

Philip Flynn

Scotland and Sin: Moral Philosophy and Scottish Culture in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

The development of moral philosophy in Scotland was part of a general secular and liberal movement within eighteenth-century Scottish culture. Although the Settlement of 1690 had established Presbyterianism as ecclesiastical policy for Scotland, inspiring some members of the reformed Church General Assembly to attempt a return to Covenanting zeal, the future of Scotland was to be shaped by influences that religious zealots could not control. The broad European and English reactions against seventeenth-century religious disputes had their effect upon educated Scotsmen. When young gentlemen studied law at Dutch universities or visited London and Paris, they encountered attitudes and systems of thought that challenged traditional Calvinist beliefs—Deism, Arminianism, Unitarianism; the attempts by Cambridge Platonists, Latitudinarian divines, and John Locke to display Christianity by the light of reason; and the scorn heaped on sectarian zeal in works such as Butler's *Hudibras*, Shaftesbury's *The Moralists*, and Swift's *Tale of the Tub*. With the Act of Union in 1707, the Lowland Scottish gentry of the new Great Britain began to look to a relatively tolerant England for their cultural ideals.¹ To the generation born at the turn of the century, a generation with no personal experience of seventeenth-century convenanting struggles, the rhetoric and controversies of the past seemed incompatible with their new political security and hoped-for economic prosperity. The Patronage Act of 1712 assured that same gentry the right to present ministers to the local kirk, thus allowing the appointment of ministers whose education, tolerance, and worldly refinement might enhance that of their patron's social circle.² Religious enthusiasm did not disappear with the Act of Union; it was a troubling element within the Church of Scotland throughout the century, causing a series of secessions from the Church and erupting in an Evangelical revival as the nineteenth century began. But puritan Calvinism did weaken in its influence throughout much of Scotland in the 1700's, allowing independent minds the opportunity to reconsider basic questions of morality.

In that same period and for some of the same reasons, ambitious Scotsmen glimpsed a pishah vision different from that seen by the theocrats of early Calvinism. The Act of Union made possible not only freer intellectual exchange, but also the customs-free exchange of goods with England and England's growing empire. Although the widespread economic improvement predicted by some Scottish advocates of Union did not follow quickly, the Scottish linen, cattle, and tobacco trades did make promising advances in the early decades. Towns such as Glasgow, Paisley, and Greenock in the West knew real, if not yet dizzying prosperity; and the early decay of guild restrictions in Glasgow allowed the entrepreneurs of that bustling city to take early advantage of mechanical improvements. By the 1760's, prosperity and optimism had spread throughout much of Scotland; by the 1780's that apparent prosperity involved not only industry, but also agriculture and transport. Edinburgh's economy, stagnant in the early decades of the century, was now providing the economic basis for that city's emergence as the architectural and intellectual Athens of the North. Population in the Lowlands and Highlands had increased through better diet and health care. In urban centers, an influx of Lowland rural laborers, Highlanders displaced by agricultural improvements, and immigrant Irish fought for the new jobs provided by the growing economy.

For those Scottish thinkers who were concerned with individual and social morality the new life of an increasingly commercial and secular Scotland posed new problems.³ Could social order be maintained among men who had ceased to be terrified by Calvinist theology? Would the struggle of selfish individuals, each following his own worldly inclinations, lead to an amoral chaos?⁴ Once the traditional restraints had been loosened—the restraints of family, guild, or clan subordination—could morality be shown to be what Francis Hutcheson would call it—the best “bargain,” the “truest gain”?⁵ For those eighteenth-century thinkers who were committed to the causes of material improvement and enlightened culture, it was necessary to find some regulating moral mechanism that could take the place of traditional controls. Scottish moral philosophers believed that they had found that mechanism within human nature itself. But to advance their arguments and to justify the evolving social order, they first found it necessary to discredit, indirectly or directly, two influential pessimistic views of human nature.

