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volume 11

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THE  
ADAM SMITH  
REVIEW

Edited by Fonna Forman

ROUTLEDGE  


# The Adam Smith Review

## Volume 11

Adam Smith's contribution to economics is well recognised, but scholars have recently been exploring anew the multidisciplinary nature of his works. *The Adam Smith Review* is a rigorously refereed annual review that provides a unique forum for interdisciplinary debate on all aspects of Adam Smith's works, his place in history, and the significance of his writings to the modern world. It is aimed at facilitating debate between scholars working across the humanities and social sciences, thus emulating the reach of the Enlightenment world which Smith helped to shape.

This eleventh volume brings together leading scholars from across several disciplines, and offers a particular focus on Smith and Rousseau. There is also an emphasis throughout the volume on the relationship between Smith's work and that of other key thinkers such as Malthus, Newton, Freud and Sen.

**Fonna Forman** is Associate Professor of Political Science and Founding Co-Director of the Center on Global Justice and the Blum Cross-Border Initiative at the University of California, San Diego, USA. She is Editor of *The Adam Smith Review* on behalf of the Adam Smith Society.



## The Adam Smith Review

Published in association with the International Adam Smith Society

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*The Adam Smith Review* is a multidisciplinary annual review sponsored by the International Adam Smith Society. It aims to provide a unique forum for vigorous debate and the highest standards of scholarship on all aspects of Adam Smith's works, his place in history, and the significance of his writings for the modern world. *The Adam Smith Review* aims to facilitate interchange between scholars working within different disciplinary and theoretical perspectives, and to this end it is open to all areas of research relating to Adam Smith. *The Review* also hopes to broaden the field of English-language debate on Smith by occasionally including translations of scholarly works at present available only in languages other than English.

*The Adam Smith Review* is intended as a resource for Adam Smith scholarship in the widest sense. The Editor welcomes comments and suggestions, including proposals for symposia or themed sections in the *Review*. Future issues are open to comments and debate relating to previously published papers.

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# **The Adam Smith Review**

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**Edited by  
Fonna Forman**

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## From the editor

I am delighted to see ASR 11 in print, not only for its excellent papers from a diverse set of authors, including a much-anticipated set of papers guest-edited by Craig Smith from the 2015 conference he organized in Glasgow on Smith and Rousseau, but especially for the moving tributes to Donald Winch and Nick Phillipson, by Richard Whatmore, James Harris and Jeng-Guo S. Chen. Donald and Nick were giants in our ever-expanding and diverse field, whose impact on Smith studies is almost synonymous with the very revival of Smith scholarship itself across the social sciences and humanities over the last decades. They inspired my own work more intrinsically than perhaps anyone else, and in ways that have become more evident to me over time, by helping me appreciate the critical potential and currency of intellectual history. My thanks, as always, to our editorial board and the dozens of referees who participated in the production of this volume. Finally, I am pleased to introduce Ike Sharpless, our new editorial assistant, who participated in the final stages of production for ASR 11. Ike is a PhD candidate in political theory, and I thank the University of California San Diego, Division of Social Sciences, once again, for supporting his position. Thanks also to Aaron Cotkin for staying with us, to help Ike ease into his new role.

*Fonna Forman*  
Editor

# Donald Winch, Adam Smith and intellectual history

*Richard Whatmore*

## I

In 2010 Donald Winch published an appreciation of his old friend R. D. Collison (Bob) Black, commenting that Black ‘provided a model for everything that I would wish to emulate in the complete historian of economic thought’.<sup>1</sup> I feel exactly the same about Donald Winch as a man and as an intellectual historian. I was Winch’s colleague at the University of Sussex for two decades, during which time he acted as the best of mentors, an incomparable friend, and a model to be revered, rather than matched, as a scholar and as a writer. Winch taught me that in order to understand a figure such as Adam Smith, for example, it was necessary to follow the adage of his colleague, the historian John W. Burrow, and reconstruct the conversations and arguments of the past, by listening to the voices of historical actors in their writings. The Smith who emerged was worried by enthusiasts and projectors, those who believed that communities facing problems could easily be united and transformed, and that reformist legislation just had to be declared in order to be realised. Rather, Smith was an advocate of the wisdom of Solon, that all laws had to be formulated for the second-best world of human frailty and failure. Furthermore, Smith was aware that unintended consequences were powerful in the realms of men, and that any project for improvement had to take seriously the limits of human capacity to predict what would happen in future. As such, Smith was far from being an advocate of ‘economic man’, which would have seemed to Smith to be a caricature of human nature. Smith was also an enemy of revolution by the imposition of free markets, which Smith associated with the physiocrats and considered to be madness. Winch knew the writings of Smith backwards, and those of most of his contemporary interlocutors. Everyone acknowledged that Winch’s view of figures such as Hume, Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, Jevons and Marshal had to be taken seriously. How did Winch come to have such a formidable mastery of his subject? One answer lies in the fact that Winch was one of the last of a long and distinguished line of professional economists and historians. Bob Black was also of that ilk. The master practitioner for both men was the great Princeton economist Jacob Viner. This is significant for Winch’s view of Smith.

Winch had been put in contact with Black by Viner at the end of the 1950s. Both men had been supervised by Viner, and were inspired to follow him,



especially in the final stages of Viner's long career, during which he turned more directly to the history of economic thought. Winch was inspired in turn by Black's *Economic Thought and the Irish Question, 1817–1870*, which was published by Cambridge University Press in 1960, and this book influenced Winch's own first book, *Classical Political Economy and the Colonies*, which appeared with Harvard University Press in 1965. Looking back, Winch accepted the verdict of another friend, Crauford Goodwin, that a 'golden age' could be identified in the study of the history of economic thought between the 1940s and 1960s, because the subject was then 'an overlay of all economics, a distinct approach to all economic problems that should be explored as fully as more conventional theoretical and empirical approaches'.<sup>2</sup> In other words, economists could be expected to value the history of economic thought, and it was perfectly possible to be a historian of the discipline in conjunction with being a professional economist. The model, again, was Viner because he combined meticulously high standards of historical research with an avoidance of the commonplace pitfalls that plagued the study of historical economics. As Winch later put it, Viner gave 'none of the concessions to present-mindedness that still serve to keep the subject on the curriculum today' and refused to offer 'ideological comfort or ready-made historical parallels with present predicaments or promise the key to large-scale historical developments'.<sup>3</sup> Historians of economic thought, in Winch's view, oftentimes failed to follow such paths. At the same time, economists increasingly turned away from history. These were two themes of all of Donald Winch's mature work, criticising teleological accounts of the rise of economics as a science, and seeking to explain economists' general lack of interest in the history of their disciplines. The final essay published during Winch's lifetime described this decline, and the parallel process of the rise of the distinct field of intellectual history.<sup>4</sup> As the history of economic thought was deemed increasingly irrelevant to economics, intellectual history became more prominent in the humanities and social sciences. This was reflected in Winch's own career, as he moved in the 1980s from the Economics Subject Group at Sussex to the History Subject Group. Research needs to be undertaken on Jacob Viner's academic children, and their relationship with the economics profession. This is not the subject of this short essay. Rather, I want to describe Winch's sense of excitement when, in the 1970s he began to engage with the historians of political thought who helped him to frame the questions that *Adam Smith's Politics* (1976) addressed. Winch's discovery of the work of intellectual historians led him to ask new questions about the past and led him to alter his perspective on Smith. Like his earlier discovery of Jacob Viner, Winch's contribution to the labours of this second tribe began at Princeton.

