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The "New, Optimistic, Theistic View" of Adam Smith and the Problem of his "Pessimistic" Views of History

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Recently, a "new, optimistic, theistic view" of Adam Smith has arisen, challenging the old, secular view of Smith. In the "new view," Smith adopts two types of teleology: teleology immanent in the human constitution and historical teleology. The latter is primarily addressed here; in this teleological view of history the divine "plan" progressively realizes the ideal society in practice and this form of "historical optimism" has some foundation in Smith's writings. Several varieties of the "new view" exist; three of these are examined below in the light of the full range of Smith's historical writings. Actually, Smith's "optimistic" version of history coexists with a "pessimistic" version. In short, this article seeks to sketch out the "new view" of Smith and the problem for it posed by his "pessimistic" views of history.

This article has five sections. The first section summarizes the "new view" of Smith. The second section discusses a problem for the "new view": various "pessimistic" themes in Smith's writings which suggest flaws in the divine design. The third section considers responses to the problem by two groups of commentators within the "new view." The fourth section discusses the adequacy of one of these responses in the light of both other evidence and a third version of the "new view." The final section provides a brief conclusion.

a) The "New View" of Nature, Human Nature and Commercial[(1)] Society

This section addresses several topics. First, we discuss the theistic

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foundation of the "new view" in the light of the prevailing view of Smith. Second, we turn to the "new view" of Smith's understanding of nature and human nature. Smith identifies several ends of human nature. What are they? How are they achieved? Third, in the light of his view of nature, we turn to the "new view" of Smith's interpretation of history. Does it propose that Smith had a teleological view of human history? Finally, what are the political implications of these views? Let us begin with the prevailing interpretation of Smith.

After World War II the view arose that Smith was a Humean: a secular thinker who denied any role for final causal explanations (*see* Kleer, 2000, p.25). Some of these mainstream commentators conceded that theistic and teleological passages existed in Smith's work but these could be removed without harming his argument (Kleer, 2000, pp.14-6). Such interpretations have been challenged over the last decade or so by the "new view"; while the secular view remains dominant, support for the "new view" of Smith has grown.[2]

The "new view" is that Smith is a theist and his theology cannot be removed without harming his argument.[3] According to Kleer, "the principle of a benevolent divine author of nature must be considered as one of the cornerstones of Smith's system of moral philosophy."[4] Waterman says that Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (*WN* hereafter) is "entirely 'natural theology'" (2002, p.918). Clarke refers to "the Christian Stoic foundation of Smith's work" (2000, p.67). Advocates of the "new view" deny that Smith was a Humean on theological matters (Fitzgibbons, 1995, pp.28-32, 86-9, 94, 127). With this background in mind, let us turn to some of the details of the "new view."

Denis says that Smith "sees nature, including human nature, as a vast machine supervised by God and designed to maximize human happiness" (1999, p.71). It "is a coherent system: '[E]ven the smallest of the co-existent parts of the universe, are exactly fitted to one another, and all contribute to compose one immense and connected system'" (Hill, 2001, p.13, quoting Smith, 1976, p.289). Similarly, Evensky says that Smith adopted the language of "Design," which attributes the observed order in the universe to a "benevolent Deity as designer" (1989, p.124). Smith "relies heavily on teleological arguments" (Hill, 2001, p.10;

see pp. 5, 9, 19; see Kleer, 2000).

Like other "new view" adherents, Hill finds *two* types of teleology in Smith. First, she finds teleology immanent in the human constitution; hence, Smith "believes that by acting through ... base instincts ... humans 'co-operate with the Deity' and serve to 'advance' his 'plan'" (Hill, 2001, p. 10, quoting Smith, 1976, p.166). The instincts are the *efficient causes* but they were designed in order to achieve the various *final causes* (benevolent ends, which will be discussed shortly). Second, Hill also finds teleology operating in history: human beings, as "the principal bearers of history ... [are] engaged in fulfilling the Creator's telic plans" (2001, p. 10; see pp. 10-1, 13). We will discuss this metatheoretical view of history further shortly but let us now discuss the logical consequence of a teleological view of nature: the *telos*, or end.

