

The Discovery of Modern Market Society and its Political and Social Implications: An Aspect of Scottish Political and Social Thought in the 18th Century

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Treating prominent philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, this paper examines the characteristics of Scottish political and social thought of the 18th century. The Socio-political theories of David Hume, Adam Smith, James Steuart, Adam Ferguson, Robert Wallace, William Ogilvie and Thomas Reid are analysed. The focal point of their inquiries is, whether it is possible that a modern market economy driven by self-interest of men can become compatible with the orders and stability of a society and with the dignity and moral progress of mankind; and if so, how and when this coexistence will be achieved.

I. Introduction

The Scottish Enlightenment is known as the birth place of modern social sciences. It is true that it tried to solve the problems arising from modern market economy typically exemplified in neighboring England. But its universal and never dying appeal to human race is not confined to the fact that it gave birth to the liberal market theory. Its interests and concerns were rather political and sociological. Scottish moral philosophers discussed, gave lectures and wrote, in attempts to give answer to the question, how to harmonize a modern market economy with ethics, social orders, stable polity and the moral progress of human race. Philosophers felt that there was no automatic mechanism between them and therefore political and sociological devices were needed.

Furthermore, Scottish philosophers'

prescription to the question was not univocal. They sometimes fell into contradiction with each other. The recommendations range over the numbers of policies from liberal polity to the complete abolition of private property. As a collective entity, Scots failed to find one clear cut solution. This very diversity of their conclusions, together with the thoroughness and sincerity of their endeavours, made the works of Scottish philosophers relevant to the people's life on the every part of the earth in the age of globalization. The aim of this overview is to point out the way of questioning that guided their thinking, the variety of answers they gave to public and the uniqueness of their views that were now forgotten. The views of the following philosophers will be examined; David Hume, Adam Smith, James Steuart, Adam Ferguson, Robert Wallace, William Ogilvie and Thomas Reid.

II. Common Agenda

"The establishment of economics and social sciences" is not solely the invention of some Scottish independent genius, but the result of collective effort to solve the puzzles discussed in a homogeneous intellectual community existed in the form of clubs and societies. The community was well-placed for the task. It was located within the boundary of British Empire so that philosophers could observe and experience the most developing market economy of the age. They were able to look it from outside as well, for, with its own laws, universities, national church and social relations, Scots still had a degree of independence from England. While Scottish intellectual community was able to maintain hand-off distance from the centre of the commercial empire, it also had its own network with the continent, mostly with Netherlands and France. This gave Scottish philosophers a milieu in which they were able to think in cosmopolitan ways and to belong to the republic of letters rather than became the citizens of the empire. The way they considered the socio-politico-economic questions of the age was, therefore, both practical and philosophical, British and European, or European and universal. These characteristics of Scottish endeavours endowed the works of them with a unique referential value, even for today's readers.

The following list of 'questions' discussed in the Select Society of Edinburgh will give a hint of the framework within which major works of the Scottish Enlightenment took shape. The society was the intellectual parliament of the country. Most of prominent philosophers took part in it and other similar societies. Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and Robert Wallace were the members of the Select Society. Smith and Ferguson presided the meetings of it. Hume took the secretarial responsibilities of several important societies including the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, which became the Royal Society in the end of the century. Thomas Reid had his own societies such as the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen when he was in King's College and the Literary Society of Glasgow while he worked as the professor of moral philosophy of Glasgow University. A meeting of such societies consisted of two parts, reading and discussing essays written by members and making arguments on a question. Questions were announced to be discussed next time in the end of a meeting.

The following questions concerning political and social matters were very frequently on agenda at the other societies and clubs, too.

1. Does the increase of trade and manufacture naturally promote the happiness of a nation?

2. Whether is a nation on a state of barbarity, or a nation of luxury and refined manners the happiest?
3. Whether doth landed or a commercial interest contribute most to the tranquillity and stability of a state?
4. Whether luxury be advantageous to any state?
5. Whether a nation once sink in luxury and pleasure can be retrieved and brought back to any degree of worth and excellencies?
6. Whether in the ancient times of every nation the people were not stronger, of body healthier, and longer lived than in late times? ¹⁾

It is obvious, in the discussions at these societies that the issue of the emergence of a modern market economy was placed in a much broader context than the matters of pure economics, how to manage the market. The issue was one of the central themes of political science because it was thought that economic growth tended to threaten social orders and political stability based upon the active participations of citizens. It was a cultural problem as well and treated in the fashionable framework of the century, of the comparison between the ancient and the modern. It was seen as the matter of psychology and ethics as well as of political economy. It was related to the prospects of the ethical advancement of human race. The focal

point is, whether it is possible that a modern market economy driven by self-interest of men can become compatible with the orders and stability of a society and with the dignity and moral progress of mankind; and if so, how and when this coexistence will be achieved.

III. New Science of a Society

It is not easy to find a plausible explanation why such a small country ever could be a cradle of many great achievements of the Enlightenment, especially in the disciplines now we call 'social sciences'. There could be several possible reasons. There were active social lives in Scottish cities, of clubs and societies, as we have seen, and homogeneous well-educated social elite who lost the political control of their own country to Westminster. They could only do something related to the social and cultural issues of their home land. But the early introduction of "new science" into Scottish educational system and the intellectual life of its social elite must have contributed significantly to the emergence of social sciences in the country.

