. All of them were most generous in responding to questions, but a special word of appreciation is due to J. C. Bryce and Andrew Skinner.

D. D. Raphael is grateful to the Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford, and to the University Court of the University of Glasgow for enabling him to spend more time on editorial work, first as a Visiting Fellow of All Souls for six months in 1967–8, and then as the Stevenson Lecturer in Citizenship at Glasgow in the autumn of 1972.

He also wishes to thank Mrs. Anne S. Walker, his secretary at Glasgow University, and Miss Hilary Burgess, his secretary at Imperial College, for the care with which they have typed the editorial matter.

Appendix II, always intended for this edition, has been published previously, with some minor changes, as an article by D. D. Raphael under the title 'Adam Smith and "the infection of David Hume's society"', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xxx (1969), 225–48. (The article contained an error on p. 245, saying that Smith refers to Hume in TMS II.ii.1.5. The reference is in fact to Kames.)

1974 D.D.R.
A.L.M.

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Key to Abbreviations and References

WORKS OF ADAM SMITH

Corr.	*Correspondence*
EPS	*Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, included among which are:
Astronomy	'The History of Astronomy'
Ancient Logics	'The History of the Ancient Logics and Metaphysics'
English and Italian Verses	'Of the Affinity between certain English and Italian Verses'
External Senses	'Of the External Senses'
Stewart	Dugald Stewart, 'Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith'
LJ(A)	*Lectures on Jurisprudence*, Report of 1762–3
LJ(B)	*Lectures on Jurisprudence*, Report dated 1766
LRBL	*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*
TMS	*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*
WN	*The Wealth of Nations*

Referencces to Corr. give the number of the letter (as listed in the volume of Smith's *Correspondence* in the present edition), the date, and the name of Smith's correspondent.

References to LJ and to LRBL give the volume (where applicable) and page number of the manuscript (shown in the printed texts of the present edition). References to LJ(B) add the page number in Edwin Cannan (ed.), *Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms* by Adam Smith (Oxford, 1896); and references to LRBL add the page number in John M. Lothian (ed.), *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* by Adam Smith (London, etc., 1963).

References to the other works listed above locate the relevant paragraph, not the page, in order that any edition may be consulted. (In the present edition, the paragraph numbers are printed in the margin.) Thus:

Astronomy, II.4 = 'History of Astronomy', Sect.II, § 4
Stewart, I.12 = Dugald Stewart, 'Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith', Sect.I, § 12
TMS I.i.5.5 = *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* Part I, Sect.i, Chap.5, § 5
WN V.i.f.26 = *The Wealth of Nations*, Book V, Chap.i, sixth division, § 26

OTHER WORKS

Bonar, *Catalogue 1* [or] *2*	James Bonar, *A Catalogue of the Library of Adam Smith*, ed. 1 (London, 1894) [or] ed. 2 (London, 1932)
Eckstein	Adam Smith, *Theorie der ethischen Gefühle*, translated and edited by Walther Eckstein, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1926)
Rae, *Life*	John Rae, *Life of Adam Smith* (London, 1895)
Scott, *ASSP*	William Robert Scott, *Adam Smith as Student and Professor* (Glasgow, 1937)

Introduction

1. FORMATION OF *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

(a) *Adam Smith's lectures on ethics*

The Theory of Moral Sentiments, Adam Smith's first book, was published in 1759 during his tenure of the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. A second, revised edition appeared in 1761. Smith left Glasgow at the beginning of 1764. Editions 3 (1767), 4 (1774), and 5 (1781) of TMS differ little from edition 2. Edition 6, however, published shortly before Smith's death in 1790, contains very extensive additions and other significant changes. The original work arose from Smith's lectures to students. The revisions in edition 2 were largely the result of criticism from philosophically minded friends. The new material in edition 6 was the fruit of long reflection by Smith on his wide knowledge of public affairs and his equally wide reading of history.