Hill provides the best "new view" account of the ends of human nature. She attributes to Smith (explicitly or implicitly) the following ends: "survival"; "perpetuation" and "population growth"; "generalized order"; "happiness"; "prosperity," "material abundance" and "material comfort" (Hill, 2001, pp. 10-2, 14, 16, 19). Something like this complex and elevated set of ends is accepted by other "new view" commentators. In addition, in Hill's view of Smith, "under a Providential regime" there is good cause to believe that these ends will be achieved over time (2001, p. 12).

This takes us back to the teleological view of history, which many adherents of the "new view" perceive in Smith. In Hill's presentation, Smith has such a view of history, combining the stadial theory of history with the view of continuing economic growth; once again, the driving factors are human instincts (see 2001, pp. 10-12, 20). A sketch of this "optimistic" view of the path of history follows.

In Hill's view of Smith, "all societies had, or would move through a sequence of distinct stages of development," namely, hunting, shepherding, farming and commerce (2001, p. 18; see Smith, 1979, pp.689-95). Further, Smith "perceived *a distinct and universal pattern to this development*" which also helped satisfy the human ends; Hill contrasts "the forlorn poverty of the

'savage' age with the 'general security and happiness'" in the commercial era (2001, p. 18 emphasis added, and p.12, quoting Smith, 1976, p.205). The "Providential" pattern showed "the Creator's telic plans for ... progressivism in human affairs" (Hill, 2001, pp.18, 10). Now let discuss the theory of economic growth.

Kleer (2000) gives the best "new view" presentation of Smith's account of economic growth. In his presentation of Smith there are at least four factors responsible for economic growth: the division of labour; capital accumulation; order and good government (two preconditions for capital accumulation); and discretion for capital owners to invest wherever they choose. Kleer discusses these in turn, tracing them back to human instincts: these include our desire to persuade; the pleasure we derive from "mutual sympathy" (namely, when an agent knows that his own sentiments are "equal in intensity to the spectator's sympathetic emotions"); our greater capacity to sympathize with joy than with sorrow; and the pleasure that we derive from "well-crafted devices."(5)

If one reconstructs other "new view" reconstructions of Smith, one finds many of the elements outlined by Kleer (see Hill, 2001, pp. 14, 18, 20). It is also important to note that continuing economic growth is linked by "new view" adherents, like Hill, to the satisfaction of divine purposes: happiness and population growth. First, Hill states that, "for Smith, happiness is a function of material prosperity" (2001, p. 12, citing Smith, 1979, p.96). Second, "population increases as a spontaneous by-product of material prosperity" (Hill, 2001, p. 12 citing Smith, 1979, pp.97, 99, 180; 1978, p.159).

What are the implications of these "optimistic" views? Here we again focus on Hill's account. For Hill, Smith has a "two-tiered model" of human society with a "clear line of demarcation" between the tiers: the first tier, the "big picture," or "social systems level," is under divine control and "the realm of Final Causes"; the second tier is the "individual goal level" and, whilst allowing some scope for human free will there, "[i]ndividual agents represent efficient causes" (2001, pp. 14-5; see p. 11). Given the supreme rationality of the "system" level, Smith' s well-known disparagement of human rationality makes perfect sense; "human

design is redundant" (Hill, 2001, p. 7). Humans must follow their well-designed passions and exercise their limited rationality in learning *not* to interfere in the operations of nature at the "system" level. "The grandiose schemes of 'Great Legislators' are cast in a blasphemous light" (Hill, 2001, p. 15).

In short, in the "new view", Smith is interpreted as a theist with an "optimistic" view of nature, human nature and the path of history. Next, we discuss some elements in Smith's writings which apparently contradict the "optimistic" picture presented above.

b) Smith's "Pessimistic" View of History

There are various "pessimistic" views in Smith's writings. I will discuss these under three headings: "pessimism" about the ability of societies to evolve into the ideal (a specific type of commercial society); "pessimism" about the goodness of commercial society as it matures; and "pessimism" about the permanence of such a society.(6)

Let us begin with Smith's "pessimism" concerning the emergence of the ideal society. First, Smith suggests that slavery will persist throughout history, thus thwarting the satisfaction of the ends of nature for many (1978, pp.186-7). Second, he says that, due to climate and terrain, "the Tartars always have been," and "always" will be, "a nation of shepherds"; the Tartars, and presumably others, cannot even reach the agricultural epoch (Smith, 1978, p. 220; see also pp.213,221-3,408.). Thus, the emergence of the best regime can be thwarted. Smith also expresses "pessimistic" views about commercial society as it matures.