## II

In April 1975 Winch, then professor of economics at the University of Sussex, commenced a correspondence with Duncan Forbes, reader in history at the

University of Cambridge, about how Adam Smith should be understood. Winch confessed to having been smitten by recent interpretations emphasising the importance of civic humanism to eighteenth-century authors, a perspective which had been introduced to him at Princeton by Quentin Skinner, both men being visitors at the Institute of Advanced Study. As Winch explained to Forbes, civic humanism might well illuminate what exactly the enlightened Scots had been up to:

When I came here [to Princeton] to spend my sabbatical year away from Sussex my intention was to begin work on a collaborative enterprise with my colleague, John Burrow, with a view to writing a book on some selected themes in the history of the social sciences. For obvious reasons this meant returning to the Scots, and since I am a historian of economic thought by trade, to Smith in particular. Much of the ground is already well-tilled, and it was with some relief that I took up some suggestions made by Quentin Skinner, one of my temporary colleagues here. This entailed doing some reading in the fairly recent literature on civic humanism and the concept of virtue and corruption. I was familiar with your own account of Ferguson on virtue, and some of the other literature on the theme of 'alienation' in Scottish writings, but I had never understood the system of republican ideas to which the ideas of 'corruption' and 'virtue' belonged.<sup>5</sup>

Winch declared that 'fired with enthusiasm', he had begun work on a re-reading of Adam Smith in the light of 'the civic humanist tradition', which he was sure provided 'a welcome alternative to the dominant liberal capitalist perspective on Smith which stretches from Locke and Hobbes on the one side to Marx and Mill on the other'. Sheldon Wolin, in his book *Politics and Vision* (1960) was identified as an example of such an interpretation, turning Smith into some kind of Whig, anticipating 'liberalism and the decline of political philosophy'. On the opposite side to Wolin were Marxist advocates of the economic determination of ideas, such as C. B. Macpherson in his *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: from Hobbes to Locke* (1962); in Winch's view Macpherson and other Marxists enunciated a teleological perspective on the development of capitalism alongside their liberal critics. Winch's correspondence shows that he was reading other authors on the civic humanist side of the divide, notably John Pocock, whose *The Machiavellian Moment* had appeared in 1975, and Nicholas Phillipson, who had co-edited *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* in 1970. Pocock's work was especially important in formulating what Winch termed 'the system of republican ideas'. At Princeton Quentin Skinner was a direct link to Pocock, as he had come up with the title of *The Machiavellian Moment* and had read and commented in detail on the text prior to publication.<sup>6</sup> A similar sense of excitement about the possibility of reconstructing the lost tradition of civic humanism was conveyed by Pocock to Skinner:

All this [revision] was blown open by my discovery, in working through things like Defoe's Review [of the Affairs of France, 1704–13] in search of

origins for the Court thesis, of a presentation of Credit (public paper credit) as an inconstant female figure and irrational historical dynamic, unmistakably none other than Fortuna (and to a lesser degree Fantasia) under a new name. So I had to rewrite my whole interpretation of the debate under William and Anne, using the title 'Neo-Machiavellian political economy' and arguing for an eighteenth-century version of the 'Machiavellian Moment' in which (1) the virtue-fortune-corruption pattern is repeated as virtue-commerce-corruption (2) early capitalism is apprehended, in a thoroughly un-Lockean and un-Macphersonian way, under the paradigm of credit-fantasy-passion-honour, so that an eighteenth-century version of false consciousness appears and we get the beginning of the sort of thought later to become Marxian.<sup>7</sup>

For Pocock too it was especially significant that civic humanism provided an alternative account of the development of capitalist ideas to that supplied by Marxists. Winch was sure that by drawing upon such work as Pocock's, and by applying it to the case of Smith, more complicated stories about 'the relationship between polity, economy and society' could be formulated.<sup>8</sup>

As noted above, Quentin Skinner proved integral to Winch's work both through his direct advice and through his own publications. Since the publication of his classic article defining the practice of intellectual history, 'Meaning and Understanding in the history of ideas' (1969), Skinner had been announcing that he expected to complete 'a more systematic discussion of the subject [the history of modern political thought], with particular reference both to the study of history, and to the use of historical examples'.<sup>9</sup> One branch was intended to address Max Weber's question, outlined in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), as to why Calvinism had appeared to go hand in hand with economic development, while Catholic areas remained relatively backward. For Weber, uncertainty about salvation induced by Calvinist predestinarian teaching had induced an intense search for the signs of grace in daily life, in turn leading to the disciplined ethos and conduct that comprised the capitalist spirit. Skinner in particular was fascinated whether faith in providence accompanied conduct that was 'provident'.<sup>10</sup>

When Skinner's *Foundations of Modern Political Thought* appeared in 1978, with the first volume being concerned with Renaissance thought and the second concerned with the period of the Reformation, a number of innovative claims were made about the history of European thought. One was that Pocock had neglected the Roman legacy in politics, because civic humanism was as much a product of Cicero's advocacy of republican virtue as Aristotle's *Politics*. A second claim by Skinner refuted Michael Walzer's argument, in *The Revolution of the Saints* (1966) that Protestantism and political liberty advanced in tandem; instead Skinner traced the origin of the connection between liberty and self-government to glossators upon Roman Law, such as Bartolus de Saxoferrato (1313–1357), and concern with the liberties of the free cities of Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Equally iconoclastic was Skinner's assertion that the resistance theories of the Calvinists and the Lutherans of the 1530s, founded on assumptions about natural rights and about the sovereignty of the people, found their origins in the

neo-Thomists of the School of Salamanca, such as Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suárez, and Juan de Mariana, and Parisian theologians of the early sixteenth century such as John Mair and Jacques Almain. Catholic and conciliarist origins of modern ideas about liberty and law, the alternative tradition to civic humanism, were being posited by Skinner.

A sense of how radical Skinner's *Foundations* was accepted as being in its reorientation of the history of political thought is apparent from his correspondence with James H. Burns, a historian at University College London whose own interests, like Skinner's, ranged from the ancient to the modern. Burns read various versions of Skinner's book and made a number of criticisms that Skinner took on board. One point, however, continued to divide them, concerning the definition of the community that could be accepted as being the locus of rights, and in consequence that might justify action against a ruler who violated those rights. Discussion focussed on certain texts of the conciliarist and professor of theology at Paris, Jacques Almain (1480–1515). Skinner wanted to draw a line from Almain ultimately to Locke, with the latter restating the conciliarist argument that the rights that princes enjoyed under positive law were originally possessed by each individual living under the law of nature. Burns felt this was taking things too far, because Almain believed in corporate entities as the foundational units for rights; rights were implanted in communities by God, rather than being granted to individuals who then formed communities, in order to defend their individual rights:

What strikes me most forcibly . . . is the reiterated emphasis placed by Almain on the community as the original possessor of the coercive power normally exercised by rulers . . . What worries me is the reference, crucial for your argument, to the prior possession of this power 'by members of the community itself'. The phrase 'the members of the community' is perhaps ambiguous; and if one reads it in the context of what Almain says . . . it is unexceptionable – but it then doesn't, I suggest, sustain your interpretation. What Almain seems to be saying, with a good deal of emphasis, is that the individual is essentially part of a corporate, even organic whole: *quaelibet persona singularis comparetur ad totam Communitatem sicut pars ad totum*; and I take this to mean that it is only as incorporated parts of such a whole that the individuals *ut universi* rather than *ut singuli* dispose of the power in question . . . Almain does state that 'God, the author of nature, made man with a natural right or power to take what is necessary for his sustenance and conservation and to repel what is harmful . . .'; and this includes the right of slaying an unjust aggressor. I also agree that he goes on to say that 'likewise' (similiter) 'a community . . . has a natural power of preserving not only its existence but its peaceful existence, to which it pertains to cut off, even to kill, those whose lives tend to disturb the community'. But I do not think that Almain either explicitly or implicitly derives the second of these powers from the first. It seems to me that he regards them as, so to speak, parallel powers, each of them conferred directly by God, 'the author of nature' – the first conferred on every individual, the second on every civil society.<sup>11</sup>