Adam Smith was appointed to the Chair of Logic at Glasgow in 1751 and moved to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in 1752. His predecessor as Professor of Moral Philosophy, Thomas Craigie, was already ill in 1751, and Smith was asked to substitute for him with lectures on natural jurisprudence and politics[1] in addition to taking the Logic class. Thereafter Smith gave the whole of the Moral Philosophy course, in which he was expected to deal with natural theology and ethics before proceeding to law and government. In view of the speed with which Smith had to prepare his extensive range of teaching at Glasgow, it was inevitable that he should make use of material already available from a series of public lectures which he had delivered in Edinburgh during the years 1748–50. These lectures were sponsored especially by Lord Kames. Both Dugald Stewart in a biography of Smith and A. F. Tytler in one of Kames describe the subject-matter of the Edinburgh lectures simply as rhetoric and belles lettres,[2] but it seems that by 1750 Smith also included political and economic theory, presumably under the title of jurisprudence or civil law.[3] In a later part of his biography (IV.25), Dugald Stewart refers to a short manuscript written by Adam Smith in 1755, listing 'certain leading principles, both political and literary, to which he was anxious to establish his exclusive right'. Stewart says that they included 'many of the most

[1] Corr., Letter 9 addressed to William Cullen, dated 3 September 1751.

[2] Dugald Stewart, 'Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith, LL.D.' (1793; reprinted in EPS), I.12; A. F. Tytler, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Henry Home of Kames* (Edinburgh, 1807), i.190.

[3] W. R. Scott, *Adam Smith as Student and Professor* (Glasgow, 1937), 50, 54–5, cites evidence for lectures on civil law.

important opinions in *The Wealth of Nations*', and then quotes a few sentences from the manuscript itself. These end with a statement from Smith that 'a great part of the opinions enumerated in this paper' had formed 'the constant subjects of my lectures since I first taught Mr. Craigie's class, the first winter I spent in Glasgow, down to this day, without any considerable variation' and that they had also 'been the subjects of lectures which I read at Edinburgh the winter before I left it'.

A report of the content and character of the early Glasgow lectures, both in the Logic and in the Moral Philosophy class, was given to Stewart by John Millar, Professor of Law at Glasgow, originally a pupil and afterwards a close friend of Smith. In his Logic course Smith despatched the traditional logic rather briskly and then 'dedicated all the rest of his time to the delivery of a system of rhetoric and belles lettres'.[4] His Moral Philosophy course could not rely so heavily on the Edinburgh lectures but it will certainly have drawn on them in its latter sections. Millar's report to Dugald Stewart gives a detailed description of it.

His course of lectures on this subject [Moral Philosophy] was divided into four parts. The first contained Natural Theology. . . . The second comprehended Ethics strictly so called, and consisted chiefly of the doctrines which he afterwards published in his Theory of Moral Sentiments. In the third part, he treated at more length of that branch of morality which relates to *justice*, . . .

Upon this subject he followed the plan that seems to be suggested by Montesquieu; endeavouring to trace the gradual progress of jurisprudence, both public and private, from the rudest to the most refined ages, . . . This important branch of his labours he also intended to give to the public; but this intention, which is mentioned in the conclusion of the Theory of Moral Sentiments, he did not live to fulfil.

In the last part of his lectures, he examined those political regulations which are founded, not upon the principle of *justice*, but that of *expediency*, and which are calculated to increase the riches, the power, and the prosperity of a State. . . . What he delivered on these subjects contained the substance of the work he afterwards published under the title of An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.[5]

There is no evidence to suggest that the Edinburgh lectures included ethical theory proper, and we must therefore presume that Smith's composition of the subject-matter of TMS began in 1752 at Glasgow.

Millar's statement that both of Smith's books arose from his lectures on Moral Philosophy is confirmed by the evidence of James Wodrow, writing (probably in 1808) to the eleventh Earl of Buchan.

Adam Smith, whose lectures I had the benefit of hearing for a year or two . . . made a laudable attempt at first to follow Hut[cheso]ns animated manner,

[4] Stewart, I.16. Stewart identifies his informant as Millar in a note added to the reprint of the 'Account' included in *Works of Adam Smith* (London, 1811), v.412.