The division of labour progresses exponentially and, as we saw, is a fundamental cause of economic growth. It also features, however, in the "dark side" of Smith perceived by Marx and Heilbroner (Marx, 1954, p.342; Heilbroner, 1973). Smith says that, eventually, most of the population are employed in monotonous occupations; this "confines the views of men" and the "low [class] people" become "exceedingly stupid" (1978, p. 539). Further, as commercial society develops, it neglects education and the martial spirit "is

almost utterly extinguished" (Smith, 1978, p. 541). Finally--with the drift of the population from the small, rural, communities to the large, anonymous, cities--the people drift towards "profligacy and vice" (Smith, 1979, p.795). These negative moral consequences of commercial society have been cited as examples of Smith's "historical pessimism" (Winch, 1978, p.117; see also Heilbroner, 1973).

Now let us turn to the termination of the growth process in a *permanent* stationary state. Smith's hints at the emergence of stasis, have been frequently discussed in the history of economic thought literature (see Hollander, 1987, pp.66, 84, 163, 176). In the permanent stasis: "both the wages of labour and the profits of stock would probably be very low .... [Wages would be] barely sufficient to keep up the number of labourers, and ... [the population] could never be augmented" (Smith, 1979, p.111). The primary cause of such stationarity in Smith's analysis was land scarcity, but also assumed were diminishing returns in agriculture, a limited role for technological improvement and a "Malthusian" sexual instinct (see Smith, 1979, p.109; Hollander, 1987, pp.162-5).

What are the implications of the decline into permanent stasis? Once the profit rate reaches the very low equilibrium level, virtually everyone--even those who were previously rich--would be forced to work (Smith, 1979, p.113). The stationary state is "hard" and "dull" for the "labouring poor"; the "scanty subsistence" of the lower classes causes such a high infant mortality rate as to just maintain the equilibrium population.[7] At this low standard of living, the society fails to meet various human ends attributed to Smith by Hill: material prosperity, happiness and population growth.[8]

Next, let us discuss Smith's view of the death awaiting all societies.[9] Smith suggests a number of scenarios for the collapse of commercial societies, two of which are presented here: external or internal subjugation; and the consequences of debt accumulation.

Smith discusses, at length, military affairs and their relevance to commercial societies. In the case of the classical commercial societies, Smith blames the improvements of the arts, sciences, manufactures and commerce for the decline

in martial virtue (mentioned earlier) and for the people's unwillingness to go to war; even the members of the upper classes no longer wish to provide military leadership. "Thus it *must happen that the improvement of arts and commerce*" lead to "a great declension in the force and power" of the classical republics "*in all cases*" (Smith, 1978, p.231 emphasis added). At this stage a standing army becomes essential but many states fail to institute it. Even if it is adopted, it culminates in the subjugation of the people by the leading general; the republic is transformed into a "military monarchy" (Smith, 1978, p.237). Even this form of government, as shown by the Roman case, carries the same fatal disease: "But *this government, as all others, seems to have a certain and fixed end* which concludes it" because the improvements of the arts and commerce "necessarily ... renders the people unwilling to go to war" (Smith, 1978, p.238 emphasis added; see also p.414). So, Smith showed that all classical commercial forms of society *inevitably* collapsed.

The second scenario for the collapse of commercial governments is the tendency of governments, at least modern ones, to accumulate debts. Servicing a growing foreign currency debt is clearly a problem, but Smith adds that, even if all of the debt was owed to domestic investors, a large and growing debt is still "pernicious" (1979, p.927). It will lead initially to increased taxation (causing domestic capital flight) and ultimately to the devaluation of the currency (thus punishing the industrious and frugal of those remaining) (Smith, 1979, pp.927-9). This will severely retard the "natural progress of a nation towards wealth and prosperity" (Smith, 1979, p.674). Smith concludes that eventually the burden of debt will "*probably* ruin, all the great nations of Europe" (Smith, 1979, p.911 emphasis added; see also pp.497,928-9; cf. pp.342-3). Despite recommending policies to reduce the debt, Smith is not "optimistic" about their potential success (Winch, 1978, p.136). Once again, doom is on the horizon.