The first of those views was that of their native Calvinism: the view of human nature as totally corrupt; the view of man, “aye, even the new-born babe, [as] a lump of wrath, a child of hell.”⁶ The human nature described in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647)—

“disabled and made opposite to all Good, and wholly inclined to all Evil”—could not of itself serve as the basis of morality.⁷ Thus, early in the century, following the lead of the Cambridge Platonists and Shaftesbury, both Francis Hutcheson and George Turnbull attempted to emphasize “the fair side of the human temper,” to offer “lovely ideas of the Deity and of our fellow creatures” and to present man as “a very noble species of being in the rising scale of life and perfection.”⁸

The second moral theory that threatened Scottish eighteenth-century liberalism was that expressed by Hobbes and Mandeville—the doctrines that man acts consistently through selfish motives, a selfishness that justifies centralized political control, and that public prosperity is possible only through the practice of what Mandeville termed private vices. Although they retained a shrewd awareness of the selfish impulses within human nature, Scottish thinkers damned the Hobbes-Mandeville views as bad philosophy. Hobbes’ view of man did not “answer the appearances”; it was false to the complexity of human experience; and Hume rejected Hobbes’ “state of nature” as a philosophical fiction, no more valid than the poets’ fiction of a golden age.⁹ As for Mandeville’s narrow definition of what qualifies a virtue, Hutcheson suggested that Mandeville had “probably been struck with some old fanatic sermon upon self-denial in his youth.”¹⁰ A rational self-discipline, something possible for man, is not the same thing as asceticism, and only an unreasonable asceticism would inhibit commercial prosperity. “If any opinions deserve to be contended for,” Hutcheson believed, “they are those which give us lovely ideas of the Deity and of our fellow creatures: If any opinions deserve opposition, they are such as raise scruples in our minds about the goodness of providence, or represent our fellow creatures as base and selfish, by instilling into us some ill-natured, cunning, shrewd insinuations that our most generous actions proceed wholly from selfish views.”¹¹

In their attempts to justify the ways of man to men, Scottish writers paid explicit and implicit homage to Bacon, Locke, and Newton, the presiding spirits of what were understood to be different aspects of the scientific method. The title-page of Hume’s *Treatise* (1739-40) announced his “attempt to introduce the experimental methods of reasoning into moral subjects.” By *experimental method* Hume meant, first, inductive study of human feelings and behavior, prior to hypothesis and system, and then “experiments” conducted to confirm any system developed through inductive study.¹² In his *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) Hutcheson moved from an analysis of our instinctive moral feelings to mathematical computations of the morality of actions—a striking mixture of inductive and deductive methods.¹³ Lord Kames cited Locke’s writings

in epistemology and Newton's work in mechanics and optics as part of his argument that moral philosophers should turn from facile hypotheses" to the slow and more painful study of facts and experiments."¹⁴ Kames' own method, as described in his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1751), was to derive inductively the laws of human nature through a study of men's attitudes and actions; then, having discovered the general laws of human nature, to deduce the specific laws that should regulate our conduct in specific situations.¹⁵ Adam Ferguson, in the lectures to his students at Edinburgh that were published as the *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (1772); cited Bacon's *Novum Organum* while insisting on the primacy of facts, "particulars," in any attempt to develop a valid system of moral philosophy.¹⁶

The facts or "particulars" available—either for initial induction or subsequent experimental verification—appear to modern eyes to have been a mixed lot. The primary data were the writer's own feelings, analyzed through close introspection, and the feelings of mankind in general, as those common feelings were observed through their expression in the varied business of life. But, as Thomas Reid acknowledged, "there is much uncertainty in the former, and much difficulty in the latter. Men differ much in their characters; and we can observe the conduct of a few only of the species."¹⁷ Because the range of the species available for study in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen was limited, Scottish writers turned to history, travel books, and imaginative literature for further data on human nature. Hume used examples from Roman, Greek, and Persian histories as "experiments" to test his arguments concerning justice; Adam Smith cited the conduct of North American Indians to illustrate the workings of sympathy; and James Beattie buttressed his discussion of the passions with quotations from Cicero, Horace, Longinus, and Ovid.