Whatever Burns's criticisms, he accepted that Skinner's work was likely to challenge those who argued in favour of Enlightenment origins for modern politics. The implication of Skinner's argument was that seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century authors had to be reconsidered by looking again at ideas about liberty and resistance across Catholic Europe, and that a tradition of civic humanism had been established in medieval times that continued to exert its influence into modern times; this understandably enthused Winch. Forbes, Skinner's colleague at Cambridge, doused the enthusiasm with regard to civic humanism and Smith. Forbes replied to Winch on 28 April, welcoming the latter's project, and identifying himself 'as a historian of ideas whose lot is that, very much, of an under-labourer'. As such, Forbes was sceptical of 'trying to put Smith into any sort of "tradition"'. He informed Winch that later in 1975 his book *Hume's Philosophical Politics* would be published by Cambridge University Press. This book formed a part of a bigger project Forbes envisaged, encompassing Smith, which was also critical of established interpretations, associated especially with economists studying the rise of capitalism, but without wishing to move to an emphasis upon civic humanism as the key interpretative context for authors like Smith:

Meanwhile I am going on with the larger business of which the Hume book was an offshoot, and that includes Smith, who after Hume is the next most important person. But this 'tradition' business I do not feel competent to write about, and I must confess I am a bit less enthusiastic about 'civic humanism' than some other people as a key to these thinkers, who are exceedingly complex, and too big to be bottled in any way. The old interpretation of Smith was of course absolutely wrong, but it was (forgive me) the work of economists who knew damn all and cared less about the background, and especially about the project in natural jurisprudence, of which *Wealth of Nations* was a part.

Forbes went on to explain what he intended to do with Smith, which was to reconstruct what being a philosopher entailed in the eighteenth century, recapturing the myriad contexts that such figures were exposed to, beyond the civic humanism emphasised by historians such as Pocock:

I may be wrong but my line about Smith is that he must be seen, like Hume, as the philosopher (with all the eighteenth-century implications of the word 'philosophy') until one gets that right, the other aspects are secondary. In other words, one must begin further back, I think, than you are doing at the moment. For what it is worth, therefore my advice is: don't sell yourself to the 'civic humanism' business. John Pocock used to have a bee in his bonnet about it. I am persuaded to do so, provided lots and lots of other bees are given total license to buzz also. And anyway, the 'civic humanism' in the context of Smith, Ferguson and whomsoever becomes something else again. That is why I am so suspicious of 'traditions' of thought.



Forbes ended his letter by calling himself a ‘pointilliste’ in scholarship, noted that his book *Hume’s Philosophical Politics* ‘is meant to be Humean’, and that it was unlikely as such ‘to be liked’ by contemporaries.<sup>12</sup> Forbes’ book made natural jurisprudence a Protestant story, revealing Hume’s debt to Grotius, Pufendorf, and the jurists who laboured towards the end of the wars of religion, and after the Treaty of Westphalia, in the hope of establishing civil liberty and peace across Europe. They had formulated what Forbes termed ‘a modern theory of natural law’.<sup>13</sup>

### III

When Winch’s book *Adam Smith’s Politics* appeared with Cambridge University Press in 1978, Forbes wrote an admiring review in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, and wrote separately to Winch about the one critical point made in the review, about the lack of analysis of natural justice:

I’ve said in my review that if you had gone into the question of natural justice in Hume and Smith more deeply you would have thrown the whole essay out of balance, but that there are one or two places where, as a consequence, a draught blows in, so to speak.

Forbes added that ‘the natural justice approach makes a nonsense of Meekery’, referring to the work of the Marxist historian Ronald L. Meek, whose *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* had appeared in 1976; once again, the need to refute Marxist perspectives on the history of ideas was foregrounded. Forbes’ final advice to Winch was to look up something he had recently become aware of as a PhD examiner, ‘an excellent thesis on ‘Natural Justice in Hume, Smith, Millar and Craig, for Edinburgh, by Knud Haakonssen’.<sup>14</sup> Haakonssen was, Forbes noted to Winch, ‘a philosopher’. Nevertheless, Forbes, a difficult person to please, considered Haakonssen’s thesis to have been outstanding, because it provided an account distinct from the current trend towards civic humanist explanations, and focussed on the innovations of Hume and Smith with regard to ideas about justice:

Hume and Smith between them outline a new theory of justice as the foundation for all social and political life. Justice is a mode of assessing social and political behaviour, the central point of which is that the motives behind such behaviour must not have an injurious tendency which would arouse the resentment of an impartial spectator. This means that they must be in accordance with a general rule which is negative, telling people what not to do and which thus ensures that the behaviour which is allowed as just is as widely compatible as possible with the rest of the values and aims accepted at any given time by a society. The latter can only be understood as they have developed through the interaction of individual men; and jurisprudence as a critical discipline is therefore dependent upon history as the new ‘science of human nature.’ Justice is a negative virtue, the rules of which are enforceable for negative utilitarian reasons.<sup>15</sup>

In his reply, Winch acknowledged ‘the big hole created by my failure to face up to TMS [Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*] and natural justice more squarely’. In consequence, he wrote, ‘my version of Smith’s politics lacks an adequate philosophical base’. This was ‘partly due to my ignorance concerning antecedents, and partly because, for reasons of earlier deformation, I knew the economic enemy best’. Winch promised to look up Haakonssen’s work, as he had ‘a vague idea of following up the career of the ‘science of politics’ in the hands of Dugald Stewart and his pupils’ and would be visiting Edinburgh, his ‘favourite city, the place where I started my teaching career’.<sup>16</sup> Later in 1978 Donald Winch acted as reader for Cambridge University Press for a manuscript by Knud Haakonssen, which appeared in 1981 as *The Science of a Legislator: The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith*. Haakonssen’s great achievement, in the view of Forbes and now also of Winch, was to have plugged the gap in scholarship, by revealing the importance of the philosophical foundations of Smith’s thought in reconstructing his science of the statesman or legislator. It was this side of Smith’s work that Winch himself began to work on more directly in the years up to the publication of his masterpiece *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750–1834* (1996). Having mastered both the civic humanist and natural juristic approaches to eighteenth-century political economy, Winch’s conclusion was that Smith’s was an ‘enduring particular result’.<sup>17</sup> In historical research, as in political ideology, it was a mistake to corral authors into clubs whose membership they themselves would have rejected.