Significant barriers exist in the path to the ideal society and some societies are doomed to remain at a pre-commercial stage. Second, sociological and economic problems lie ahead for commercial societies as they mature. Even if no country had yet reached permanent stasis, Smith claims that two hundred

years is “as long as ... human prosperity usually endures” (1979, p.425; see also pp.365-7). Third, regardless of which explanation is adopted, Smith says that commercial societies inevitably collapse; he apparently accepts a cyclical theory of history. Hence, contrary to Hill, and other “new view” advocates, Smith seems to hold that the divine design is badly flawed. Having highlighted Smith’s “pessimism,” we now turn to some of the “new view” responses to it.

c) Two “New View” Responses

The varied response to the problem of Smith’s “pessimism” highlights the variety of views within the “new view” itself.[10] Some maintain that, despite appearances to the contrary, Smith believed in the perfection of the Divine design; I have called them the “Panglossians.” Others concede that Smith’s “pessimistic” utterances necessitate revision to the sanguine view outlined previously; I call them the “realists.” Let us begin with the “Panglossians.”

The “Panglossian” branch of the “new view” is exemplified by Denis. In his account, for Smith: “we truly live in a Panglossian ‘best of all possible worlds.’... [A]ny appearances to the contrary are a result of our finite, partial view of the world” (1999, p.73). Similarly, Hill says that Smith conceives the universe “in optimistic terms as perfect and self-regulating ... all of Nature’s works, including apparent defects, are accommodated within a vast, purposeful, beneficent perfection” (2001, pp.7, 21 see also pp. 12, 15-6). This view does not do justice to Smith’s anguish about the path that commercial societies are following (see Alvey, 2003, p.267).

More detailed attention is warranted for the “realists,” namely, Evensky and Tanaka. As Tanaka essentially follows Evensky on this theme, we will consider the latter’s view in detail. He says that: “Smith combined the languages of the Newtonian scientific method, the Design argument, ... civil jurisprudence, ... social psychology ...[and] civic humanism” (Evensky, 1989, pp.125-6). The thrust of Evensky’s article is to show that, during his lifetime, Smith became more “pessimistic” about Design and increasingly adopted a “civic” voice.

According to Evensky, in his early works--the Lectures on Jurisprudence

(*LJ* hereafter) and the early editions of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (*TMS* hereafter)--Smith suggests "that human kind is in some long historical sense progressing toward the ideal state"; the divine design is evident in history (1989, p.128).(11) Complicating even this initial presentation, however, is his assessment that Smith's "jurisprudentially based" ideal, whilst asymptotically approached, is never achievable.(12) The teleological view of history adopted by Hill is endorsed with a wrinkle that the end of history is not the ideal but just an "approximation" to it. Contrary to Hill and Denis, Smith's early work "was sanguine but it was not Panglossian" (Evensky, 1989, p.131).

As indicated above, even in his early work Smith saw certain problems with the emergence and development of commercial society (Evensky, 1989, p.131). Arrival at the commercial stage could be impeded by "natural impediments" or "the oppression[s] of civil government"; the latter were "historical artifacts" and "the rising tide of social progress" would eliminate them (Evensky, 1989, pp.131-2 citing Smith, 1978, p.521). In addition to these, Evensky also refers to several problems which were produced by the evolution of commercial society itself: the stupefying effects of the division of labour, the "neglect of education" and the "diminution of the martial spirit" of the citizenry (1989, p.131; citing Smith, 1978, pp.539-41). While Hill mentions the first of these, Evensky demonstrates a greater awareness of Smith's "pessimistic" views.