University reform and the introduction of 'new science', especially of Newtonianism, are the remarkable features of Scotland in the first half of the century. As the results, the country had advanced educational institutions and the

prevailing scientific set of mind which looked the matters of nature, morality, politics and religion in the same epistemological and methodological point of views. 'Experimental philosophy', thought by intellectuals to have been successfully exemplified by Isaac Newton and John Locke in the beginning of the century, was the buzz word of the century. Consequently it was very natural to think that philosophers' task was to succeed the project launched by Locke and to establish the science of a man and a society with the same method of Newton, as well as to continue the intellectual conquest of nature in chemistry, medicine, geology, electricity and magnetism with tools invented by him. The works of Hume, Smith, Ferguson and other figures in socio-political philosophy were the products of the same collective endeavour that directed the scientific researches of Colin MacLaurin, William Cullen, Joseph Black and James Hutton.

But the ways they carried out the tasks were significantly different. Many held an orthodox Newtonian view of the Royal Society of London in which moderate Christian beliefs coexisted with the latest discovery of natural science in the form of natural theology. Realist attitude toward ethical matters was predominant among them. Hume did not share this configuration of ideas and seem to have been very critical to the

majority's view. Smith took different position in ethics, too. In methodology and epistemology, all these Scots were seemingly Newtonian, or at least the supporters of the watch word 'experimental philosophy'. Their positions and techniques however substantially differed. Let's take the example of Adam Smith.

Although the economic theory of Adam Smith has been often characterized as an adaptation of Newtonianism in social sciences, his interpretation of Newtonian method was very peculiar. He once characterized the Newtonian method in *The Lectures in Rhetoric and Belles* as to "lay down certain principles known or proved in the beginning, from whence we account for the severall Phenomena, connecting all together by the same Chain." Furthermore, he stated that "Des-Cartes was in reality the first who attempted this method."²⁾ Smith made a duplicated mistake in this explanation. Firstly, Descartes was the target that Newton's criticism aimed at in *Principia*. There are numerous attacks on Cartesian philosophy in the writings of British Newtonians and most of them accused him of employing the false method in empirical sciences, the very method that Smith called Newtonian in the lectures, that is, the method of deductive reasoning. Therefore, Newtonian method and Cartesian method is not at all identical as Smith explained above. Secondly, the method Smith described

should be called Aristotelian method, the method of individual sciences described in *Posterior Analytics*, instead of Newtonian method. The methodology employed in *The Wealth of Nations* has no resemblance to that of Newtonian science, except the fact that Smith consciously constructed his system deductively from the first and self-evident principle, such as propensity to exchange or the function of sympathy. It looks as if Smith had followed Newton in the first two of 'the rules of philosophizing' of *Principia*, parsimonious principles that require axiomatic principles should be very few in number, but not in the second two, the needs for experimental proofs in theoretical reasoning.³⁾

However, the empiricist aspect of Smith's method cannot be overlooked. Natural history was another source of influence that natural sciences had on 18th century social sciences and much more so on Scottish social sciences including Smith's works. Smith's methodology is a hybrid of Aristotelian method and the method of natural history in the following way; instead of demonstrating theorems from axiomatic propositions, natural history collects data and classifies them. For Smith, it is the supplementary method to his deductive reasoning, because he presupposed certain principles as true, such as sympathy and natural price, before the inductive processes began. Thus allowing

the universality of the results of deductive reasoning from supposed general principles, natural history served his theories as the explanatory tool to justify the deviations of existing systems from general laws, finding particular conditions derived from geographical, historical and situational contingencies.

Though not exactly a product of a rigorous empiricist version of Newtonian methodology, the Smithian system of social sciences was a byproduct of the developments of the 18th century sciences. Smith was not an inventor of a 'system', a 'fabricated' knowledge of the universe, as the doctorines of Descartes or Leibnitz was thought to be in 18th century Britain. Smith was one of 'empirical scientists' of 18th century Scottish science, who claims to have found the principles of a sub-system, of chemical processes, or of human body, or of a market economy, which were the essential parts of the entire world created by God. This aspect of Smith's scientific projects is, if not exactly Newtonian, still very characteristically Scottish, in the sense that Scottish scientists in the century, starting out from Newtonian inspirations and methodological formats, bravely endeavored to carry out premature attempts to build the self-sufficient explanatory bodies of knowledge, and in so doing, stood out among their contemporaries in Britain as the imaginative theorists of 18th century

sciences, as S. Mason wrote in his *A History of Sciences*.⁴⁾

IV. Self-interest & State

David Hume is the first author who demonstrated the plausibility of coexistence. Hume is the most important philosopher in the Scottish Enlightenment. Today he is regarded as a prominent economist, social theorist and one of the discoverers of a modern market society, too. The ascendance of David Hume toward the pantheon of philosophy and social sciences had been so impressive that we tend to forget that he was standing on the fringe of the intellectual landscape of the Scottish Enlightenment. Hume was the greatest skeptic of the age in his country. Everybody enjoyed the game of criticizing him. Eventually, his skeptical arguments became the catalyst of Enlightenment thoughts. In this sense, Scottish philosophy was born as the result of the efforts to construct effective counter arguments against Hume's philosophy.

Hume's contribution to social theory was profound. In the essay "Of original contract",⁵⁾ he effectively demolished social contract theory that was one of the basis of Whigish political theory. This philosophical attack on the ideological foundation of the Glorious Revolution was interpreted as being originated in his conservative political attitude by

radical Lockians like Reid. But by doing so, he opened up the scope to the empirical research into the origins of society and authority. In philosophical contexts, formally expressed his intentions to follow the method of John Locke, Hume dramatically destroyed his master's philosophy in his first and the major philosophical work, *A Treatise on Human Nature*.⁶⁾ He continued this destructive-constructive restructuring of British empiricism in his treatises on politics and society and became a founder of modern socio-political theory and ethics. In initiating the conceptual change of referential points from contract to utility, from natural jurisprudence to convention, he succeeded in separating the principles of social order from ethics and virtue. He also found the origin of government not in an original contract but in violence, as V. I. Lenin did in *The State and Revolution*.