[5] Stewart, I.18–20.

lecturing on Ethics without papers, walking up and down his class rooms but not having the same facility in this that $Hut^{n\cdot}$ had, ... Dr. Smith soon relinquished the attempt, and read with propriety, all the rest of his valuable lectures from the desk. His Theory of Moral Sentiment founded on sympathy, a very ingenious attempt to account for the principal phenomena in the moral world from this one general principle, like that of gravity in the natural world, did not please Hutcheson's scholars so well as that to which they had been accustomed. The rest of his lectures were admired by them and by all especially those on Money and Commerce, which contained the substance of his book on *the Wealth of Nations*. . . .[6]

Francis Hutcheson was Professor of Moral Philosophy from 1730 to 1746. Smith was his pupil in the late 1730s, Wodrow in the 1740s. Wodrow remained at the University as Keeper of the Library from 1750 to 1755.

It seems, then, that the first published version of TMS was prepared or worked up from the final form of the second part of Smith's lectures on Moral Philosophy. No doubt there was steady development between 1752 and 1758. Although no copy of a student's notes of Smith's lectures on ethics has as yet appeared, there is some evidence from which we can reconstruct his method of improving what he had written. In Appendix II we give reasons for thinking that a fragmentary manuscript of philosophical considerations on justice is a part of Smith's lectures on ethics. Revisions within the manuscript itself and detailed comparison with corresponding passages in TMS show that Smith tended to work over previous composition rather than write a new version. He made minor corrections both of style and of content, he inserted substantial additions, and (when it came to preparing a text for publication) he shuffled passages about like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. Exactly the same methods of development can be seen in the changes that Smith made when revising the printed book for edition 2 and for edition 6. There is far more evidence for tracing the genesis of *The Wealth of Nations*; we have two Reports by students, apparently from successive sessions, of Smith's lectures on jurisprudence, a fairly long manuscript that has been called 'An early draft of part of *The Wealth of Nations*', and two fragmentary manuscripts that come much nearer to the text of WN itself. From this material Professor Ronald L. Meek and Mr. Andrew S. Skinner have been able to give an extraordinarily precise account of the development of Smith's thought on a central topic of his economic theory.[7] The picture of Smith's working methods that emerges from a comparison of these documents with one another and with WN is similar to that gathered from the more limited evidence for TMS.

[6] Taken from transcription in Glasgow Univ. Library, Murray MS. 506, pp. 169 ff.

[7] 'The Development of Adam Smith's Ideas on the Division of Labour', *Economic Journal*, lxxxiii (1973), 1094–1116.

The printed text at times betrays its origin in lectures. At several points Smith refers back to something he has said on a former 'occasion', whereas it would be more natural, in a book, to write of an earlier 'place'. Then again, in the final paragraph of the work he promises to treat of the general theory of jurisprudence in another 'discourse'.

One other piece of internal evidence seems to match part of the description of the original Glasgow lectures given to Dugald Stewart by Millar: 'Each discourse consisted commonly of several distinct propositions, which he successively endeavoured to prove and illustrate.'[8] Much of Part II of TMS can be said to fit this account in a general way, but the first chapter, II.i.1, illustrates it quite strikingly and would seem, if unrelated to Millar's account and the lecture form, a rather odd way of continuing from the more natural mode of discussion in Part I. If this chapter does indeed retain Smith's original method of procedure in his lectures, it is almost unique in this respect and shows that Smith must have commonly recast the actual structure of his lectures for the book, even though he kept most of the words and phrases.

The printed text allows a further conjecture about the lectures. The *last* part of the book seems to originate from material that formed the *first* part of the lectures on ethics in their earliest version. Why otherwise should Smith set out here (VII.i.2) the two main problems of ethical theory, as if by way of introduction, when in fact most of his task is already done? It seems probable (and it would accord with his usual method of approaching a subject) that at first he entered upon ethics with a survey of its history in dealing with the two topics of moral motive and moral judgement. Having carried the history up to the thinkers of his own day, he will have reflected upon the differences between the two theories that impressed him most, those of his teacher Hutcheson and his friend Hume. Whether or not he already had definite views of his own on these matters in 1752, it is impossible to say; in any event his account of sympathy and its place in moral judgement will have developed as he gave more attention to the subject. Once it had developed it became the focus of Smith's own distinctive theory of ethics, and at this stage (if our conjecture about the original form of the lectures is correct) Smith will have recast his thoughts, starting off with sympathy, building up his theory from that base, and making the historical survey a sort of appendix.