Smith's second phase was the period 1773-76, when he was in London, revising his drafts for the initial publication of the *WN*. By the time the first edition of the *WN* was published, Smith still presented "the progressive evolution of society" but his "tone ... was less sanguine than before"; at this stage he adopted a "new role of social critic" (Evensky, 1989, pp.131-2). When he became less "optimistic" that "the natural evolution of society" was "progress towards the ideal," he adopted the civic humanist voice in order to actively assist in "realizing that ideal" (Evensky, 1989, p.132). The cause of this change of mood Evensky traces to the transformation of British politics during the eighteenth century: at the beginning of the century parliamentarians were public spirited; by the 1760s they were corrupted by patronage and swayed

by personalized "interests"; shortly afterwards, politics became dominated by modern "interests," where people unite to defend or improve their group interests at the expense of the public good (1989, p.133). Only the third phase of the century troubled Smith. The factional, monopolizing spirit of the merchants was an impediment to the realization of the ideal and it caused his growing "pessimism"; the economic system of the merchants Smith sarcastically called "mercantilism."[13] He came to see the growth of factions not as an "historical artefact," temporarily impeding the realization of the ideal society, but as endemic to commercial society (Evensky, 1989, pp.132-7). Smith's revisions to drafts of the *WN* during 1773-6 reflected his new awareness of this problem (Evensky, 1989, p.135).

Evensky says that Smith's "growing frustration" with mercantilism led to a re-evaluation of his priorities; in the *WN*, Smith's earlier concerns about problems generated by commercial society "pale in comparison" to his new concerns about the "dynamic corrupting force of the mercantile interests" (Evensky, 1989, pp.135,137). Further, the problems Smith specifically addressed in the *WN* and his solutions are "drawn directly from the language and spirit of civic humanism" (Evensky, 1989, p. 137).

After the publication of the *WN*, with its promotion of the free trade type of commercial society, Smith was disappointed that his ideas were ignored by the British parliamentary leadership until Lord Shelburne came to power in 1782. The collapse of Shelbourne's administration within a year was critical, according to Evensky, in the "Additions and corrections" to the *WN* made by Smith in 1784 (1989, pp.138-9). By now, the "distorting force" of the mercantile interest "had become Smith's primary concern"; from this point onwards, Smith's civic voice dominated (Evensky, 1989, p.139; see pp.127-8).

In the period just before his death (in 1790), Smith made one final attempt to address this problem. In the revisions to the sixth edition of the *TMS* we see "very clearly his new intention, social critic, and his new language, civic humanism" (Evensky, 1989, p.139). He became increasingly convinced that achieving the ideal "required the active participation of citizens" along civic lines (Evensky,

1989, p.140). The battle "for the future of the state" was being waged in parliament but the mercantilists had the upper hand there (Evensky, 1989, p.140; see p.141). Consequently, Smith "enlisted the classic civic humanist device to rescue the state, Machiavelli's legislator": the overturning of mercantilism was allocated by Smith to "the wisdom of future statesmen and legislators" (Evensky, 1989, p.141; Smith, 1979, p.606). Smith advocated a wise legislator with knowledge of the ideal laws and the art of directing his subjects, in a bearable manner, towards the goal (Evensky, 1989, p.141; citing Smith, 1976, pp.233-4).

By the end of his life Smith fully endorsed the civic humanist programme. While his view of the ideal remained unchanged, his view of the path there changed "from a confidence that the invisible hand will guide us there [actually an approximation to the ideal] to a hope that civic virtue can take us there" (Evensky, 1989, p.143). Smith's legacy, however, was different: he was seen as a jurisprudential theorist advocating *laissez-faire* (Evensky, 1989, p.127,143). Evensky endorses Winch's view that it is a "myth" that Smith is an "optimist" who believes in progress and preaches "laissez-faire" (1989, p.143 quoting Winch, 1978, p.81). In doing so, Evensky is also attacking Hill, and other "Panglossians."

The "pessimistic" aspects in Smith's writings are dealt with in different ways by two branches of the "new view." The members of the "Panglossian" wing are ignorant of, or essentially ignore, the problem. By contrast, the "realists" take the issue seriously, proposing that Smith became progressively more "pessimistic" over time. Hence, Smith gradually modifies his account of teleological history by increasing the scope for human rationality and action; this is especially evident in the growing role allocated to the legislator. The next section scrutinizes the adequacy of the "realist" response to Smith's "pessimism."

d) A Reconsideration of the "Realist" Response

This section reconsiders the "realist" view that, during his lifetime, Smith became more "pessimistic" about the possibility of reaching the ideal society (or an approximation to it) over time. This view is contested by other evidence and

by a third version of the "new view."