If inductive or validating data were drawn from varied sources, there were also reservations on the question of how closely the methods of moral philosophy *could* parallel the methods of the physical sciences. Hume's ambition to introduce experimental method into moral subjects did not blind him to the "peculiar disadvantage" of moral philosophy, "that in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them purposely, with premeditation"; "this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phenomenon."¹⁸ Ferguson believed that there exists an essential distinction between physical and moral science: moral "laws" are not laws in the sense that they embody a series of observable, uniform phenomena, but in the sense that they derive a moral authority from those apparent

ends for which human nature is designed. Data on how men *do* behave should not be confused with that evidence of teleological design that allows us to discover how men *should* behave.¹⁹

It was their shared confidence in final causes that sustained Scottish moralists in the face of methodological problems. Scottish moral philosophy in the eighteenth century combined modern and traditional elements in a balance that rarely has been possible since their time and place. Their dedication to empirical study was matched by their conviction that there is a recognizable *telos*, or end, designed for man by God or Nature. That conviction—while temperamentally congenial to a group of philosophers that included several Presbyterian ministers—was not an untested assumption. These writers believed that the facts of moral life, men's natural faculties, supported the belief in final causes—a belief that, based upon feeling or reason, is itself natural to man. "We make no difficulty to pronounce," Kames pronounced, "that a species of beings are made for such and such an end, who are of such and such a nature."²⁰ Scottish writers believed that they had found in human nature just such moral mechanisms as justified the argument that men are meant to live in social concord. That end, once discovered, then could be applied as a deductive principle in settling subtle or disputed moral questions. Studying man's spontaneous feelings, Hutcheson found "a fine machinery of nature," Smith the work of "an invisible hand," Reid the intentions of "the wise Author of our being."²¹ Hume again had reservations: the moral faculties he found in the human frame appeared to him to be more a happy stroke of nature than an order that justified belief in a benevolent deity.²² But, despite his refusal to discuss final causes, Hume found efficient cause for optimism. His study of the workings of men's natural sympathies, a study that included "the whole animal creation," found "nothing . . . presented on any side but what is laudable and good."²³

What, then, of Sin? How to explain the persistent phenomena of men sunk in selfish or sensual pursuits and bent upon each other's destruction? Scottish moral philosophers did not give sustained attention to the problem of moral evil; their remarks upon "vice" were usually brief qualifications of their more detailed attempts to identify virtue and the mechanisms of moral approbation. To Hutcheson, who identified virtue as benevolence, men's selfish or aggressive attitudes and actions were the results of "mistaken self-love, made so violent as to overcome benevolence."²⁴ He explained this unhappy "mistake" by referring to eccentric associations of ideas or to the shibboleths of religious and political fanaticism. Lord Kames, who denied the reality of moral liberty, excused moral evil as "the result of general laws and

of a necessary connection betwixt causes and their effects”²⁵—a definition that might satisfy Johnson’s philosopher in *Rasselas*. Hume recognized that the sight of another man’s suffering sometimes gives pleasure through the comparison with our own well-being, and Smith acknowledged in human nature a capacity for malice that prevents the natural workings of our sympathies.²⁶ For Thomas Reid, who believed that reason plays a central role in moral life, a cool and deliberate preference for malicious actions over moral duty seemed to be almost a contradiction in terms. But Reid admitted that there may be individuals who are so enslaved to sensual appetites that they cannot make cool and deliberate judgments concerning right and wrong. “Hypotheses might be framed,” he concluded, “but, while we have ground to be satisfied that he [God] does nothing but what is right, it is more becoming for us to acknowledge that the ends and reasons of his universal government are [in some instances] beyond our knowledge.”²⁷ Adam Ferguson expressed a similar humility concerning God’s sometimes mysterious ways. But, while his years as chaplain to a Black Watch regiment must have given him close knowledge of the darker sides of human nature, Ferguson emerged from that experience with the conviction that malice is not instinctive to man. Our ill-will towards others develops primarily through mistaken notions of competition; and although “such errors of the imagination” are a moral weakness “and scarcely separable from actual depravity of heart,” our very awareness of moral weakness is a sign of men’s progressive nature and divine design.²⁸ A creature who perceived no moral defect could have no principle of improvement. Thus, for Ferguson and other Scottish thinkers, the human scene was a hopeful prospect. The majority of men were far from civic sainthood, even in enlightened Scotland, but the potential for individual and social improvement was natural to the species.