An examination of changes in style might perhaps give some guidance about alterations from the original lecture notes. There is a clear difference in style between much of what Smith wrote for edition 1 and the considerable additions, including the whole of Part VI, which he composed late in life for edition 6. The earlier matter tends to be rhetorical, in tune with the style accepted for lectures in the mid-eighteenth century, while the

[8] Stewart, I.21.

later writing is in the more urbane style of WN. Both WN and the additions to TMS were of course written with a direct view to publication. When one remembers the type of classes that Smith addressed as a Professor in Glasgow, the style of the original material can be better understood. Most of the students were of the age of secondary schoolboys today. The number attending the class of public lectures on Moral Philosophy in Smith's time was probably about eighty, many of them being destined for the Church. To hold the attention of his class Smith used rhetorical language and made humorous references to manners of the day in a way likely to interest young people.

Of the lectures that Smith delivered in his last four years at Glasgow after the publication of TMS, Stewart (III.1) writes:

> During that time, the plan of his lectures underwent a considerable change. His ethical doctrines, of which he had now published so valuable a part, occupied a smaller portion of the course than formerly: and accordingly, his attention was naturally directed to a more complete illustration of the principles of jurisprudence and of political oeconomy.

The last statement appears to be borne out by the two surviving Reports of the lectures on jurisprudence as delivered in sessions 1762–3 and 1763–4. It would be wrong, however, to infer from Stewart's account that Smith's thought on ethics stood still at this time. There is substantial development of his theory in edition 2 of TMS, especially of his notion of the impartial spectator. He can also be seen to apply that concept in the lectures on jurisprudence, so that there is a continuity in his thinking, as indeed Smith himself makes plain at the end of TMS.

(b) *Influence of Stoic philosophy*

Stoic philosophy is the primary influence on Smith's ethical thought. It also fundamentally affects his economic theory. Like other scholars of his day Smith was well versed in ancient philosophy, and in TMS he often refers as a matter of course to Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero (the last sometimes, but not always, as a source of information about Stoicism). In his survey of the history of moral philosophy in Part VII, however, Stoicism is given far more space than any other 'system', ancient or modern, and is illustrated by lengthy passages from Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. (The *Discourses* of Epictetus seem to have been chiefly responsible for Smith's early fascination with Stoicism.) In editions 1–5 of TMS some of this material on the Stoics appears separately in Part I, but the separation does not produce a lesser impact on the reader; on the contrary, it shows up more clearly the pervasive character of Stoic influence. Even in edition 6 there remain in the earlier Parts of the book enough direct references to and quotations from Stoic doctrine to indicate this. Stoicism never lost its hold over Smith's mind. When revising his book for edition 6 in his last years, he not only moved two of the earlier passages on 'that famous sect' (as he calls it in the Advertisement) to the historical survey in Part VII. He also added further reflections, especially on the Stoic view of suicide, stimulated no doubt by the posthumous publication of an essay by Hume arguing that suicide was sometimes admirable.

More important, however, is the influence of Stoic principles on Smith's own views, again something that persisted to his latest writings. In the fresh material added to edition 6 of TMS, Smith's elaboration of his account of Stoicism in Part VII is less significant than the clearly Stoic tone of much that he wrote for Part III on the sense of duty and for the new Part VI on the character of virtue. Part VI deals with the three virtues of prudence, beneficence, and self-command. The third of these, which also figures in the additions to Part III, is distinctively Stoic. The first, though common to many systems of ethics, is interpreted by Smith in a Stoic manner. He departs from Stoicism in his views on beneficence, but even there, when he comes to discuss universal benevolence in VI.ii.3, he introduces Stoic ideas and Stoic language to a remarkable degree.