Another advocate of the "new view," Fitzgibbons, apparently without knowledge of Evensky, takes up the issues addressed in the previous section. His conclusions run in the opposite direction. He argues that there are "pessimistic" passages in Smith's writings but these are associated with his early writings; Smith became increasingly "optimistic" over time (see also Alvey, 2003, pp.239-48). I call this the "anti-realist" view.

Fitzgibbons argues that Smith has an ideal regime; it was a type of commercial society which combined monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, such as that found Britain at the time (Fitzgibbons, 1995, p.120, citing Smith, 1978, pp. 421-2). This ideal had other elements which were missing from Britain but the latter was "unique" because it could potentially be transformed into the ideal (Fitzgibbons, 1995, p.120). By contrast, the general trend of history was less sanguine. In his early writings Smith adopts the view that there is a cycle of political regimes combined with an upward "spiral" through the *economic* stages of history (Fitzgibbons, 1995, pp.116-7). At the same time, decay commenced due to the loss of martial virtue and the unwillingness of all classes to go to war (Fitzgibbons, 1995, p.121). Being forced to rely upon mercenaries, conscripts and those without moral virtue, the society is vulnerable from within and without. As Fitzgibbons points out, external vulnerability means that a standing army becomes essential for survival but, along classic *civic humanist* lines, in his *early writings* Smith rejects it as a threat to liberty (1995, pp.121-2 citing Smith, 1978, pp. 543-4). As we saw earlier, even the adoption of a standing army only delays the inevitable. Hence, as Fitzgibbons points out, in his early writings Smith sees commercial society as "transient" and, in thoroughly civic terms, opposes the means which can prolong its life, presumably because the cure is worse than the disease (1995, p.122). For Fitzgibbons, the overall tone in Smith' s early work is "pessimistic."

Fitzgibbons's next step is to show that "Smith clearly changed his mind" in an "optimistic" direction (1995, p.123). In the past, commercial societies were overwhelmed by pre-commercial "barbarian" people; but Smith came to believe

that modern military technology combined with a "properly constituted" standing army (one led by the king and the leading citizens) gave commercial societies a decisive advantage over "barbarian" threats (Fitzgibbons, 1995, pp.122-3; see Smith, 1979, pp.706-8). This combination would be militarily successful and not threaten individual liberties (Fitzgibbons, 1995, pp.122-3, citing Smith, 1979, pp.706-7). Under these circumstances, commercial society could "escape from the old cycle" (Fitzgibbons, 1995, p.123; see also McNamara, 1998, p.51).

Thus, in the *WN*, Smith revised his views presented in the *LJ*. Smith suggested in the *WN* that the major factor in the fall of the classical republics was *not* the arts and commerce but the lack of a standing army (1979, pp.698-702). The reasons given for the demise of the Roman Republic was revised to the ill-advised admission of many Italians to Roman citizenship (Smith, 1979, pp.622-4). Special factors (notably the degeneration of the army into a mere militia) were now blamed for the Fall of the Roman Empire (Smith, 1979, pp.703-5).

Let us consider one further example where Smith apparently revised his thinking: the sociological problems caused by the division of labour. His pessimistic view in the *LJ* — that, in commercial societies, "[t]he minds of men are contracted and rendered *incapable* of elevation"— is softened in the *WN* by the possibility that the negative effects of the division of labour could be remedied; as Fitzgibbons says, "liberal society could counteract this ... through cultural adaptation, and especially through the reform of education and religion." [(14)] Here, and elsewhere, Fitzgibbons says that Smith gives a large role to statesmanship (1995, pp.110,143,152-63). What lessons can we draw from these examples?

First, contrary to Evensky, in the *LJ* Smith already adopts a *strong* version of the civic humanist view: commerce and the arts damaged the classical societies in various ways, including their external security. Smith *reduced* these civic views over time. In the *LJ*, Smith appears like a civic humanist, blaming commerce for various social ills; in the *WN*, he mitigates his concerns by suggesting that remedies, such as modern weaponry, a standing army, and

reformed education and religion, are available (see 1979, pp.701-8, 782-814). As Fitzgibbons points out, Smith changed his mind in the *WN*; he apparently becomes less "pessimistic" about the harm done by commerce to the classical societies.