Hume was a forerunner of the classical school of political economy, too. Although Hume as an economic theorist could not believe in the endless progress of nations in terms of economic development, his essays on money, trade and population are the precursors to those of Steuart and Smith. He favoured liberal economic policy and made arguments against Mercantilist theories and policies so persuasively that he put the corner stone for the further development of economics. However, he

was not an 'economist' in today's sense. His essays on political economy always accompanied by the sociological point of view. This 'interdisciplinarity' of his observations enabled him to grasp the role of 'luxury' in a modern market society.⁷⁾ On the one hand, luxury creates "effective demand" in Keynesian sense, and ignites and maintains economic growth. On the other hand, the diffusion of it to the members of a market society brings sophistication of their taste and deepens interdependence among them, thus strengthens social bounds that could replace 'public virtue' in the ancient polity. Discovering the economics and sociology of a consumer society, Hume refuted his opponents' proposition that the self-interest axiom of actors in a market society would destroy the society. Hume was able to find the origin of the stability and orders of a market society in its very nature. Eventually Hume represented the modernity in political and social philosophy in the century.

But it is not correct if one try to say that Hume was a forefather of liberalists in the 19th and 20th century. As a skeptic, he acknowledged well the serious defects of a modern market society. He predicted that British monetary empire would corrupt soon because of huge public debts. He did not approve the continuity of economic success of wealthy nations and favoured the view of their cyclical downfall. He did not believe in the

economic and political supremacy of liberal democracy over other forms of government. On the whole, Hume was a skeptic philosopher who was able to support a modern market society and still remained to be critical against it.

The ambivalence against modern market society can be seen even in the works of Adam Smith, the discoverer of a modern market society and the founder of economics and economic liberalism. Smith, a young friend of Hume, synthesised the theory of a modern market society in his 'system of natural liberty'. Smith emerged as such in his lectures on moral philosophy at Glasgow University.⁸⁾ Francis Hutchison, Smith's teacher of the university, already taught him the major issues of political economy, such as labour, price and money etc., even though not in a systematic ways as his student. There are many other works from which Smith learned. If we adopt the cynical view of J.A. Schumpeter on him, the genius of Smith was in the very way of putting together many arguments previously made by writers on the issues in a beautiful and seamless narrative with the help of few guiding principles, self-interest, propensity to exchange and the division of labour. But even when Schumpeter is absolutely right, it is certainly an achievement to complete and publish *The Wealth of Nations*. The theoretical parts

of the book except those apparently influenced by Francois Quesnay were already presented to students in his lectures at Glasgow University.

As every figure in the hall of fame in the history of philosophy, there are many misconceptions on Adam Smith's views caused by the simplification of his doctrines made in the succeeding centuries. He was not an enthusiast of liberal market fundamentalism. He never forgot to mention that the division of labour had tendency to make a man unable to become a responsible citizen. He supported the roles of the state to protect its citizens from external and internal insecurity, to educate them properly and to make investment into public goods that could not be financed by private sectors. Taxation was therefore not a necessary evil but a 'necessary good' for him. It is very likely that he thought that governing a country was the responsibility of natural rulers, of landlord class, though he emphasized the importance of individuals' initiatives and taught statesmen in his books not to ignore the knowledge and motivations of ordinary people. He did not trust mercantile classes because he anticipated that their interests tended to be against public interest, often ended up in the mistreatments of labourers, the formation of monopoly and the corruptions of government, therefore the competition among them must have been introduced

against their wills by the ruling class of a country. No phrase like 'cheap government', 'tax burden', 'deregulation', 'liberal democracy' etc. can be found in his writings. These ideas were the fabrications of later followers of Smith who rarely read the whole of *The Wealth of Nations*.

It is worth mentioning that his theory of political economy forms the second chapter of his theory of politics in the lectures at Glasgow University. The part treats the internal policies of a country, 'police'. The aim of 'police' is to bring peace and happiness to citizens. Smith stressed in the beginning of the part of his lectures that the prosperity of a nation created the stability and orders of its polity. For him, economic growth is not the end of 'police' but the most effective means to achieve the goals of internal policies. One of the uniqueness of his political economy is that he made it independent from the form of government and other topics of politics. Adam Ferguson, the professor of moral philosophy of Edinburgh University, treated political economy in relation to the matter of national defense. Alexander Gerard, in his lectures on moral philosophy at Aberdeen, discussed what kind of government most fitted to promote economic growth. For Smith, with his friend David Hume, the policies of 'the natural system of liberty' could be adapted by several forms of government.

They supposed that it was able to be implemented in France under the rule of absolute monarchy. If interpreted correctly, Smith's views on 'economic liberalism' perfectly in harmony with quasi-democratic one party rule in post war Japan, the dictatorship for development seen in South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan etc. and even with the communist regime in present day China. In short, Smith was not an advocate of North American ideology in the present century. What matters him most was not political liberty itself, but the external and internal peace of a country and the material welfare of ordinary citizens, which, in the end, bring the progress of human kind towards moral perfections.

It is also important to notice that there are some contradictive and self defeating remarks in his writings. He boldly declared that the system of natural liberty was the true system of political economy in the part treating physiocracy of his masterpiece.⁹⁾ But in his philosophical essay on the history of astronomy,¹⁰⁾ he explained that the every system of philosophy, including Newtonian natural philosophy, was the creation of human psychology and therefore would be replaced by new ones in the future. So be it, then his system of natural liberty must have the same destiny, too. In the third book of *The Wealth of Nations*, he described the

natural course of the development of investment from agriculture to foreign trade. Then he argued that the economic history of Europe after the decay of Roman Empire followed the opposite course from foreign trade to agriculture and it was very foolish if one hoped to reverse the development. If he was really a sincere student of experimental philosophy, he could not formulise the theory of 'natural course', because it was against empirical evidences that he himself supplied in the same book. If he really believed what he theoretically stated, he must have supported physiocrats. Even in his first and a successful publication, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*,¹¹⁾ he seems to have been unable to decide between ancient, heroic, stoic virtue and modern morality seen among the middling ranks of a modern society.