Smith's ethical doctrines are in fact a combination of Stoic and Christian virtues—or, in philosophical terms, a combination of Stoicism and Hutcheson. Hutcheson resolved all virtue into benevolence, a philosophical version of the Christian ethic of love. At an early stage in TMS, Adam Smith supplements this with Stoic self-command.

> And hence it is, that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature; . . . As to love our neighbour as we love ourselves is the great law of Christianity, so it is the great precept of nature to love ourselves only as we love our neighbour, or what comes to the same thing, as our neighbour is capable of loving us. (I.i.5.5)

Smith emphasizes self-command again when supplementing for edition 6 his treatment of the sense of duty in Part III. He there repeats the dual character of his ideal. 'The man of the most perfect virtue . . . is he who joins, to the most perfect command of his own original and selfish feelings, the most exquisite sensibility both to the original and sympathetic feelings of others' (II.3.34). In Part VI Smith goes farther, making self-command a necessary condition for the exercise of other virtues. Great merit in the practice of any virtue presupposes that there has been temptation to the contrary and that the temptation has been overcome; that is to say, it presupposes self-command. 'Self-command is not only itself a great virtue, but from it all the other virtues seem to derive their principal lustre' (VI.iii.11). For Adam Smith, self-command has come to permeate the whole of virtue, an indication of the way in which Stoicism permeated his reflection over the whole range of ethics and social science.

When Smith sets Stoic self-command beside Christian love in the first of the quotations given above, he calls it 'the great precept of nature'. Life according to nature was the basic tenet of Stoic ethics, and a Stoic idea of nature and the natural forms a major part of the philosophical foundations of TMS and WN alike. The Stoic doctrine went along with a view of nature as a cosmic harmony. Phrases that occur in Smith's account of this Stoic conception are echoed when he expresses his own opinions. The correspondence is most striking in the chapter on universal benevolence, where Marcus Aurelius is recalled by name as well as in phrase: 'the great Conductor' whose 'benevolence and wisdom have . . . contrived and conducted the immense machine of the universe' (in the new material of edition 6 at VI.ii.3.4–5) is a recollection of the 'all-wise Architect and Conductor' of 'one immense and connected system', 'the whole machine of the world', (quoted from Marcus Aurelius in VII.ii.1.37). Essentially similar turns of speech are to be found in a number of passages, both early and late, of TMS. Indeed, the frequency of such phrases leads one to think that commentators have laid too much stress on the 'invisible hand', which appears only once in each of Smith's two books. On both occasions the context is the Stoic idea of harmonious system, seen in the working of society.

The Stoics themselves applied the notion to society no less than to the physical universe, and used the Greek word *sympatheia* (in the sense of organic connection) of both. This is not the sympathy that figures in Adam Smith's ethics. Sympathy and the impartial spectator, as Smith interprets them, are the truly original features of his theory. Yet it is quite likely that in his own mind each of these two ideas was intimately related to the Stoic outlook. Like the Stoics he thought of the social bond in terms of 'sympathy', and he describes the Stoic view of world citizenship and self-command as if it implied the impartial spectator.

> Man, according to the Stoics, ought to regard himself . . . as a citizen of the world, a member of the vast commonwealth of nature. . . . We should view ourselves . . . in the light in which any other citizen of the world would view us. What befalls ourselves we should regard as what befalls our neighbour, or, what comes to the same thing, as our neighbour regards what befalls us. (III.3.11)

In WN the Stoic concept of natural harmony appears especially in 'the obvious and simple system of natural liberty' (IV.ix.51). We should remember that the three writers on whom Smith chiefly draws for Stoic doctrine—Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Cicero—were all Roman, and that the practical bent of the Romans closely connected men's moral duties with their legal obligations as citizens. The universalist ethic of Stoicism became enshrined in the 'law' of nature. This tradition Smith accepted, understandably in his setting. Ethics for him implied a 'natural jurisprudence', and his economic theories arose out of, indeed were originally part of, his lectures on jurisprudence.