In their descriptions of human nature, however, Scottish philosophers were forced to work with caution. A series of bitter doctrinal disputes shook the Church of Scotland in the early eighteenth century, causing not only secession from the Church but also an internal division between Moderate and Evangelical parties. Although by the 1760’s the Moderate Party would gain ascendancy in the Church General Assembly, bringing a more worldly and tolerant tone to Church affairs, its members seldom publicly denied the basic Calvinist doctrines of the inherited depravity of man and of the necessity for divine election. Throughout the century both ministers and university professors were required to subscribe to the *Westminster Confession* as a statement of their personal faith. As happened to John Simson, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow, they were warned both formally and

informally “not to attribute too much to natural reason and the power of corrupt nature to the disparagement of revelation and efficacious free grace.”²⁹ For Hutcheson, who had studied under Simson at Glasgow, and for William Leechman, Hutcheson’s protege, the classroom offered dangers as well as opportunities. Alexander Carlyle, a pupil of Hutcheson and Leechman, remembered that his teachers taught no obvious heresies, but “opened and enlarged the minds of the students, which soon gave them a turn for free inquiry, the result of which was candour and liberality of sentiment.”³⁰ But one man’s candor is another man’s heresy: Hutcheson at Glasgow and Archibald Campbell at St. Andrews were charged by their local presbyteries, Hutcheson for teaching “husks of heathen morality” and Campbell for attacking those religious extremists who defined God’s will in terms of their own bigotry.³¹ Even laymen such as Hume and Kames, whose livelihoods were not wholly dependent upon church or university, were often checked by opposition from religious conservatives. So, for reasons both sincere and pragmatic, the majority of Scottish moral philosophers attempted to reconcile their non-Hobbesian, non-Calvinistic views of human nature with religion—if not with the Calvinist scheme itself, then with Christian stoicism or at least with the dictates of Natural Religion. Hutcheson argued that the study of man’s moral life inexorably leads us to God: the evidence of moral design in the human frame is proof of the existence of a moral government, just as evidence of physical design in the external world proves intelligent design in that sphere.³² Kames described conscience or the moral sense as “the voice of God within us.”³³ Reid believed that, in the study of human moral faculties, “the noblest work of God that falls within our notice, we may discern most clearly the character of him who made us.”³⁴

These writers differed in their understandings of the principles of virtuous conduct and moral approbation, but they shared a hope that moral science—the systematic study of the natural “laws” of moral life—might combine with the physical sciences to bring modern men to a rational piety. In that effort, wrote Ferguson, “science may be considered as the highest attainment of created intelligence, and its nearest approach to . . . the Supreme Creator.”³⁵ But what was the place of Christian revelation in a rational system of philosophy? With the notorious exception of Hume, the majority of Scottish moralists affirmed that Revelation is intended by God to support, not supplant, the moral truths men can come to know through the exercise of and reflection upon their moral faculties.³⁶ If human reason, of itself, were not able to rise to the concepts of a moral order, a benovolent Creator, and an after-life, the evidence of Revelation itself would be suspect. No pretended Revelation can be true that contradicts those moral truths

that reason has discovered. But no such contradiction exists: the notions of God's government developed naturally through reason are consistently refined and supported by Christian Revelation. For Hutcheson, Turnbull, Reid, James Beattie and Adam Smith, the belief in an after-life was essential to human contentment amidst life's misadventures.³⁷ Although their definitions of virtue were such as Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius might have accepted, they were conscious of human weakness and the Gospel's aid.