Maybe his personality issues contribute to the inconsistencies. A lady once described Smith as 'ugly like a devil'. He had a sort of mental illness to lose his consciousness suddenly. Hume happily spent a bachelor's life but Smith failed to marry women twice in his life time. He characterized philosophy in 'the history of astronomy' as a product of human fear against irregularities and surprise that sometimes, he said, killed a man. Unlike sociable, handsome and lovely David Hume, his friend Adam Smith hid a dark side of his personality beneath the

surface of his perfect narrative as an Enlightenment philosopher.

But it is natural that philosophical reasons are there as well. If so, this is not the dishonour for Smith. This is rather the evidence that Smith was again one of the sincere thinkers of Scottish Enlightenment who considered the merits and the defects of a modern society, contradictions between wealth, power and the ethical progress of human kind very seriously and very thoroughly. As the result, even though Smith seems to have definitely decided to stand by modernity than any other philosophers in the country, he still held ambivalence and reservation to it.

V. Imbalance & Corruption

While Smith was able to present a plausible explanation how a modern market system could function well, James Steuart played the role of pointing out the inner defects and malfunctions of it. Some may hesitate to honour Steuart with the title of a "Scottish Enlightenment philosopher". Most of the literati and the scientists of the Enlightenment were religiously moderate or deist, and politically standing for the union, or at least, not against Westminster's rule. Sir James Steuart was born and educated in the country. He joined the Jacobite rebellion in 1745. Consequently he had to leave his

country and stayed in the continent. When he was allowed to come back to his homeland, he brought the plan and materials of a splendid gift to Britain. It is the first comprehensive book ever written in English on the 'principles of political economy'.¹²⁾ Although the book was welcomed by public and intellectuals alike, it became almost forgotten in later years. When J.M. Keynes revived the theory of effective demand against free market policies, he only named T.H. Malthus as his predecessor, despite the fact that the founder of the theory was actually James Steuart. Certainly his book was widely read in the late 18th century. Even G.W.F. Hegel read it in a German translation and there are traces of Steuart's influence in Hegel's texts. But the person who inspired most by it could be Adam Smith, because it appeared just in time when he had formulated his ideas on police in his lectures and was about to write his major works. It is tempting to imagine that Smith, astonished by the publication of *the Principles*, changed his publication plan and began to write a book on police, the second part of his lectures, instead of completing the first part of his Jurisprudence, on justice. However, Smith never mentioned Steuart's name in his major work and the success of *the Wealth of Nations* washed away *Principles*.

Steuart's view is pictorially

represented in the following metaphor. Smith says that an artificial intervention will destroy the harmony of an economy driven by the self-interest of citizens.

"it (this bounty) breaks what may be called the natural balance of industry."¹³⁾

Steuart says that a modern state and a society are so developed that they need more careful management than primitive polity.

"It is of government as of machines, the more they are simple, the more they are solid and lasting; the more they are artfully composed, the more they become useful; but the more apt they are to be out of order."¹⁴⁾

"The Lacedemonian form may be compared to the wedge, the most solid and compact of all the mechanical powers. Those of modern states to watches, which are continually going wrong; sometimes the spring is found too weak, at the other times too strong for the machine: and when the wheels are not made according to a determined proportion, by the able hands of a Graham, or a Julien le Roy, they do not tally well with one another; then the machine stops, and if it be forced, some part gives away; and the workman's hand becomes necessary to set it right."¹⁵⁾

Steuart was very aware that the

driving force of a modern market economy was individuals' initiatives to seek their own interests. His point is that, although the market system is the most efficient in producing material wealth, it sometimes causes imbalance within itself and there is no automatic mechanism that ensures the system will recover from it. His warning comes therefore not from the denial of the reality of a market system, but from the very cognition of the sophistication and the complexity of it. His analysis of money as an economic theorist is also worth mentioning. Smith and classical school were so obsessed in refuting mercantile writers that they paid little attention to money as an independent variable. Steuart's words sound very meaningful in the age of globalization when most of the population of human race is forced to live in a polarized global society run by the global circulation of money with frequent economic disturbance and ever growing anxieties. Where to find the 'careful hand of a statesman' to correct the imbalance is the major contemporary political problem. The works of Steuart and Smith thus must be seen as nonidentical twins that cannot be separated in the theoretical consideration of a market system.

There was a sociologist who saw the danger of a market society, too. Although Adam Ferguson's fame has

never reached the heights of Hume and Smith, he was one of the most internationally influential social philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment. Karl Marx praised him of writing the "first history of civil society". Ferguson has regularly been mentioned in the textbooks of the history of sociology as the founder of modern sociology. Now some writers begin to give him the honour of discovering the neo-con social theory.

However, it is not entirely accurate to characterize him as the representative figure of republicanism and public spirit in the Enlightenment. Being fluent both in Gaelic and Latin, he always maintained historical perspective that often gave him an insight of historical relativism. Being a very active member of Scottish intellectual institutions, such as the church, universities, clubs and societies, he has never lost a touch with the reality of modern life and fully realized the importance and efficiency of the division of labour and the market that constitute the system of a modern commercial society. The sympathy towards the ancients and republican spirit did not make him an anachronistic admirer of ancient times nor another Jean Jack Rousseau, but an impartial observer of both ancient and modern societies.