The Stoic concept of social harmony, as Smith understood it, did not mean that everyone behaved virtuously. Stoic ethics said it was wrong to injure others for one's own advantage, but Stoic metaphysics said that good could come out of evil.

> The ancient stoics were of opinion, that as the world was governed by the all-ruling providence of a wise, powerful, and good God, every single event ought to be regarded, as making a necessary part of the plan of the universe, and as tending to promote the general order and happiness of the whole: that the vices and follies of mankind, therefore, made as necessary a part of this plan as their wisdom or their virtue; and by that eternal art which educes good from ill, were made to tend equally to the prosperity and perfection of the great system of nature. (I.ii.3.4)

This doctrine anticipates the better-known statement of Smith's own opinion that the selfish rich 'are led by an invisible hand' to help the poor and to serve the interest of society at large (IV.1.10). Smith has added the idea of a 'deception' by nature and the phrase 'an invisible hand'. The famous phrase may have sprung from an uneasiness about the reconciliation of selfishness with the perfection of the system. In itself the idea of deception by an invisible hand is unconvincing. It gains its plausibility from the preceding account of aesthetic pleasure afforded by power and riches, a pleasure that is reinforced by the admiration of spectators. Smith himself clearly set most store by the psychological explanation. But the invisible hand, through its reappearance in WN, has captured the attention, especially of economists.

In the TMS passage Smith writes disparagingly of the 'natural selfishness and rapacity' of the rich, but this does not mean that he regards all self-interested action as bad in itself and redeemable only by the deception of nature. He does not even accept the view of Hutcheson that self-love is morally neutral. Smith follows the Stoics once again in holding that self-preservation is the first task committed to us by nature and that prudence is a virtue so long as it does not injure others. His explicit account of Stoicism in Part VII begins with the doctrine that 'every animal was by nature recommended to its own care, and was endowed with the principle of self-love', for the sake of preserving its existence and perfection (VII.ii.1.15). This is echoed by an expression of Smith's own view in Part II, 'Every man is, no doubt, by nature, first and principally recommended to his own care' (II.ii.2.1), and then again in the new Part VI, where it is reaffirmed with acknowledgement, 'Every man, as the Stoics used to say, is first and principally recommended to his own care' (VI.ii.1.1).

Smith does appear to give rather more scope to prudence in the new Part VI than in the earlier material, no doubt reflecting a change of emphasis in the thought of the more mature man who had written WN. Essentially, however, TMS and WN are at one. For example, Smith writes in TMS of 'that great purpose of human life which we call bettering our condition' (I.iii.2.1). This reappears in WN in vivid form: 'But the principle which prompts to save, is the desire of bettering our condition, a desire which, though generally calm and dispassionate, comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave' (II.iii.28).[9] In WN this is of course worked out in its economic aspect, as the drive to employ one's stock and industry to one's best advantage. In TMS the desire to better our condition is related to class distinction and is attributed to 'vanity', the desire 'to be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency, and approbation'. There is a difference of tone, but both books treat the desire to better our condition as natural and proper.

The consistency and the Stoic character of Smith's views of prudence may be brought out by comparing two passages, one written for edition 6, the other for edition 1. In VI.i.11 Smith says: 'In the steadiness of his industry and frugality, in his steadily sacrificing the ease and enjoyment of the present moment for the probable expectation of the still greater ease and enjoyment of a more distant but more lasting period of time, the prudent man is always both supported and rewarded by the entire approbation of the impartial spectator. . . .' The reference to industry and frugality immediately recalls WN. The other passage, in IV.2.8, written thirty years earlier, contains a similar reference when discussing self-command: from the spectator's approval of self-command 'arises that eminent esteem with which all men naturally regard a steady perseverance in the practice of frugality, industry, and application, though directed to no other purpose than the acquisition of fortune'. The passage in Part VI appears to take a more charitable view of prudence as such, but in fact there is no real change of doctrine, for in the Part VI passage Smith goes on to explain that the approval of the impartial spectator is really directed at 'that proper exertion of self-command' which enables the prudent man to attach almost as much importance to future enjoyment as to present. There is no reason to suppose that Smith departs in any way from this view when he gives similar praise to industry and frugality in WN. The moral quality of prudence depends on its association with the Stoic virtue of self-command.