Further, the possible remedy of a standing army, which previously was presented as doomed to fail militarily and politically (and as a "remedy" which was worse than the disease), is now seen as a *true* remedy and endorsed; hence, he apparently becomes more "optimistic" about the permanence of commercial societies.(15) Decline is inevitable in the *LJ* but in the *WN* he is less emphatic, merely stating that "empires, like all the other works of men, have hitherto proved mortal" (Smith, 1979, p.830). The introduction of standing armies and modern weaponry may become the norm. Smith's view of the military vulnerability of commercial society drifted away from the civic view over time. In short, Smith became more "optimistic" and dropped his adherence to the cyclical theory.

Contrary to Evensky, in various areas, Smith's "optimism" increased between his *LJ* and his *WN* and his civic concerns correspondingly reduced. If Evensky, and other "realists," are correct in their view, that Smith became more "pessimistic" in some areas during his lifetime, Fitzgibbons has shown that he also became more "optimistic" elsewhere. Further, Smith remained committed throughout his lifetime to his view that climatic and terrain factors prevent some countries from ever becoming commercial. He also remained committed to two of the causes of decline for commercial societies: the accumulation of debt and land scarcity (which ultimately causes the stationary state). The "realist" presentation is inadequate.

e) Conclusion

The "new view" of Smith has made a powerful case for a theistic understanding of Smith. In this view Smith was an adherent to the view that the universe was constructed by a benevolent deity; teleological design underpinned Smith's work. The growing popularity of this "new view" reflects dissatisfaction

with the secular interpretation. The problem for the "new view" discussed above was Smith's simultaneous acceptance that certain flaws in the divine design existed. Smith's "pessimism" apparently coexisted with his "optimism."

Adherents to the "Panglossian" version of the "new view" do not effectively deal with Smith's "pessimistic" side. The solution proposed by the "realists" was that Smith became progressively more "pessimistic" about the probability of the realization of the Divine Plan; Fitzgibbons, the "anti-realist," proposed the opposite. Neither reflects the complexity of Smith's position over time: he seems to have maintained a "hard core" of "pessimism" throughout his lifetime. This "change of view" strategy does not reflect accurately the mix of Smith's views over his lifetime.

Second, even if one version of the "change of view" thesis is accepted as true, the next issue is whether the solution works. Both the "realists" and the "anti-realists" suggest that Smith increasingly smuggled in human reason and action as a means of correcting the flaws in nature. Can the "natural impediments" to commercial society (climate and terrain) be solved by human reason? The silence of the "new view" adherents to this question suggests a negative answer.(16) Further, as the "Panglossians" may point out, does reliance on statesmanship and the legislator, by the "realists" and the "anti-realists," really make sense? Smith's work is dominated by the view that human reasoning is feeble and high-quality *human* wisdom is in short supply. On the other hand, the demand for delicate human interventions grows in commercial society. High levels of statesmanship are needed to institute and properly maintain a standing army, overthrow mercantilism, properly reform education and religion, and so on (Alvey, 2003, p.226). If Smith relied on statesmanship, or the legislator, to save the day, as Evensky suggests, could he have realistically held out much hope for success?

Perhaps there is a degree of incoherence in Smith's writings. Nevertheless, whichever period of his life one considers, Smith was not a Panglossian. Smith' s "optimism" coexisted with his "pessimism." Smith seems to have retained a "hard core" of "pessimism" throughout his life. Perhaps we can conclude that

throughout his lifetime Smith was an 80-per-cent "optimist"; while the micro-level composition of Smith's "optimism" and "pessimism" changed, his macro-level of "optimism" remained rather constant. If this is correct, all three versions of the "new view" are confronted with a new problem.

Notes

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(1) In Smith's own time many European states, including England, France, Flanders, Holland and Genoa, had reached the commercial epoch (Smith, 1979, pp.209,263,431).