## Notes

- 1 Donald Winch, ‘R. D. Collison Black, 1922–2008: A Personal Tribute’, *History of Political Economy*, 42/1 (2010), 1–17.
- 2 Crauford Goodwin, ‘History of Economic Thought’, in Steven H. Durlauf and Lawrence E. Blume, eds., *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2nd edn.
- 3 Donald Winch, ‘Jacob Viner as Intellectual Historian’, in W. J. Samuels, ed., *The Craft of the Historian of Economic Thought* (Connecticut: JAI Press, 1983), 1–17.
- 4 Donald Winch, ‘Intellectual History and the History of Economics’, in Richard Whatmore and Brian Young, eds., *A Companion to Intellectual History* (New York and London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 170–183.
- 5 Donald Winch to Duncan Forbes, 17 April 1975, Donald Winch papers, University of Sussex Special Collections.
- 6 Richard Whatmore, ‘Introduction’, to J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2016 [1978]).
- 7 Pocock to Skinner, October 12, 1972, private papers of Quentin Skinner. I am extremely grateful to Quentin Skinner for giving me access to such letters.
- 8 Donald Winch to Duncan Forbes, 17 April 1975, Donald Winch papers, University of Sussex Special Collections.
- 9 Quentin Skinner, ‘Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas’, *History and Theory* 8/1 (1969), 3–53, n. 192, 45.
- 10 Mark Goldie, ‘The context of the Foundations’, in Annabel Brett and James Tully, (eds.) *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3–19.

- 11 James H. Burns to Quentin Skinner, 20 December 1977, pages 3–4, papers of James H. Burns, Special Collections, University of St Andrews.
- 12 Duncan Forbes to Donald Winch, 28 April 1975, Winch papers.
- 13 Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 59–90.
- 14 Duncan Forbes to Donald Winch, 19 May 1978, Winch papers.
- 15 Duncan Forbes' notes on Knud Haakonssen's PhD thesis, private papers of Knud Haakonssen.
- 16 Donald Winch to Duncan Forbes, 25 May 1978, Winch papers.
- 17 Donald Winch, 'Adam Smith's Enduring Particular Result; A Political and Cosmopolitan Perspective', in Istan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (eds.), *Wealth and Virtue; The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 253–269.

# Nicholas Phillipson, 1937–2018

*James Harris*

As his many friends among the readers of this journal will already know, Nicholas Phillipson died at Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary on 24 January 2018. He was 80, and had been suffering for some time from severe pain in his hips and lower back that turned out, far too late for anything to be done about it, to be caused by prostate cancer. As Nick would have wanted, his funeral was very far from being a sombre affair. Like Nick's life, it echoed with music, conversation, and laughter. But it is in the nature of funerals that they are organised at short notice, and I know that many people who wanted to be there could not be. Thomas Ahnert and I are putting together a celebration of Nick's academic achievements to take place in Edinburgh on 1–2 March 2019. All will be very welcome, and we hope that the Smith community will be well represented. In the meantime, I have been asked by the editor to write something in memory of the author of *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life*.

Nick arrived in Edinburgh in 1965 to take up a lectureship in the Department of History at the University, and he never left. He had written his PhD at Cambridge on the Whig programme for reform of the Court of Session in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and some of his earliest publications, including some notable pieces on Sir Walter Scott, grew out of that work. At the same time, Nick was preparing a series of essays on the then still relatively neglected question of the origins and nature of the Scottish Enlightenment. These essays introduced themes which he would spend the rest of his life refining and elaborating upon. They argued that the impetus for Scotland's intellectual achievement in the eighteenth century was provided by a crisis of identity among the country's elites caused by the 1707 union of parliaments. This was a crisis felt particularly acutely in Edinburgh, now a capital without a political role. It was in the great institutions of Edinburgh life – the law, the church, and the university – that resources were found for addressing and overcoming the crisis, in the form of the development of a new moral and political language, indeed a new understanding of social life itself, orientated towards the pressing question of how to make the most of the economic opportunities that the union provided. The project for the Scottish literati, Nick claimed, was not so much to legitimise the values of the union as to define them.

This general framework for understanding the Scottish Enlightenment was both confirmed and transformed by the publication in 1975 of J. G. A. Pocock's

*The Machiavellian Moment*. After that, a major question for Nick was how the Scots adapted the language of neo-Machiavellian civic humanism to their own distinctive purposes. The traditional republican model of freedom through self-government was no longer available to them. But an alternative was provided by the life of the coffee house and club as described, and instantiated, in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Here, according to Nick, was a language of civic morality uniquely appropriate to Scotland's situation. The great achievement of the Scottish Enlightenment, he argued, was the way its philosophers were able to show how this language could be used for discussing the moral, political, and economic organization of commercial society at large. It was in this spirit that Nick approached Hume in the book he published in 1989 for a series called 'Historians on Historians'. 'All of Hume's philosophy, all of his history', Nick wrote, 'was to be directed towards the goal of teaching men and women to seek happiness in the world of common life, not in the life hereafter, and to pay attention to their duties to their fellow citizens rather than to a suppositious God'. Nick despatched effectively with the absurd idea that Hume was more of a philosopher than he was a moralist and historian, and sketched what remains a powerfully plausible account of Hume's intellectual life considered as a whole. As was entirely appropriate, Penguin reissued the book in the tercentenary year of 2011. It is, to my mind, easily the best short book about Hume, and the only one worth giving to someone who doesn't know much about Hume and wants to know what all the fuss is about.

Aftershocks of Pocockian revolution in the study of the moral and political thought of Britain in the eighteenth century are audible in the chapter Nick wrote on Smith for the seminal collection *Wealth and Virtue*, edited by István Hont and Michael Ignatieff. Smith, Nick argued there, was 'a philosopher who was concerned with the principles of propriety as well as with those of virtue and valued the spirit of independence and sense of ego of commercial man rather than the libertarian civic virtues of the classical republican'. In 1995 Nick signed a contract with Penguin to write a book on Smith. It was not until he retired from his position at Edinburgh in 2004, however, that he was able to give the book his full attention. When it finally appeared in 2010, it was, as every reader of *The Adam Smith Review* will be well aware, a spectacular triumph. I still have some notes that I took at the discussion of the book at the Edinburgh Book Festival. In his presentation of its major themes, Nick began, as he very often did, with the science of man, interpreted, à la Smith, as the science of how, through socialisation, we become who and what we are. Human beings are, he continued, everywhere thrown into a world of trade – trade in opinions, manners, sentiments, trade with others, and trade with ourselves. Through this trade – and only through this trade – we become individuals. Nick was at pains to point how far his Smith was from the Smith of enthusiasts for maximally free markets and maximally small government. His Smith saw government as absolutely necessary in the enforcement of the law, and also in the securing of fairness in the distribution of wealth. And his Smith was also very much not only the author of *The Wealth of Nations*. He was, just as importantly, a giver of lectures on rhetoric and on jurisprudence,



and – as Nick was always keen to emphasize – a commentator on and developer of the scepticism of his friend David Hume. The first question Nick fielded after his introduction was from someone who, unaccountably, wanted to know what this had to do with *The Merchant of Venice*. Needless to say, Nick was unperturbed.

After the huge success of his book on Smith, Nick returned to where he began, and started work on a comprehensive account of the Scottish Enlightenment. It is not clear for now how far he had got with this new yet old project by the time he died. There is no reason, though, to think that he changed his mind about the fact, as he saw it, that the history of the Enlightenment in Scotland was, to a very large extent, the history of Edinburgh in the eighteenth century. Enlightenment, as he saw it, happened in the discussion of ideas at clubs and societies, among the audiences of recitals and concerts, at dinner, and over long evenings drinking claret and port. As anyone who met with Nick in Edinburgh will remember, this was his world too. I expect many people reading this have their own memories of refined, hilarious, erudite, gossipy lunches with him at The Outsider or Centotre. He was immensely generous in spirit, and always humane in his scholarship. Our world is smaller without him.

