

FIL2701/4600 – vår 2023

Moral Sense and Moral Sentimentalism in the Scottish Enlightenment

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Course Description

In this course, we shall be reading texts by various moral philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment who believed that humans were by nature committed to morality and that this commitment was manifest in their sentiments and feelings. Some of them, including Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) and Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) attributed a 'moral sense' to people, a sense somewhat analogous to the sense of sight most people naturally have. Others, including David Hume and Adam Smith, rejected the assumption of a moral sense as a kind of 6th sense, pointing out that observation of people's behavior did not provide evidence for it. Still, the comparison between people's sense of sight and their sensitivity to moral matters plays an important part in their sentimental moral theories.

All of them, however, rejected Thomas Hobbes' psychological egoism as an inadequate reduction of the manifold of human sentiments and desires to one source; and they found moral relativism objectionable on normative grounds, since they were committed to moral universalism. Their ambition was to defend a normative moral theory that was empirically informed, sentimental in kind, and universalistic.

We shall first look briefly at Shaftesbury's and Hutcheson's moral sense theories before we turn to Hume and Smith and their respective attempts to explain how we can achieve a justified consensus on moral matters even though our first access to moral matters is sentimental in kind.

Requirements

Regular attendance, active participation, semester paper

Reading List

Primary Texts

Butler, Joseph (2006) *The Works of Bishop Butler*. Edited, with an introduction and notes, by David E. White. Rochester: University of Rochester Press.

Hume, David (2000) *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Edited by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton. Oxford: OUP.

Hume, David (1975) 'An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals.' In: *David Hume. Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Reprinted from the 1777 edition with Introduction and Analytical Index by L.A. Selby-Bigge. Third edition with text revised and notes by P.H. Niddich. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hutcheson, Francis. *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. Edited by Wolfgang Leidhold. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004.

Hutcheson, Francis. *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections: With Illustrations on the Moral Sense* Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002.

Kames, Henry Home, Lord (2005) *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*. Edited and with an introduction by Mary Catherine Moran. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of (1999) *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. Cambridge: CUP.

Smith, Adam (1759/1790/1984) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Edited by D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Comments

Carrasco, Maria Alejandra and Christel Fricke (2021) 'Impartiality through "Moral Optics": Why Adam Smith Revised David Hume's Moral Sentimentalism.' *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 19/1, 1 – 18.

Darwall, Stephen (1995) *The British Moralists and the Internal 'Ought'. 1640-1740*. Cambridge: CUP.

Fricke, Christel (2019) 'Moral Sense Theories and other Sentimentalist Accounts of the Foundations of Morals.' In: Craig Smith and Alexander Broadie (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*. Cambridge: CUP, 131 – 15.

Fricke, Christel (2013) 'The Sympathetic Process and the Origin and Function of Conscience.' In: Christopher Berry, Craig Smith, Maria Pia Paganelli (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Adam Smith*. Oxford: OUP, 177 – 200.

Gill, Michael B. (2006) *The British Moralists on Human Nature and the Birth of Secular Ethics*. Cambridge: CUP.

Gill, Michael B. (2016), 'Lord Shaftesbury [Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury]', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/shaftesbury/>.

Schneewind, J.B. (1998) *The Invention of Autonomy. A History of Modern Moral Philosophy*. Cambridge: CUP.

Taylor, Jacqueline (2015) *Reflecting Subjects. Passion, Sympathy, and Society in Hume's Philosophy*. Oxford: OUP.