Smith's respect for Stoicism was not unqualified, and he ends his account of it, as of other 'systems', with some firm criticisms. Apart from the particular question of suicide, which he says is contrary to nature 'in her sound and healthful state', Smith finds fault with two features of the Stoic philosophy. First, he rejects the Stoic 'paradoxes' that all virtuous actions are

[9] Cf. also WN III.iii.12; IV.v.b.43; IV.ix.28.

equally good and all failings equally bad. Second, while accepting the idea of world citizenship, he rejects the Stoic view that this should obliterate stronger ties of feeling for smaller groups. On the contrary, Smith argues, it is nature that teaches us to put family, friends, and nation first, while also providing us with the judgements of the impartial spectator to check any excessive attachment. Despite the criticisms, however, it is not too much to say that Adam Smith's ethics and natural theology are predominantly Stoic.

(*c*) *Influence of contemporary thinkers*

Among contemporary thinkers Hume had the greatest influence on the formation of Smith's ethical theory. Smith rejects or transforms Hume's ideas far more often than he follows them, but his own views would have been markedly different if he had not been stimulated to disagreement with Hume. Second in order of importance is the influence of Hutcheson, whose teaching directed Smith's general approach to moral philosophy and enabled him to appreciate the progress in that approach made by Hume. The particular doctrines of TMS, however, owe little to Hutcheson's actual theory, which Smith probably took to be superseded by Hume's more complex account.

The relation of Smith's ethics to the thought of Hutcheson and Hume needs to be described in some detail, but first let us note the extent to which Smith was influenced by other moral philosophers of his time. It is remarkably small. Smith was well informed about ancient philosophy, keenly interested in the history of science and the evolution of society, and widely read in the culture of his own time, especially its literature, history, and nascent social science. He was anything but insular: his reading of recent books was almost as extensive in French as in English, and it was not negligible in Italian. Yet he was not closely acquainted with much of the ethical theory of the eighteenth century. Perhaps the very breadth of his interests and outlook was responsible for this. In his 'Letter to the Editors of the *Edinburgh Review*', July 1755, Smith could describe, from his own reading, not only Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* but also 'the Theory of agreeable sentiments by Mr. De Pouilly'; yet his ignorance of recent works in English comparable with the latter is shown by his remark that the characteristic English approach to philosophy, taken over by France, 'now seems to be intirely neglected by the English themselves'. In fact there were several English contributions to mental and moral philosophy in the 1740s and early 1750s at least as valuable as Lévesque de Pouilly's little book on the psychology of pleasure. Smith's statement in the 'Letter' that England had until then been pre-eminent for originality in philosophy is simply a repetition of what Hume had said in the Introduction to the *Treatise of Human Nature*, and Smith's list of 'English' thinkers

(Hobbes, Locke, Mandeville, Shaftesbury, Butler, Clarke, Hutcheson) differs little from Hume's. It follows Hume in including Hutcheson, although the point of the 'Letter', unlike that of Hume's Introduction, is to urge the *Edinburgh Review* to look beyond Scotland.

There are a few particular issues on which Smith was affected by contemporary thinkers other than Hutcheson and Hume. When he distinguishes justice from beneficence he refers to the work of Lord Kames, 'an author of very great and original genius' (II.ii.1.5), but perhaps Smith's view of the distinction was reinforced rather than suggested by that of Kames since the theories of the two men do not have much in common. (The tone of homage in Smith's allusion to Kames may owe something to gratitude for promoting the Edinburgh lectures, which in turn led to the Glasgow appointment.) At I.iii.1.1 Smith refers, rather inaccurately, to a passage of Bishop Butler about sympathy, though not so as to suggest any indebtedness. In another place, III.5.5–6, Smith unconsciously recalls some of Butler's phrases about the authority of conscience. Here Smith is as much influenced by Hutcheson as by Butler himself, for Hutcheson's lectures (posthumously published as *A System of Moral Philosophy*) had adopted Butler's language on this topic. The passage in TMS probably survives from the earliest version of Smith's lectures, in which he will have followed the example of Hutcheson more closely than in later years when he had developed his own theory of conscience as the imagined impartial spectator. The unconscious repetition of phrases, both from his own earlier work and from that of other writers who had moved him to agreement or disagreement, is a characteristic feature of Adam Smith's writings, and Butler is not the only contemporary philosopher to leave such traces in his mind. Faint echoes of Mandeville and of Rousseau can be heard in the passage about the deception of nature (IV.1.8 and 10). But all these are nothing to the echoes of Stoicism and of Hume that appear so often in both the language and the doctrine of TMS.