# In Memory of Nick Phillipson

*Jeng-Guo S. Chen*

I first came across the name of Nicholas Phillipson upon learning the term ‘Scottish Enlightenment’ in 1992, and first met him while presenting a project to him on Adam Smith in 1995. I was granted a prestigious studentship by the Taiwanese government in 1992 that would cover all my tuition fees in any humanities discipline and in almost any country in which I chose to study. I was, however, greatly confused by this indulgent liberty, pondering what subject I should or could take beyond my congenial home discipline of Chinese history. Serendipitously, the name of Adam Smith came into my mind. The voice of Clio started to whisper in my ears: what kind of society could Smith have lived in, and what kind of society could produce a writer like Smith? I was soon taken away by such historical questions I proposed for myself.

I started to do preliminary research concerning these questions and found with awe the term of the ‘Scottish Enlightenment’ as Columbus did when he thought he had discovered the ‘New Continent’. Obviously he did not. Neither did I, despite the fact that this specific Enlightenment was a terra incognita in the Taiwanese college curriculum. The article on ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’ collected in Porter and Teich’s volume, *Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge 1982), led me to the world that had occupied Phillipson and many other historians for years. It is in the brief biography of Dr. Phillipson in the Porter’s volume that I knew he had been preparing for a book on Smith in 1982. I did not encounter ‘natives’ of the Scottish Enlightenment until 1995, when I embarked on my journey to Edinburgh from Brighton, where I did my first postgraduate study.

Among the ‘natives’, Nick instantly impressed me with his unusual height among academics – and uncommon kindness among tutors – when I was first received by him at William Robertson Building of Edinburgh University, in early October 1995, with a proposal on Adam Smith’s moral philosophy and agricultural economy. In that year, Ian Ross published an acclaimed and highly detailed biography of Smith. Many Smith scholars might envisage themselves writing something brilliant based on the toolkit-like reference that Ross contributed to the world (I, at least, was one). After the ritual reception of a beer at Blind Poet’s Club on the Richmond Street near WRB, however, five years of exciting-cum-grooming days awaited me.

Edinburgh became dark far too soon for a man born below the Tropic of Cancer. So went my first years of supervised days under Nick, the gentle giant.

After the first-year report, I told Nick that I was ready to write up my thesis on Smith, because, as I said to him, 'I have read all Smith's publications twice.' 'Oh, really,' said he. 'I have read them seven times. And I do not know how to start.' He concluded our conversation that day with self-exploration. The frankness in this self-exploration was certainly a warning against my complacency in presenting a study of Smith that was original in any sense of the term. I retired to my study room and read, more voraciously, the secondary literature on Smith. The result is that I started to steer astray from Smith and toward the generation after him, including John Millar, Francis Jeffrey, and James Mill, among others. Nick noticed this deviation of my intellectual trajectory and tried to resuscitate me: 'For a PhD thesis, it is good enough if you can do a great summary of 200 books of the study of Smith.' This is characteristic of Nick's suggestions given to comfort his students on the brink of withdrawing from their studies. At last, I finished my supervised work with Nick but ended the thesis with a study of James Mill in the Scottish Enlightenment. In a sense, the thesis is one of, to borrow Colin Kidd's apt term, 'Phillipsonian Enlightenment', but only in reverse.

From time to time during tutorials, Nick confided to his students that the central and final task of the study of the Scottish Enlightenment was 'how to contextualize Hume and Smith'. Such a statement might sound overly authoritarian to the ears of Hutchesonian, Fergusonian, Reidian and Robertsonian scholars – among those many others searching the Enlightenment with different approaches. Nick's literary career nonetheless supports the track of this conviction, as Hume and Smith present the largest part of his publications. By 'contextualizing' Hume and Smith, Nick meant much more to endorse the existence of imminent relation of society and intellectual culture, than the existence of the so-called Cambridge School of 'contextualism'. Partisanship is the least characteristic trait of Nick's intellectual life, after all. Intellectually he has been associated with Jack Plumb, the Hegelian scholar Duncan Forbes, John Pocock, Istvan Hont, Quentin Skinner, and many other historians of ideas. In the later years of his literary career, Nick worked closely with Susan Manning, the late professor of literature, on the project of the 'Science of Man'. It is crucial, nonetheless, to note that in the 70s Nick closely worked with social historians, including Rosalind Mitchison and Lawrence Stone. One day in a tutorial, Nick told me: 'Chen, I found it very curious that your papers seem to be written from a pen of the 70s, just like mine.' By 'the 70s', Nick meant the old school of sociologist historians, who studied history with the hope that they could portray a distinct society, or, rather, try to bring a distinct society in the past back to life. Unlike the modern cultural historians who tend to objectify cultures as social practices without agents, Nick aimed at painting a society by using cultural history as the colour. The culture of politeness is the sharpest colour that Nick used to draw on the Scottish society of the period with which he was infatuated, during which Hume and Smith also lived. Nick might not agree with my representation, which somehow puts him in opposition to cultural historians. He is by no means a partisan, but Nick had a good reason for this denial. That 'we cannot truly know others' minds' is probably the most profound motto that Nick

derived from the Scottish Enlightenment. Upon this conviction was built the trunk of the Phillipsonian Scottish Enlightenment model of modern scepticism.

What makes Nick distinct from conventional social historians is that he was himself ‘absolutely meticulous about details’, as Nick once applied this phrase in praise of a historian. If polite culture and scepticism represent the Humean society, the meticulousness of niceties represent Smith’s *Science of Man*. Both in TMS and WN, Smith generously spares considerable pages for quotidian lives and the behaviors of people’s economic and sentimental exchanges, the process of production, the evolution of institutions, and psychological happenings and mutations. As a great lover of art, Nick appreciated the Smithian historian’s craft. One of the prominent features of Dr. Phillipson’s *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life* is a long quotation of Smith’s own words. And his students know why very well. In another tutorial, Nick admonished me: ‘Chen, you are too thrifty to your people.’ He told me not to represent my heroes by summarizing their works. ‘You have to let your people speak.’ ‘Your readers like to listen to historical figures speak for themselves.’ The historian, in this sense, is like a conductor, leading the whole orchestra to sound harmoniously, or, rather, a playwright writing non-fictions. But how can a historian giving out long quotations be free from inviting blame on account of tediousness and pedantism? It requires thorough familiarity with the texts, the society and the ages the historian is dealing with. It also asks for patience and attention to detail, so that every quotation appears in the most proper context.

Since Dugald Stewart’s *Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith*, given at the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1793, the public have received some very distinct biographies of Smith. Among them, John Rae’s (1895), Ian Ross’ (1995) and Phillipson’s (2010) are three milestones. It is extremely hard for new generations to vie with the achievements of these pathbreaking works, in terms of the collection of biographical information and details, in the fluidity of motif-change in each chapter, and their readable prose, although it nonetheless won’t be an obstacle for young generations to strive onward with the the Smithian studies, to which Nick contributed so much.

Last September I invited Nick to be a tutor at a conference of Smith in China. He ended up not coming. I shall let my historical hero, my old supervisor, speak for himself on this anecdote to close this piece of my memory of him:

Dear Chen

I’m afraid you’re going to be very annoyed with me, and you will be right to be so. Very regretfully, I’m going to say no to taking on this project. I’m too old to take on such an important and demanding assignment.