The perspective of a social scientist never prevented him of becoming a popular teacher of moral philosophy in his

university. Science was not yet the value-free cognitive process in the century. He shared the conviction with other Scottish philosophers that the method of experimental philosophy most successfully demonstrated by Newton could ensure the ethical foundation of human righteous conducts as well as unveil the laws that governed the nature and a society. He tried to find out the foundation of virtue and morality in human nature with the help of the method of natural history. With Steuart, Ferguson's approach in moral philosophy was more empiricist than Hume and Smith and it made him the founder of sociology.

Moreover, he was one of the early social critics of modern market society. As a historian and a sociologist, he understood the principles of modern society in comparison to the ancient. In so doing, he clearly recognized the fact that the division of labour was the origin of wealth in a modern society, that the division of labour presupposed the liberty to have private property and thus liberal polity was most adequate to a modern market society. But he never forgot to point out that the division of labour tended to make a man a gear of a society rather than an active human being. This insight immediately reminds us of Karl Marx's theory of alienation 100 years later. He also warned that, with the words of Max Weber 150 years

later, the establishment of a modern society as a huge machine could end up in the loss of energy and passions of citizens. He gave two threats that endangered the liberty of modern society. The one is the enemy from outside. Another is the despotism originated from the passive attitude of citizens. The latter example sounds very prophetic as if Ferguson had foreseen the emergence of totalitarianism in the 20th century.

An active principle of human behaviour lies under this brilliant critic of a market society in his writings. He differed in the definition of liberty from Hume and Smith. For the two, liberty means not being forced to do something or not to do something, except a man behaves against public interest. Ferguson thinks this is not enough. As a social animal, a man should behave actively to contribute to the public. Liberty lies in the self determination to protect oneself by one's own hand. In other words, Ferguson defined modern liberty as participation and autonomy. However, Ferguson is not a Hanna Alendt in the 18th century. As a social scientist, he approved the vitality and industry of vocational life in a modern society. His perspective is therefore much more comprehensive than her. Recognizing well the importance of private property, free trade and the division of labour in a modern market society whose supremacy to the ancient was evident, Ferguson was

still remained to be an acute critic of it from the sociological and political point of view.

VI. Alternative solutions

If there is reformism in the Scottish Enlightenment, there are revolutionaries, too. Several Scottish thinkers took completely opposing position against the development of a modern market. Robert Wallace was a minister of the Church of Scotland. He was one of the able opponents of David Hume and famous for his essay on population that was translated into French. Wallace was a student of Edinburgh University in the early 18th century. He was a member of a legendary student club called the Rankenian Club and a friend of the prominent figures of the first generation of the Enlightenment, such as Colin MacLaurin, Lord Kames and George Turnbull. He left deistic remarks on religion in these years. After joined the church hierarchy, he was very active in church and politics. Later years, he became sympathetic to the radical politics of John Wilkes in the end of the century.

With his mathematical skill elaborated by attending David Gregory's class at Edinburgh University, with his friendship with distinguish scholars and politicians, and with his own convictions, Wallace was an early reformist of the country and in fact he succeeded to

establish a first example of public insurance for widows. His essay on population, itself and succeeding exchange with David Hume made his name known even to France, was inspired by his critical view against Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of Bees* and his egalitarian inclinations which preferred social justice and industry to luxury and hierarchy. He also interested in finding way to make marriage and agriculture more productive to increase wealth. The former led him to invent a idea that a kind of free and democratic way of marriage would be most productive. For the latter, he concluded that an egalitarian land reform was the efficient way to bring wealth.

Wallace's *Prospects*¹⁶⁾ is said to be a source of T. H. Multhus's *An Essay on Population*.¹⁷⁾ But their contexts are very different. Multhus wrote his essay in the end of the century to destroy the radical arguments of William Godwin who published *Political Justice*,¹⁸⁾ a call for a utopian society based upon reason and social justice in the revolutionary period. Wallace's essay has two lines of arguments. The one is the desirability and the reality of a utopian society. The other is, on the contrary, the impractical nature of a utopia. He put these two inconsistent ideas in the following way. The realization of a utopia is impossible, because it is so perfect and efficient for human happiness and social progress.

The success of the advancement of a society is, from Wallace's point of view, evaluated by the rapid growth of population. The growth is very fast in a utopian society and it will soon reach the natural limit, the environment of the earth. Therefore, a utopia will fail not for its internal defects but for its success itself. Here we find the surprisingly early cognition of the antagonism between global environment and economic growth.

It is not certain what Wallace really meant to say in the essay. He says at first that a utopia is the perfect system of government that human kind ever imagines. This is the opinion he expressed in earlier essay on government. He also confirms that there is no obstacle to establish a utopian regime on this planet with the given nature of present human race. It must work perfectly and successfully. Then he explains why a utopia cannot flourish on the earth. Not the system itself nor the nature of human race, but the present conditions of the planet will threaten the existence of a utopia. If one elaborates his way of reasoning in contemporary contexts, the conclusion will be that, not a utopian system, but the liberal global market regime is unrealistic, because it will create, and in fact already has created, environmental disasters in global scale.

It is very likely that Wallace, differed

from radical thinkers in the end of the century and socialist writers in the 19th century, literally followed the format of utopian literature. As in the case of Thomas More and Plato in his *Politeia*, a vision of a utopia was not a plan to change an existing government according to it, but a referential point from which a philosopher could see a society critically. In saying that a utopia could not be last for long on the earth, Wallace denied the reality of it on this planet and affirmed at the same time the theoretical probability of its existence. With his utopian speculation, he succeeded in securing the position to be fundamentally critical against a 'commercial society' without being a fanatic dreamer whom he disliked and feared.