The courses in Moral Philosophy at Scottish universities included subjects that today enjoy independent academic status: epistemology, political science, jurisprudence, linguistics, and aesthetics. The concern with political questions was particularly strong. In the Aristotelian tradition, human nature was believed to reach its natural fulfillment only in the context of a political community, and "Moral Philosophy" at Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen moved normally from lectures upon Ethics to lectures upon Politics.³⁸ Hutcheson and Smith at Glasgow, Ferguson and Stewart at Edinburgh, Beattie at Aberdeen, and other Scottish thinkers in and out of school were inspired by the Middle Stoic/Ciceronian/Renaissance teachings on Natural Law—as well as by Grotius, Locke and Montesquieu—to consider what natural rights and obligations might exist "previous to civil government and other adventitious states."³⁹ Hutcheson's lectures on natural rights, utilitarian government and justified resistance were high moments in the Scottish Whig tradition, a tradition that influenced colonial educators such as John Witherspoon at Princeton,⁴⁰ a tradition that in Scotland extended through the troubled closing decades of the century into the lecture rooms of Dugald Stewart and Glasgow's John Millar—and, by 1802, into the pages of the second *Edinburgh Review*. As part of their discussions of rights and moral standards, Scottish moral philosophers attempted to analyse and integrate the new information on human behavior that explorers, missionaries, and commercial adventurers were discovering in Polynesia, the Americas, and Asia. That information, Dugald Stewart acknowledged, had "wonderfully enlarged our knowledge of human nature," showing "that many sentiments and opinions which had been formerly regarded as inseparable from the nature of man are the results of accidental situation."⁴¹ "From these great accessions to knowledge," wrote James Mackintosh in his *Discourse on the Study of the Law of Nature and Nations* (1799), "lawyers and statesmen, but above all moralists and political philosophers may reap the most important instruction."⁴² While they warned their students and readers against the extreme forms of cultural relativism⁴³ and the "wondrous" credulity⁴⁴ of some travel writers, Scottish moral philosophers joined

with sociologists, historians, and anthropologists (the moral philosophers themselves were often sociologists, economists, historians, or anthropologists) to develop an evolutionary model of cultural history.⁴⁵ In that attempt to trace the origin and natural development of familial-tribal structures, literary forms, and concepts of property, they came to recognize how the peculiar character of a social or political structure can influence its members' moral standards.

The elements in Scottish moral philosophy that raised the most sustained philosophical debate were theories concerning the principles of moral approbation and disapprobation. How do humans develop their concepts of moral good and evil, virtuous and vicious conduct? Looking back upon his century's progress in the science of morals, Dugald Stewart cited the concern with moral *theory*, as opposed to practical moral exhortation, as the feature that most clearly divided modern writings from the writings of moral philosophers before Hobbes. That theoretical concern, "recommended at once by its novelty and difficulty to the curiosity of speculative men,"⁴⁶ had been pursued in the early and mid-decades of the century for avowedly practical motives. Hutcheson believed that his inquiries concerning the principles of moral approbation would prove "what we call the reality of virtue."⁴⁷ and thus justify less institutional control, in opposition to the teachings of Hobbes. At the conclusion of his attack upon much of his age's moral certitude, Hume expressed the hope that his abstract speculations might make the more important branch, practical morality, "more correct in its precepts and more persuasive in its exhortations."⁴⁸ And Kames, before arguing that moral liberty is a psychological illusion, expressed the perhaps paradoxical conviction that right action ought to be the goal of a philosopher's inquiries, "without which moral as well as metaphysical reasonings are but empty speculations."⁴⁹