I feel guilty about not having come out directly with a ‘no, thank you’ when you first invited me to take this on, and I can only say now, thank you very much for having asked me in the first place and I hope and trust that the event, particularly with Fonna as well as you taking part will be a great success

with very best wishes as always

Nick

(13 March 2017)

Dear Chen

The great sadness of not coming to China is that I shan't see you. Let's hope that we can do something about that in the near future!

As ever

Nick

(14 March 2017)





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# Smith and Rousseau

*Guest editor: Craig Smith*



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# Symposium on Adam Smith and Jean-Jacques Rousseau

*Craig Smith*

The genesis of this symposium was a joint meeting of the International Adam Smith Society and the Rousseau Association that was designed to foster further work on the intellectual connections between these two great thinkers by bringing together the two scholarly communities. The meeting, held in July 2015 at the University of Glasgow and generously supported by the British Academy/Leverhulme fund, led to a series of highly productive discussions cutting across the academic disciplines. The papers in this symposium are drawn from the more than fifty papers prepared for the joint meeting. Additional papers will appear in forthcoming volumes of *The Adam Smith Review* and in the forthcoming edited volume *Adam Smith and Rousseau: Ethics, Politics, Economics* (Edinburgh University Press).

Smith scholars will be familiar with the recent flourishing of interest in the relationship between Rousseau and Smith. See for example: Pack (2000); Larrère (2002); Force (2003); Hurtado Prieto (2003, 2004); Berry (2004); Hanley (2006, 2008a, 2008b); Rasmussen (2006, 2013); Schliesser (2006); Neuhouser (2008); Vaughan (2009); Griswold (2010); Phillipson (2010); Kukathas (2014); Rathbone (2015); Stimson (2015); Niimura (2016). Two recent book-length treatments of Smith and Rousseau by Dennis Rasmussen (2008) and Istvan Hont (2015) are about to be joined by a third by Charles Griswold (forthcoming). We are clearly dealing with a developing sub-field of eighteenth-century studies. The papers collected in this symposium have been selected because they represent new work on aspects of the Smith/Rousseau relationship that has been under-explored in the recent literature. The symposium takes as its broad organisational principle the desire to include a new approach to each of the key points where Smith directly engages with Rousseau's thought. The papers are prefaced by a contextual piece which examines a possible Rousseauian engagement with Smith's thought and ends with a consideration of what the study of Smith and Rousseau might mean for Enlightenment studies more generally.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith are two of the foremost thinkers of the European Enlightenment, thinkers who made seminal contributions to moral and political philosophy and who shaped some of the key concepts of modern political economy. Though we have no solid evidence that they met in person, we do know that they shared many friends and interlocutors, particularly the

French thinkers Smith met during his time on the Continent in the mid 1760s. Most famously Smith's close friendship with David Hume brought him into the quarrel between the latter and Rousseau following Rousseau's stay in England in 1766. Smith comments on the incident in his letters to Hume (Corr. 90: 110; 93: 112–13; 96: 118; 103: 125; 109: 132; 111: 133–6; 112: 136–7). The usually mild-mannered Smith is clearly exercised on his friend's behalf and refers to Rousseau as a 'great . . . Rascal' and a 'hypocritical Pedant' (Corr. 93: 112–13). That said, Smith was clearly very familiar with Rousseau's writings and both men were part of a wider culture of cosmopolitan intellectuals exchanging ideas across Europe.

The first paper in the symposium, by Christopher Kelly and Heather Pangle, engages with this cultural and intellectual milieu. It reverses the usual trend in the current literature on Rousseau and Smith. Instead of examining Smith's response to Rousseau, or placing the two in a comparative context, Kelly and Pangle explore a potential point of interaction between Rousseau and Scottish moral philosophy in the letters of Julie von Bondeli. The paper explores Rousseau's interaction with Bondeli, a leading Bernese literati, whose letters reflect on enlightened life and ideas. Their correspondence in the early 1760s comes at a time when Bondeli was absorbing the work of Hutcheson and Smith and refining her own views on the moral sense. Her response to *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is informed by her reading of Scottish moral philosophy and the exchanges with Rousseau provide intriguing insight into the continental reception of Scottish sentimentalism.

The second paper, by Gloria Vivenza, examines an aspect of Rousseau and Smith's shared immersion in the cultural legacy of the classics. Vivenza examines and compares the attitude of both thinkers to Cato the Younger. The discussion of the example of Cato was a key part of the political tradition of republicanism, and their quite distinct responses to the emblematic example of Cato's life and, more importantly, his death, offer us an interesting angle on one of the symbols of Roman political virtue.

Smith's first published mention of Rousseau lies in the letter to the *Edinburgh Review* (1756) where he discusses contemporary philosophy, the *Encyclopédie* and Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755). The discussion comes at a key point in Smith's intellectual development as he was engaged in writing the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) which established his international reputation. In the letter Smith famously traces the inspiration for elements of Rousseau's thought to the work of Bernard Mandeville (Letter: 250–4). This provides the subject for our third paper by Spencer J. Pack. Pack examines the evolutionary account of history found in Smith and Rousseau in the light of the central notion of unintended consequences. Pack explores how a very similar evolutionary approach leads Smith and Rousseau to very different conclusions about the evolution of commercial society.

Smith also discusses Rousseau in some of his less well-known writings such as the *Considerations Concerning the First Formation of Languages* (1761) (CL 2: 205; see also LRBL i.19: 9–10). In his paper Byron Davies explores the relationship between language and moral judgement in the *Discours* and *The*

*Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Davies examines the illocutionary implications of giving credit to an individual's statements. Given the stress on interpersonal judgement in Rousseau and Smith's accounts of socialisation, we are able to explore the effect of crediting testimony on social status.

Smith also mentions Rousseau in the essay on the *Imitative Arts* (1795) and Kris Worsley takes this as his inspiration for a fascinating study of Smith and Rousseau's respective discussions of the idea of understanding instrumental music through the notion of imitation (see IA: 199–200). Worsley situates Rousseau and Smith's thinking on the issue within the wider context of eighteenth-century music theory and shows how both thinkers make novel contributions to the discussion. By comparing and contrasting their views on this issue we are also able to gain insight into other areas of their thinking where imitation is a key concept.

The final paper in the symposium, by Iago Ramos, widens out the discussion to consider what the study of the Rousseau and Smith connection can contribute to the study of the Enlightenment more generally. Ramos explores Rousseau and Smith's shared fascination with sentiment and imagination and considers whether this axis might provide us with an alternative analytic for the Age of Reason. If reason is less than central to the interests and accounts of human experience to be found in two such central Enlightenment figures, then perhaps much of the existing scholarship on the Enlightenment is mischaracterising the thought of the period.

Taken together these papers continue the discussions started in the recent literature and highlight new avenues along which to consider Rousseau and Smith.

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# Rousseau and Julie von Bondeli on the Moral Sense

*Christopher Kelly and Heather Pangle*

In recent years, scholars such as Ryan Hanley (2009) and Dennis Rasmussen (2008) have been arguing that important parts of Adam Smith's thought can best be understood as responses to Rousseau following from a more sympathetic reading than had previously been accepted. Even more recently, Charles Griswold (2013) has stressed differences between the two that nevertheless indicate a common frame of reference. To date, no one has suggested that the relations between the two move in more than one direction: Smith is known to have read and written about Rousseau, and there is no evidence that Rousseau read Smith's works or those of most other important figures from the Scottish Enlightenment. Rousseau's relations with the Scottish Enlightenment, it has seemed, can be limited to his quarrel with Hume, a quarrel in which he showed rather little detailed knowledge of Hume's published writings.<sup>1</sup> We will show, however, that Rousseau did, in fact, have an indirect brush with the Scottish Enlightenment even before his stay in England. This contact came from a surprising source – his correspondence with and about a Swiss woman who was an enthusiastic reader of Smith and of other participants in the Scottish Enlightenment.