Nonetheless, with his imagination and his skill in political arithmetic, Wallace equipped the speculation of an ideal society with more realistic considerations than originals. He was neither a prophet nor a revolutionary. But an idea on utopia endows him with an Archimedes' point to criticize and reverse the existing orders of his society from outside. His utopian tract was evidence that the Scottish Enlightenment held the context of reformist and revolutionary ideas that were to be expressed later in the writing of William Ogilvie, John Miller and James Mackintosh.

William Ogilvie is less known than

any other philosophers treated in this paper. He was a student of Thomas Reid at King's College of Aberdeen and of Adam Smith at Glasgow University. In his political tract published anonymously while he was a professor of King's College, he pushed radical Lockian natural law theory, another source of the radical thinking of the Scottish Enlightenment, to an extreme in the following two senses.¹⁹⁾ In Lockian understanding of property, God allowed men to occupy and utilize land in order to satisfy human needs. Therefore, Ogilvie concludes that every member of a society has a "birth right" to demand a fragment of land to live. Not only speculating the ideal forms of a society, he proceeds to elaborate this basic idea to several concrete policy recommendations, mostly several plans of the redistribution of landed property. He distinguished three kinds of value, or the fertilities of land. Land is fertile because of its nature. Land also has possibility to become more productive due to improvement in the future. Only productivity already created by investment done by a landowner can be regarded as the owner's 'property'. The product of the fertilities of other two should belong to public use. Having so defined the substance of the birth right of people, Ogilvie examines and proposes several policies of practical land reform. Eventually he became a precursor to

Lockian radicals in England in the end of the century such as Thomas Spence and Thomas Paine, and the movements of land reform in the 19th century.

Ogilvie, being an experienced landowner, concluded that the redistribution of land to the poor would not only contribute to the social welfare of citizens, but also create necessary condition for stable and favourable economic developments. This argument looks very familiar to North-East Asians today, for highly praised economic miracles of Japan, South Korea and China were partly based on these kind of agricultural policies, though the reforms were implemented not by democratic governments, but by American occupation army in Japan, military dictators in South Korea and communist regime in China. On the contrary, against the apparent seriousness of the intentions of the author, "birth right" tract of Ogilvie was never actualized in its birth place.

Whatever eccentric it may seem to be, the tract was an attempt to give a solution to the central issue of Scottish social and political thought, especially the issue how to ease the tension between the market and social cohesion. It gives evidence that radical utopian thinking in Scottish philosophers could be brought to actual political movements. Scottish moral philosophy was not confined to pedagogic practice to raise the responsible members of a society. It

was the hotbed of reformist ideas, notably seen in the political economy class of Dugald Stewart in the end of the century.

Thomas Reid was recorded in the history of philosophy as the founder of Scottish common sense school and the prominent opponent of David Hume. His fame was, for the readers in 21st century, unimaginably great in the end of 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. The uniqueness of his socio-political philosophy was hardly recognized until the publication of his manuscripts in the late 1990s, although it must have influenced his students including Ogilvie and Dugald Stewart. There was a time when Reid was regarded socially and politically conservative. The recovery of his paper on utopian system has changed our views on Reid as a social and political philosopher of the Enlightenment for ever.

In his utopian tract Reid push the issue of wealth and virtue in the Scottish Enlightenment, the contradictive nature of the market and ethics, to the very extreme.²⁰⁾ Again in Reid's case, the intention of the author looks not self-evident. The paper was only read before his colleagues of Glasgow University at a meeting of the Literary Society of Glasgow and never published in its complete form. Instead, small

extracts of the paper, the introduction and a part of conclusion, appeared in a conservative journal with the title, "The Danger of Political innovation".²¹⁾ It is obvious that the publication of the tract was made in order to present Thomas Reid as a conservative who was very afraid of possible political disaster caused by the influence of French Revolution upon young people of the country. In fact, Reid was sympathetic to the Revolution. His appraisal of it and the donation to French parliament brought a black mail to him.²²⁾ When read in the complete form, the paper looks to have been written to guide young intellectuals surrounding him to practical reformist policies, warning them that the fundamental change of a society was sometimes dangerous without credible evidences and careful experiments. The paper also clearly demonstrates that a utopian system is not unrealistic. Consequently, Reid's position toward the ideal form of a society is very similar to that of Wallace.

When Wallace brought theoretical and practical seriousness to utopian speculation, Reid infused it with the achievements of Scottish Enlightenment, the study of human nature and political economy. He was praised by Dugald Stewart of successfully applying the method of 'experimental philosophy' to the study of human nature.²³⁾ He interested in the issues of political economy

when he was in Aberdeen and taught it in Glasgow University as the successor of Adam Smith. In his lecture notes, he demonstrated that he had the better understanding of the subjects than any other professor of moral philosophy in Scotland except Smith himself.

How desirable and ethically correct the behaviors of the inhabitants of a utopian system may look, the system lacks strong passion to fulfill individual's desire. It is the main drive of the actors in a market system and the sole propelling force of human behavior that Smith and Stewart presupposed in deducing the functions of the system. Ferguson looked ambitions as the stimulus to the progress of humanity. Wallace did not consider it but Reid in the end of the century thought that something had to replace it in a utopian system. He introduced the scales of honour and income differentials into the system as the alternative to self-interest axiom. Then there would be emulation, not competition, among the citizens of a utopia.

For Smith and Reid, the problem of political economy is how to promote the production of national wealth. Wealth is the product of labour and therefore economic system is the system of allocation of labour as the main resource of production. For Reid, the question of political economy is to find the most efficient way to allocate labour. His

conclusion was that a utopian system was the best system in political economy. His utopia is in fact an ancestor of socialist economy based upon public ownership and central planning. It is very hallucinating experience indeed to read such a paragraphs written by a Scottish moral philosopher in the 18th century very similar to the passages from *Das Kapital*.