In Part VII of the book Smith discusses recent as well as ancient philosophy. Apart from Hutcheson, the only contemporary philosopher who is considered at length is Mandeville in VII.ii.4. (In editions 1–5 his name was coupled with that of La Rochefoucauld, but Smith's actual exposition and criticism of 'licentious systems' in this chapter were always confined to the work of Mandeville.) There are short accounts of Hume's views in VII.ii.3.21 and in VII.iii.3.3 and 17. There are references to Hobbes in VII.iii.1 and 2, a glance at Clarke, Wollaston, and Shaftesbury in VII.ii.1.48, a perfunctory mention of the Cambridge Platonists in VII.ii.3.3, and a more definite reference in VII.iii.2.4 to one of them, Cudworth, as a representative of ethical rationalism.

The ethical writings of both Hutcheson and Hume contain important criticism of opposing views. Hutcheson attacked egoistic theory, notably as expounded by Mandeville, and theories of ethical rationalism, especially those of Samuel Clarke and William Wollaston. Hume redoubled the assault on rationalism with a veritable barrage of subtle argument, but he did not repeat Hutcheson's criticism of egoism, doubtless thinking that this was now dead. Adam Smith evidently felt the same about ethical rationalism. His chapter on the rationalists (VII.iii.2) is brief and summary. He takes it for granted that moral rules are inductive generalizations and that moral concepts must arise in the first place from feeling. In the last paragraph of the chapter he refers to Hutcheson's criticism of ethical rationalism in *Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* as being quite decisive. (It is noteworthy that he does not explicitly mention Hume's more finely directed series of arguments in the *Treatise of Human Nature*, though there is presumably an implicit reference to Hume in the statement that Hutcheson was 'the first' to distinguish 'with any degree of precision' the respective roles of reason and feeling in morals.) Smith writes as if he had little knowledge or appreciation of the carefully argued counter-attacks on Hutcheson in writers such as John Balguy and Richard Price. Unlike Hume, however, Smith evidently thought that egoistic theory was still a force to be reckoned with, as is shown by the length of his chapter on Mandeville. Perhaps this was because he had seen the strength of Mandeville's position in economic affairs. At any rate he treats it more seriously than ethical rationalism. Mandeville's system, he says, could not have 'imposed upon' so many people or have caused 'alarm' to so many others 'had it not in some respects bordered upon the truth' (VII.ii.4.14).

Hutcheson held (against egoism) that moral action and moral judgement are both disinterested, and (against rationalism) that they both depend on natural feelings. Moral action is motivated by the disinterested feeling of benevolence, and moral judgement expresses the disinterested feeling of approval or disapproval that Hutcheson called 'the moral sense'. Since benevolence aims at producing happiness or preventing unhappiness, and since a wide benevolence is approved more than a narrow, the morally best action is that which 'procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers'.[10] The approval of virtue is like the appreciation of beauty, a feeling aroused in a spectator.

Hume agreed with Hutcheson that benevolence is a motive natural to man and that it naturally evokes approval. But he did not agree that benevolence is the sole motive of virtuous action or that moral approval is an innate basic feeling. He distinguished natural from artificial virtue; benevolence is the chief example of the former, justice of the latter. Moral approval can be explained by sympathy. The spectator takes sympathetic

[10] *Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil*, III.viii; D. D. Raphael, *British Moralists 1650–1800*, § 333.