Numerous of Rousseau's most successful literary works take the form of letters in which he addressed the general public indirectly while ostensibly writing to an individual. Even in his actual correspondence he knew that his letters would be copied and circulated to a broad audience. He also knew that they might be opened by the public authorities. On a number of occasions, sets of correspondence (such as the *Botanical Letters*) were collected and published as literary works that went through many editions. Some of the most interesting of the exchanges of letters are with women and young men who wrote to Rousseau asking for advice from a writer who had inspired them.<sup>2</sup> Scholars who study these letters usually focus on Rousseau's portion of the correspondence, but sometimes his correspondents compel attention as well. Our intention is to take a brief look into the correspondence with and about Rousseau by one correspondent who stands out from the crowd in many ways, Julie von Bondeli.

The existence of this correspondence has been known to some readers in part because Goethe refers to it in his autobiographical *From My Life: Poetry and Truth*. He mentions listening to readings from Bondeli's letters on a visit to her friend Sophie von La Roche, who was herself well known across Europe as one

of the first successful female authors of fiction in German. Goethe reports that correspondence was a valued means of fostering ‘moral and literary exchange’ and that letters were often read at friendly gatherings. He adds, ‘The letters of a certain Julie Bondeli were highly esteemed: she was famed as a woman of sense and merit, and as a friend of Rousseau. Anyone with any connection whatever to this extraordinary man basked in the glory emanating from him, and a silent congregation had been established far and wide in his name’ (1987: 411). This remark could be read as suggesting that her letters owed their interest primarily to her relations with Rousseau, and no doubt this is true. Nevertheless, one should not ignore Goethe’s remark that she was famed as a woman of sense and merit, a reputation she acquired without the aid of emanations from Rousseau.

Indeed, Rousseau himself went even further in his praise than Goethe did. After seeing a letter from her for the first time – a letter written to a friend in which she discussed *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and its critics – he wrote to a mutual acquaintance,

[S]he brings together what is rarely found anywhere at all and what I would not have looked for at Berne: solidity and shading, precision and pleasure, the reasoning of a man and the intelligence of a woman, Voltaire’s pen and Leibniz’s head, she refutes my censors as a philosopher and mocks them as a woman of elegance.

(Leigh 1965–1991: XIII, 200)

Who is this woman who combined Voltaire’s pen and Leibniz’s head, both of which were much admired by Rousseau? What did she say that led Rousseau to this characterization?

### **Julie von Bondeli and her circle**

Born in Berne in 1732 to parents of distinguished birth and intellect, Bondeli was by all accounts a leading light of Swiss society who became perhaps the most important female letter-writer of the German enlightenment (Christensen 2012: 57). Despite difficult personal and familial circumstances – the bankruptcy of her father, his death and the prolonged illness and subsequent death of her mother, and unrelenting bad health that led to her own painful and premature death at the age of 47 – she had a superlative education and acquired a coterie of devoted friends and intellectual partners. Although considered physically unattractive and not materially well off, she was recognized as astute, lively, and kind-hearted.

Even prior to gaining Rousseau’s notice, Bondeli already stood as a central figure of an intellectual and personal web in which she was recognized as a woman of sense, wit, analytic rigor, and sharp powers of observation. In Berne, she frequented circles of active and highly educated men and women who hosted one another in salons and on country estates, engaging in both serious intellectual exchange and leisurely amusement.<sup>3</sup> Her close friend (and later an acquaintance of Rousseau) Vincenz Bernhard Tschärner, a politically active

Swiss author, historian, and publisher, described her as the ‘soul’ of the circles she was a part of (Christensen 2012: 25, 45 f. 186). The salon in which she spent many of her Berne evenings went so far as to secretly plan and then dramatically execute a theatrical declaration of her as their Queen. She playfully declared her acceptance of her selection, expounded the principles she meant to rule by, and conferred posts and offices on her delighted electors (Schädelin 1838: 24–5, Bodemann 1874: 10). Friends and acquaintances, many of whom were authors of substantial fame and influence, frequently sent her theoretical and literary works in draft form seeking her advice and critical comments. She took part in intensive intellectual exchange on literary, philosophic, political, and scientific matters, sometimes in circles that were otherwise entirely male but in which she was treated as an equal.<sup>4</sup> Her friends and admirers included numerous friends of Rousseau’s – men such as Vincenz Bernhard Tschärner, Leonhard Usteri, Niklaus Anton Kirchberger, Daniel Fellenberg and Paul-Claude Moultoy.<sup>5</sup> It will be useful to say a word about some of these friends.

In her surviving correspondence, Julie von Bondeli emerges as a woman with wide-ranging influence and diverse interests. One illustration from early in her life is her relationship with Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), who shaped the development of the modern novel, writing what may be considered the first Bildungsroman, and who introduced the German-speaking world to Shakespeare, translating 22 of his plays. He began an influential literary journal, and later in life became a professor of philosophy and a tutor to several Weimar princes. His work, written in a wide range of literary forms from epic verse narrative to political satire, was admired (and also at times criticized) by contemporaries including Goethe and Lessing. Recalling a stay in Prussia around the turn of the century, John Quincy Adams noted that ‘Wieland was there, I think, decidedly the most popular of the German poets’ (Van Abbé 1961: 163).

Wieland described Julie von Bondeli as deserving the title of ‘the tenth muse or the fourth grace’ – at least for him (Bodemann 1874: 59). While Wieland’s early poetry was sentimental and effusive, even mystical, Bondeli drew him toward a more philosophic and earthly, observation-based style. Insofar as Wieland had an effect on the trajectory of German poetry – an effect which has been depicted as freeing German poetry from its old stiffness and cutting a new path (Bodemann 1874: 80; McCarthy 1979: 156–158; Van Abbé 1961: 60, 65) – Bondeli had an unmistakable hand in the character of that effect. They fell in love and spent some time planning to marry, although a misunderstanding and perhaps a misdeed on Wieland’s part that is alluded to in surviving letters caused the engagement to be broken off. They maintained a close friendship and Wieland continued to send his work to ‘the subtle Julie’ for her comments and criticism (Bodemann 1874: 80).

J. G. Zimmerman, a mutual friend of Bondeli and Wieland’s as well as an acquaintance of Rousseau, was another notable member of her circle. Bondeli corresponded with him beginning in her youth on the matter of her ill health – he was a physician who would go on to gain wide repute across Europe and hold stations in several royal entourages, first as court physician at Hanover for King George III and subsequently as physician for Fredrick the Great. Zimmerman was

also a successful author across a range of medical, theoretical, and political subjects. The professional acquaintance between Zimmerman and Bondeli bloomed into an enduring friendship.