Perhaps because of being clergy who took the responsibility of managing poor law system, Wallace and Reid shared the same feeling towards the growing gap between the rich and the poor in their society. They used the same expression as found in the English translation of More's *Utopia*, "the beasts of burden", to condemned the rich and demanded justice for the poor. In More's original, the phrase was appeared in a very impressive passage where the author openly expressed his compassions to the lower ranks of his society forced to live in miserable conditions. Apparently both church men felt the same sentiments in their engagement in the business of social welfare. It is also certain, however, that both welcomed the fruits of the market system. Their philosophical reasoning therefore focused on finding social and political system to achieve wealth without the present system of inequality and oppression.

VII. Conclusion: Ambivalence, Cosmology and Plurality

Being both for and against a modern market society, the achievements of 18th century Scottish socio-political thoughts are very inspiring and have everlasting appeal to contemporary readers. Finally, we have to look at the lost dimension of them. While Wallace, Ogilvie and Reid were too pessimistic to the self-managing ability of a modern market society, Hume and Smith overlooked the factors that threaten it today. If they could have taken the international movement of capital involving the outflow of jobs and the international movement of people themselves into account, they could have never thought that economic growth and stable social order would have brought into harmony. It is very natural that Scottish philosophers' scopes were limited by their experience restricted within their century and locality.

There are also paradigmatic limitations that can instantaneously be noticed in the works of every philosopher in the Enlightenment. How broad and universal the perspective of Scottish philosophy of the century was, nobody ever can deny the fact that it developed within the cultural boundaries of the country and the period. Most of the thinkers were moderate Presbyterians. At most, like Hume and young George Turnbull, they were deists and not atheists. All of them

believed in natural theology and the existence of the intelligent Creator of the universe. In other word, their philosophy developed within the framework of modern European Christian tradition and never stepped out of it.

This limit of their scope, apparently narrower than that of the French Enlightenment where outspoken atheists and materialists were actively producing their works, if seen from different angle, evidences the uniqueness and contemporary relevance of 18th century thought.

As Newtonianism was dominant in the intellectual landscape of the country, every aspect of thinking was connected to the cosmology that had been completely reformed by modern astronomy. This cosmological aspect of 18th century thoughts is seriously lacked in contemporary political and social thoughts. Until modern sciences as the cluster of specialized disciplines emerged in the 19th and 20th century, Copernican system could not be separated from "the plurality of the world," especially after Galileo found mountains and valleys on the surface of the moon by newly invented telescope. Many of eminent astronomers believed the existence of extra terrestrial intelligent life form, or at least felt no need to deny the probability to it.²⁴⁾ Consequently most of Newtonian scientists looked the idea as an inseparable part of Newtonian system of the universe.

The following extracts from the works of Colin MacLaurin and Adam Ferguson will show how different the way of thinking in the Enlightenment was from ours. The plurality is taken for granted in a famous handbook to Newtonian philosophy of MacLaurin and this 'fact' serves here to demonstrate the prospects of the future improvement of human intelligence.

"We cannot but take notice of one thing, that appears to have been designed by the author of nature: he has made it impossible for us to have any communication from this earth with the other great bodies of the universe, in our present state; and it is highly probable, that he has likewise cut off all communication betwixt the other planets, and betwixt the different systems. We are able, by telescopes, to discover plains, mountains, precipies, or for cavities in the moon: but who tread those precipies, or for what purposes those great cavities (many of which have a little elevation in the middle) serve, we know not; and at a loss to conceive how this planet, without any atmosphere, vapours, or seas, can serve for like purposes as our earth. We observe sudden and surprizing revolutions on the surface of the great planet Jupiter, which would be fatal to the inhabitants of the earth...It does not appear to be suitable that we should see so far, and have our curiosity so much

raised concerning the works of God, only to be disappointed at the end. As man is undoubtedly the chief being upon this globe, and this globe may be no less considerable, in the most valuable respects, than any other in the solar system, and this system, for ought we know, not inferior to any in the universal system so, if we should suppose man to perish, without ever arriving at a more complete knowledge of nature, than the ever arriving at a more complete knowledge of nature, than the very imperfect one he attains in his present state; by analogy, or parity of reason, we might conclude, that the like desires would be frustrated in the inhabitants of all the other planets and systems; and that the beautiful scheme of nature would never be infolded, but in an exceedingly imperfect manner, to any of them. This, therefore, naturally leads us to consider our present state as only the dawn or beginning of our existence, and as a state of preparation or probation for farther advancement " 25)

As the last survivor of the Enlightenment literati, Adam Ferguson constructed his speculations of omnipresent intelligence in the early 19th century on the common cosmological knowledge which MacLaurin displayed. He first asks himself the reason of the existence of vast material universe which modern astronomy has found. Then he calculated

the "population" of intelligent beings in the universe from human experience and estimates that it will be two thousands millions of millions, enough to cover the whole of the universe. He concludes that the populousness of the universe is the basis for human moral advancement, because the idea of the existence and the number of the higher ranks of intelligence encourage men to improve themselves mentally and spiritually by the psychology of emulation.

"OF THE COMPARATIVE FORMS OF BEING

The material world being such as we perceive it from afar as well as near indefinitely various and great: What are we to think of the intellectual or world of minds? ...

If thus the scale of estimation be disturbed on earth where the human soul is so perspicuous; no wonder we are ravished with the magnitude and order of a firmament now discovered by the sagacity of men to present many such worlds as we inhabit, while the essence of a superiour form of being for whose use such magnitude of scenery is made has yet, if at all, but faintly or by conjecture dawned upon our sight...