The sceptical doubts raised by Hume and Kames provoked reaction—not only from Evangelical churchmen but also from Moderate philosophers. James Oswald, in his *Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion* (1767-72), insisted that the fascination with moral theory had obscured the proper business of a moral writer—his elaboration of the moral duties of life.⁵⁰ Beattie devoted long sections of his *Elements of Moral Science* (1790), an abridgement of lectures delivered through the years at Marischal College, Aberdeen, to warnings against metaphysical moralists and to direct moral exhortation. And Reid came to deny that theories concerning the principles of moral approbation have any proper place in moral science: a sound moral system is one that explains the ends for which human nature has been framed and the duties that those ends entail: men need not first become

metaphysicians before they can be brought to a better understanding of what constitutes moral obligation.⁵¹ Reid, however, wrestled at length with Hume's and Kames' theories concerning moral obligation and free will. Doubts once raised could not be ignored, and Dugald Stewart found at the end of the century that Edinburgh students were infected with sceptical opinions. "In such an age as the present," he admitted, "when skeptical doctrines have been so anxiously disseminated by writers of genius, it appears . . . to be a still more essential object in academical instruction to vindicate the theory of morals against the cavils of licentious metaphysicians than to indulge in the more interesting and popular disquisitions of practical ethics."⁵²

The problem had its origin early in the century in Hutcheson's denial that men's moral distinctions are the product of deductive reasoning. Convinced that the "Author of Nature" has provided us with moral instructions "almost as quick and powerful . . . as we have for the preservation of our bodies,"⁵³ Hutcheson attempted to give moral ideas the status of Locke's "simple ideas"—i.e., those provided through sensation. Not finding in Locke's model of our cognitive lives a sense that could provide such ideas, he developed the doctrine from Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* (1711) that men feel a natural attraction toward virtue. Hutcheson believed that there exists in human nature an instinctive benevolence, "some instinct, antecedent to all reason from interest, which influences us to the love of others."⁵⁴ In the exercise and recognition of this benevolence men feel the noblest pleasure that our human nature provides. That pleasure itself is felt through what Hutcheson called a "moral sense"—not an innate idea, but a pre-rational determination to feel pleasure in the recognition of such attitudes and actions that benefit our fellow men. Thus, for Hutcheson, the simple ideas of moral good and evil have their source in the sensations, the pleasure and pain, felt through the moral sense.⁵⁵ When fully developed, that sense naturally leads us to feel the greatest pleasure in the contemplation of such attitudes that consistently tend to effect the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers.⁵⁶ Hutcheson's early utilitarianism, his equation of virtue with benevolence, and his egalitarian doctrine of a common moral sense had potentially widespread appeal in Glasgow, Greenock, and other economic centers, where many merchants and manufacturers had turned their backs on Highland-Jacobite hierarchy and heroics, as well as on the ascetic aspects of Calvinism, to seek the good life of enlightened self-interest and civic philanthropy available to them in a Hanoverian North Britain.

Although Hutcheson was careful not to base morality *solely* on immediate feeling,⁵⁷ his basic doctrine that moral distinctions are not

products of the reason was developed in disturbing ways by Hume.⁵⁸ Hume agreed that moral distinctions have their basis in feelings of pleasure or pain, “the chief spring or actuating principle of the human mind.”⁵⁹ In his *Treatise* and later *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), Hume found in human nature a principle of “sympathy” or of “humanity” that leads us to share in the emotions of others.⁶⁰ Through the workings of that principle, we feel pleasure in a person’s character or action if it is useful or agreeable to society at large or to the person himself. That disinterested pleasure is the source of our idea of virtue, as the disinterested pain that we feel in contemplating harmful character or action is the source of our idea of vice. “Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of,”⁶¹ Hume concluded, and the role of reason in Hume’s moral philosophy was usually subordinate to that of feeling. While reason can instruct us in the tendencies of attitudes and actions, thus determining “the great lines of our duty,” it is sentiment or feeling that first prompts us to approve of those actions or qualities of mind that are useful or agreeable to others.⁶² For Hume, as for Hutcheson, man’s natural feelings justified the hope that men could live in harmony without oppressive kirk or state control. But Hume did not find in men’s natural feelings any evidence of divine design. His moral analysis was naturalistic: different creatures with different constitutions would develop different standards of virtue and vice, as natural and valid for them as human standards are for us. Hume could find no moral authority for any *ought* that contradicts what *is*.