(2) On the secular interpretation, see Haakonssen, 1981; Griswold, 1999.

(3) Kleer, 1995, p.300; Hill, 2001, p.1; Tanaka, 2003, p.136.

(4) Kleer, 1995, p.279; see also Kleer, 2000, pp.25-6; Smith, 1976, p.77.

(5) Kleer, 2000, pp.17-9, citing Smith, 1976, pp.13-6, 45, 179-83; 1978, pp.352, 493-4; 1979, pp.27, 341.

(6) For further details, see Alvey, 2003, pp.177-236. One might also note that, by relying upon a base motivation, the essential character of all commercial societies is flawed.

(7) Smith, 1979, pp.99,90; see also pp.91,97. On the "scanty subsistence", see Heilbroner, 1973, p.247.

(8) The high-wage stationary state of J.S. Mill, and more recent environmentalists, is not envisioned by Smith (see Mill, 1987, pp.746-51).

(9) Heilbroner, 1973, p.256; cf. Winch, 1978, pp.63,182; Haakonssen, 1981, p.179.

(10) A third version will be discussed in section d).

(11) Smith's view of the ideal society was one "in harmony with the rest of the Deity's Design" (Evensky, 1989, p.143). In this moral world, guided by the dictates of the impartial spectator and self-command, the role for positive law would be minimal; the invisible hand could guide society to "the greatest possible wealth" (Evensky, 1989, p.128).

(12) Evensky, 1989, p.140. Evensky refers to Smith's discussion of human self-deceit and weakness of will; humans often lack "a perfect vision of the dictates of the impartial spectator" and fail to "enforce those dictates upon themselves with perfect self-command" (1989, p.128).

(13) The policies advocated by the "mercantile" economic theorists included import protectionism and export subsidies.

(14) Smith, 1978, p.541 emphasis added; Smith, 1979, pp.781-8; Fitzgibbons, 1995, p.156; see also Evensky, 1989, p. 137; Hill, 2001, p.18.

(15) Smith, 1978, pp. 543-4; Smith, 1979, pp. 699-708; Fitzgibbons, 1995, pp.121-3.

(16)Evensky suggests that, in Smith's writings, these obstacles to the achievement of the ideal are minor in comparison to those of political factions (1989, p.137). Even so, it does not mean that, in the grand scheme of things, the latter were more important than the "natural impediments." Smith's stress on factions may have reflected his assessment of what would most interest his potential (British) audience.

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アダム・スミスの「新しい、楽観的な、有神論的見方」と彼の「悲観的」歴史観の問題

＜ 要 約 ＞

ジェームズ・アルヴィ

近年、アダム・スミスを世俗的なデイビッド・ヒュームの後継者とみなす古い見方を批判する「新しい、楽観的な、有神論的見方」が強まっている。この「新しい見方」においてスミスは二種類の目的論を採用したとみなされている。それは、構造に内在的な目的論と歴史的な目的論である。本論が主に扱うのは後者の目的論である。この歴史の目的論的見方においては、神の「計画」が実践における理想的な社会を進歩的に体現するものとされている。こうした「歴史的楽観主義」はスミスの著作におけるある程度の前提となっている。この「新しい見方」には幾つかの種類が存在している。本論ではスミスの歴史観に関わる著作の全てに注目しつつ、そのうちの三つを検証する。実際、スミスの歴史の「楽観的」理解はその「悲観的」理解と同居している。「新しい見方」の支持者の中には、スミスの「悲観的」理解に気付いていないように見える者もいる。一方でスミスが次第に「悲観的」になっていったと主張する者もいるし、さらに「楽観的」になっていったと言う者もいる。本論は、こうした「見方の変化」という理解は問題を解決しないと主張する。スミスは人生において「悲観主義」の「核」を保ち続けたように見える。たしかにスミスの人生全体で見れば、彼は八割方は「楽観主義者」であったかもしれない。ミクロ・レベルにおけるスミスの「楽観主義」と「悲観主義」の構成は変化したものの、彼のマクロ・レベルでの「楽観主義」は一定であったといえる。しかしながら、「新しい見方」はその重要性にも関わらず、あらゆる問題においてスミスの「悲観主義」に対する満足な解答を提供するものではない。