From the magnitude etc. of planets

they were guessed to be worlds like this earth, and from their motions this earth was guessed to be a planet like them. Of this there is now no doubt, but when we would go farther and guess they are inhabited, we must admit the probability of great variety as well as analogy in the forms of existence in comparison with that we experience.

It is thus that without rejecting the characteristic diversity of forms in nature we apprehend in every planet by which our sun is surrounded a living world analogous to that of which we ourselves make a part on this terrestrial sphere, and in every fixed star a sun like our own environed also with planets revolving in orbits such as we have learned with so much accuracy in all their anomaly vibrations and mutual disturbances. Nor do we sense a limit to this assumption of worlds not to be limited merely by our defect of sight which does not extend beyond a mere corner of universal existence that has no bounds but those of number and space if to such there be any limits.

So great, so numerous are the forms of material existence. To what effect or for what purpose?

This question for ever occurs on our observation of nature, and where it cannot be solved, we are slow of belief in the fact so manifest commonly is the end in all the forms or operations of nature...

Is the universe of body then formed for the sake of mind alone? To us there appears no other end or purpose for which it is made. If so great the corporeal departments of nature, what are we to think of the mental for whose sake those departments are so formed and dispersed throughout the immensity of space? ...

That we may perceive the vanity to number in this instances be it remembered that the human species of any one generation has been reckoned at one thousand millions: if but one hundred generations are supposed to have assed, one hundred thousand millions of souls have already flown from terrestrial source; and if every planet in the solar system has been equally productive, the sum will amount to seven hundred thousand millions; and if every fixed star supposed to be two thousand is but the sign post if a system similar to ours, let imagination try to accompany in thought two thousands millions of millions which figures may in vain be used to express and let the vanquished conception acknowledge that the material world, however great, is still subordinate, and even upon such data as the material world itself can supply must shrink in magnitude as well as in estimation before the world of living and conscious existence whose essence is power and distinction, felicity...

When the aspiring mind recalls the millions of millions and hundred thousands of millions of millions with whom he may now have to contend for distinction, he may possibly shrink in despair. But if he judge aright, the object of a just ambition is not comparative but of an absolute value. That in which the value of existence itself consists is the capacity of happiness, and the happy mind is of the highest value whatever be the number that partakes in the same distinction.

If you perform what in the present moment what you are called upon to do with benignity, diligence and resolution, you are happy.

To this it may be subjoined that the multitude of competitors in the same pursuit will not impede but promote the success.²⁶⁾

Astronomy, plurality, political economy and Stoic virtues are consciously mixed together in the Ferguson's memoir in order to demonstrate the idea of human moral progress. Based upon Semitic religious tradition of omnipotent God, Enlightenment thinkers were able to put together the image of infinite universe and the superiority of mind above the material world. The way they looked at a man is not the same as ours. Reid taught in the lectures on moral philosophy at Glasgow University that the human nature is only one empirical

subject available to us from which we understood how mind worked. In this context, 'the mind' means universal intelligence whose owners include God, angels and the probable inhabitants of other planets and other systems. These narrowness and universality, Semitic-Christian ideas and cosmological imaginations, of the way of thinking, served Enlightenment philosophers to grasp humanity in universal perspective.

Of course, their views have become obsolete long time ago. But this embeddedness of socio-political thought into cosmology could inspire our rethinking of humanity in the 21st century when the unprecedented advancement of science and technology, together with the increasing conflicts between cultures and civilizations, endangers the traditional ideals of humanity. We are living in the age when the view of the universe is dramatically changing. Genetic research has demonstrated that a man shares many genes with an octopus, a cockroach and a paramecium, not to mention that a chimpanzee is genetically almost a human being. Ferguson's speculation is a typical response of a moral philosopher to the changing view of nature and a man in the 18th century within the given settings of West European cultural values. How to proceed further beyond out-dated ideas like liberalism and socialism upon different values and ethics

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is our problem. The achievements and limitations of 18th century Scottish socio-political thoughts could become, not an answer, but a catalyst to it.

Notes

- 1) *Minutes of the Procedure of the Select Society*, National Library of Scotland, MS 23.1.1.
- 2) Smith, 1983, pp.145-6.
- 3) To interpret the first two as the assertions of 'Ockam's razor' is controversial, because the expressions of the rules are different according to the versions of *Principia*. Moreover, they appeared only from the second version of *Principia* (1713) as such. It seems that Newton became more conscious to present himself as an empiricist in the later versions. Thomas Reid's interpretation of the first ones based on the third version was rigorously empiricist. See Paul Wood's introduction of Reid, (1995).
- 4) S. F. Mason, 1953, Chapter 24.
- 5) Hume, 1748.
- 6) Hume, 1739.
- 7) Hume, 1752.
- 8) Smith, 1978.
- 9) Smith, 1776.
- 10) Smith, 1795.
- 11) Smith, 1759.
- 12) Steuart, 1767.
- 13) Smith, 1978, p.498.
- 14) Steuart, 1777, pp.249-50.
- 15) Steuart, 1777, pp.249-50.
- 16) Wallace, 1761.
- 17) Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, London, 1798.
- 18) William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, London, 1793.

- 19) Ogilvie, 1781.
- 20) Reid, 1990.
- 21) See Haakonsen, 1990.
- 22) See Wood, 1995.
- 23) Stewart, 1803.
- 24) For instance, Laplace (1749 – 1827), a French great scientist in the second half of the 18th century to early 19th century, wrote in the concluding chapter of his *System of the World* (Exposition du systeme du monde) published in 1796. "Their existence is, at least, extremely probable" (Pierre Simon Laplace, *Exposition du systeme du monde*, Paris, 1796)
- 25) MacLaurin, 1748, pp.390-2.
- 26) From *The Papers of Adam Ferguson*, owned by Edinburgh University Library, first published by Yasuo Amoh, 1996

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