Following the lead of Hutcheson and Hume, both Lord Kames and Adam Smith attempted to trace men’s ideas of virtue and vice to their basis in our sentiments and feelings. Kames, who regularly referred to male and female acquaintances as “bitches,” assumed a higher tone in his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1751), arguing that men feel a distinct kind of pleasure or pain in the perception of human attitudes and actions that are fitting or unfitting to our nature as social animals. Those distinct feelings, experienced in the perception of moral beauty or deformity, are themselves the feeling of moral approbation and disapprobation. The faculty by which we perceive moral beauty or deformity is the moral sense—not, strictly speaking, a principle of action, but the guide and director of our varied principles of action. While Kames and Smith agreed that Hutcheson and Hume had defined virtue too narrowly in terms of benevolence or of utility, Smith also found the theory of a distinct moral sense unnecessary. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) Smith advanced the principle of sympathy, “our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever,”⁶³ as a sufficient explanation of the sources of our

moral distinctions. When able to sympathize with the emotions of others, we feel pleasure; when unable to sympathize with another's emotions we feel pain. These feelings of pleasure and pain are the sources of our moral distinctions, and those feelings are prompted by our recognition of the propriety or impropriety of our neighbor's feelings. Thus the general *mean* of feeling, the capacity of mankind in general to sympathize with any given emotion, becomes our public standard of moral propriety. "O wad some Power the giftie gie us/ To see oursels as ithers see us!" implored Burns, who had studied Smith's *Theory*; "It wad frae monie a blunder free us, / An' foolish notion."⁶⁴ But Smith, like Burns after him, drew a distinction between virtue and common propriety. Virtue involves both extraordinary sensibility and extraordinary self-command—an unusual capacity to sympathize with others, as well as an unusual capacity to adjust our own feelings to a Stoic standard of calm resignation of resolve.

The explanation of morality in terms of human feelings, the theoretical equation of moral with aesthetic "taste," strongly influenced Scottish literary criticism and imaginative literature.⁶⁵ In the latter half of the eighteenth century and in the early decades of the century that followed, the period including Henry Mackenzie's *Mirror* and *Lounger* and Francis Jeffrey's years with the *Edinburgh Review*, poetry as varied as that written by Ossian, Burns, and Thomas Campbell was praised for its appeal to the sympathetic emotions. Dramatic tragedy and comedy were analyzed as agents of emotional arousal,⁶⁶ and both parties in the Moderate-Evangelical dispute on the morality of theatrical attendance saw the stage as a source of moral education, good or bad. Mackenzie's novels explored the dangers and delights of sensibility; in the late nineteenth century there would develop a distinctive "kailyard school" of Scottish novelists, recording the sentimental melodrama of domestic life.

But the Scottish version of the general British and European cult of sensibility was riddled with reservations and contradictions. While Mackenzie's novels provided their readers with the joys of moral weeping, they also exposed the excesses of refined sensibility—those "feelings which perhaps are too tender to be suffered by the world."⁶⁷ While Dugald Stewart warned his students that sentimental reading was a dangerous regimen of moral instruction, he eagerly subjected himself to a reading of Thomas Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809), from which he emerged "pale as a ghost, and sick with weeping."⁶⁸ And Jeffrey, who was often reduced to tears by sentimental poetry and novels, identified "tenderness of feeling" as Burns' poetic strength in the same review in which he attacked Burns' "pitiful cant of

careless feeling," his "contempt, or affection of contempt, for prudence, decency, and regularity."⁶⁹