As the most extensive trove of Bondeli's surviving correspondence, her letters to Zimmerman testify to her steadiness, sense, and warm compassion as well as to her intellectual curiosity and independence of judgment. These letters range widely across literature, philosophy, and science. Considering her correspondence as a whole, her thinking appears to have been most influenced by the German philosophers Christian Wolff and Gottfried Leibniz and the English and Scottish philosophers Shaftesbury, Henry Home, David Hume, Francis Hutcheson, and Adam Smith.<sup>6</sup> As we shall see, these latter served as the basis of Rousseau's brush with the Scottish Enlightenment through his acquaintance with Bondeli. Of all pursuits, she understood herself most suited to 'the chase' of ideas. One principle directing her studies was her conviction that knowledge ought to have the purpose of bettering the moral character and the passions. She was therefore uninterested in pure logic or metaphysics (Christensen 2012: 42–3).<sup>7</sup> Her particular interest was the 'moral sense.' Her letters show evidence of her engagement with thinkers including Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Hobbes, Bayle, Diderot, Voltaire and of course Rousseau (Bodemann 1874: 13–14, 19, 28, 29, 323–4). Bondeli and Zimmerman's correspondence about Rousseau ranges from assessments of his philosophic and literary ideas and aims to friendly concern and interest in his political difficulties and personal circumstances. Although Bondeli herself met and talked with Rousseau only a couple of times, she received a stream of information on him from friends who saw him more frequently and for longer periods.<sup>8</sup>

One such friend was the Swiss theologian and educator Leonhard Usteri (1741–1789). Usteri worked in Zürich as a professor, where he held several positions over the course of his lifetime in subjects including Hebraic languages, rhetoric, logic, and mathematics. Usteri took an interest in educating and influencing Bondeli's artistic knowledge and tastes. He also consulted her about both theoretical and practical questions regarding education. In Zürich he was at the forefront of successful efforts to promote substantial reform and improvement of the public schools, including the creation of the city's first public school for girls. Bondeli took a keen interest in these projects; in 1775 she wrote to Usteri praising him for his efforts and the progress he had made, saying:

Wherever good takes place, it interests me; I am convinced that its rays radiate like those of Light. Only a better guided Education can imperceptibly create a new humankind, and only a new humankind can perfect the laws, and only perfected laws can enable the so great and so simple Machine of the general Good to run better.

(Bondeli 2012: 402, Bodemann 1874: 141–2, 363)

Two other notable friendships with interesting characters of the era for which evidence of lively correspondence survives include those of Johann Lavater and Goethe's friend Sophie von La Roche. Lavater (1741–1801) was a preacher, poet,

and author remembered for his influential publications on religion and on physiognomy, his correspondence with Herder, and his friendship with Goethe (who was also severely critical of him). When Julie von Bondeli met him for the first time in 1764, she was impressed by the fineness of his observations on characters and physiognomies, though sceptical of his tendency toward religious mysticism and effusiveness (Bodemann 1874: 149). Lavater subsequently invited her to contribute to advancing the study of physiognomy. She wrote to him setting forth all the doubts and difficulties that she found in physiognomy and his approach to studying it, as well as her cautious optimism that it might be able to be developed as a science (Bodemann 1874: 152–3). Lavater ignored her criticisms and concerns; he simply sent her back a plan that he suggested she could work from. This plan ‘shocked me’, Bondeli wrote to Usteri, ‘because it contained a too well-ordered and definite (although nevertheless ingenious) direction for a science which, if it even is one, is still too new to have strict rules which depend on intellect, while the science itself seems to me only to depend on tact’ (Bodemann 1874: 153, 348–9). Bondeli’s friendship with Lavater, never very close, came undone in subsequent years as he judged her religious beliefs to be of questionable soundness and enthusiasm and persuaded Zimmerman, who was suffering under the strain of severe depression and hypochondria, to distance himself from her.

Bondeli had a warmer and more long-lasting friendship with Sophie von La Roche (1730–1807). La Roche first became well known across Europe for a popular novel written for young women, *The History of Lady von Sternheim*. She subsequently published numerous volumes of fiction, travel writing, and letters and was for a time the hostess of a lively literary salon. She wrote primarily for and about women, and she and Julie von Bondeli engaged frequently with one another on the topics of women and education. While Bondeli found her friend too apt to revel in sentimentalism and exuberant ideals and cautioned her against eccentric idealism, this difference of opinion and taste did no harm to their friendship. After all, Bondeli took the position that ‘a lively life of feeling holds more worth than coldness of heart in even a clear understanding’ (Bodemann 1874: 166). Bondeli’s opinion corroborates the description of the ‘feminine genius’ that she ascribed to La Roche after reading her novel, *The History of Lady von Sternheim*.

Perhaps someone would yet say that you cannot have genius because . . . you are a woman, and a woman . . . cannot have genius, since it cannot be of the same currency as that of a man,

she wrote.

Let us preserve our feminine countenance, my dear, and let them chatter; let us preserve our tact, our feeling, our piercing clear sight and leave [those of such opinions] to themselves! . . . And so it is as much as determined, that you have only a feminine genius: a sad compound of tact, sensitivity, truth, piercing understanding, and fineness and accuracy in your opinions and remarks.  
(Bodemann 1874: 168)

That a similar description might have been applicable to Bondeli herself is borne out by statements from Wieland ('she is a woman of genius, or if you will, a feminine genius') (Bodemann 1874: 57). This, in sum, is the woman who, according to Rousseau, combined the pen of Voltaire with the head of Leibniz.

### **Bondeli and the moral sense**

The immediate cause of Rousseau's effusive praise was a letter Bondeli wrote analysing his novel, *Julie*. This letter was originally sent in 1761 to Suzanne Curchod – at one time Edmund Gibbon's fiancée and later the banker Jacques Necker's wife. Bondeli circulated copies of the letter to members of her entourage along with a short discourse 'Sur le sens moral et l'esprit de l'observation'. One of the recipients, Caspar Hess, showed both of them to Rousseau, who quickly decided that he wanted to publish the letter (but not the discourse) in a collection of correspondence he had received about his novel. This proposal sent Bondeli into a mild panic. She insisted that she had no aspiration to become a published author and feared the consequences at Berne if she was discovered to have defended Rousseau. It should be kept in mind that, by the time Rousseau read her letter, both *Emile* and *The Social Contract* had been banned or burned in a number of European communities. The specific ground for Bondeli's concern was that she had sharply attacked those critics who objected to Rousseau's presentation in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* of the atheistic Wolmar as an honourable man in spite of his lack of religion. Her own private opinions were in fact quite unorthodox. This position became less publicly acceptable once the persecution of Rousseau had begun.

Rousseau himself says that he had written *La Nouvelle Héloïse* with a secret object which was to show religious people that a sceptic could be moral and to show sceptics that a religious person could be tolerant. The second of these possibilities was exemplified by his heroine, Julie, and the first by her husband, Wolmar.<sup>9</sup> Given the importance of this dimension of Rousseau's plan for the novel, it is worth considering Bondeli's defence of Rousseau on this score as well as her criticism of another part of his portrayal of Wolmar.

Bondeli defends Rousseau's portrait by pointing out that the commonness of vice among Christians makes it impossible to assert that religion is both necessary and sufficient for morality. Then she makes a distinction between two different sorts of moral virtue. She suggests that Wolmar's is what she calls 'the Virtue of Temperament' (Bondeli: 2012: 128). She contrasts this with a different virtue that is based on principle reinforced by habit. Only the latter is capable of acting consistently as a brake upon the passions. Wolmar is virtuous precisely because he is almost completely lacking in passions: there is nothing that leads him to vice. It is important to see that Wolmar is not simply perfect in his virtue; if he were he would be a totally unrealistic character. He does, however, have one passion: his love for Julie. Bondeli says that 'this passion causes him to commit a stroke of a dishonourable man, precisely because he did not have principles to oppose to it'. He marries Julie even though he knows that she does not love him and, indeed, is in love with someone else. Bondeli concludes, 'Thus, then, Rousseau is justified, because he