Those contradictions can be understood partly in terms of the economic, historical, and social conditions of urban Scottish life. Sentiment came easily to some eighteenth-century Scotsmen—nostalgic sentiment for Scotland's lost nationhood, nostalgia for the language and local manners of their childhood. "My *reason* is with the modern world, my *dreams* with the old one": so confided Henry Cockburn, Whig reformer, to his *Journal*.⁷⁰ An exquisite moral sensibility, like a refined aesthetic taste, was one mark by which aspiring members of the upper middle class could distinguish themselves from those less successful below them or less sensitive above them.⁷¹ But sentimental attachment to a national or personal past was excess baggage on the road of Anglicized, utilitarian progress; and moral weeping must needs be a cultural luxury when young men such as Jeffrey and Mackenzie were forced early into what were at first uncongenial trades or professions, when material advancement depended at times upon a ruthless allegiance to political or ecclesiastical faction, and where the sight of poverty-choked closes, children ravaged by small-pox, and frequent public executions necessitated some defensive hardening of the heart.

But the tensions within imaginative literature and literary criticism were also expressions of tensions within the Scottish moral philosophy upon which Scottish sentimental aesthetics was based. The issues involved found their most forceful expression in the work of Thomas Reid, who had devoted himself to a wide-ranging rebuttal of the premises of post-Cartesian moral philosophy, epistemology, and aesthetics. Reid had studied at Aberdeen under George Turnbull, from whom he would have heard a sympathetic exposition of the main tenets of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. But Reid recognized that the subjectivistic emphasis of recent moral analysis had led logically to Hume's conclusion that men's moral judgments are not judgments of objective fact, but expressions of our sentiments or feelings. And Hume's conclusion, Reid believed, was potentially destructive to morality and Natural Religion: "If what we call *moral judgment* be no real judgment, but merely a feeling, it follows that the principles of morals . . . have no other foundation but an arbitrary structure and fabric in the constitution of the human mind: so that, by a change in our structure, what is immoral might become moral. . . . It follows that, from our notion of morals, we can conclude nothing concerning a moral character in the Deity, which is the foundation of all religion and the strongest support of virtue."⁷² Unlike Hume, who had argued that reason guides us only in the choice of means to attain those ends to

which the feelings have impelled us, Reid found in human nature distinctively rational principles of action that act upon data provided by the conscience, moral sense, or moral faculty.⁷³ That moral sense or moral faculty, “an original power of the mind,”⁷⁴ not only provides us with our general concepts of right and wrong, but also allows us to recognize *specific* acts and attitudes as being right or wrong. Such moral perceptions instruct us not in what man *is*, but in what man *ought to be*, and we develop our standards of human duty on the basis of those perceptions. Thus moral approbation and disapprobation are complex operations of the mind—involving, first, a judgment whether attitudes or actions accord with man’s moral duties, and, second, feelings of pleasure or pain that are consequent upon that judgment. *Virtue* consists not in natural affections or involuntary qualities of mind: the virtuous man is he who resolves to do his duty, resolves to be what conscience dictates that man ought to be. And duty sometimes demands that we ignore the immediate promptings of benevolence and sympathy, that we strive to reach a higher standard than what is agreeable or useful to others.⁷⁵

Reid’s preoccupation with the problem that was Hume may have caused him to underestimate the rational dimension in the theories of Hutcheson, Smith, and Hume himself. None of those writers had denied that reason (*be reason* Hume’s “calm passions” or Hutcheson’s moral mathematics) plays an important role in moral life. While they had insisted that feelings are the basic element in men’s personal responses and in any valid public code, they had also insisted that the rational evaluation of effective means and practical ends is a necessary check to the promptings of our partial affections.⁷⁶ For Reid, James Oswald, James Beattie, and Dugald Stewart, however, Scottish theories from Hutcheson through Smith seemed milestones on a road to moral scepticism—the replacement of Right Reason by moral “Taste,” the denial of moral Liberty in the name of Determinism, the abandonment of Stern Duty in pursuit of the pleasures of Benevolence, Sympathy, or recognized Utility.⁷⁷ In reaction, Reid and his colleagues attempted to establish human moral discernment on a basis more secure than the possibly arbitrary structure of the human frame. In moral philosophy, as in epistemology, Scottish thinkers of the latter half of the eighteenth century tried to reconcile the valuable insights and scientific methods of their predecessors with those certitudes that practical men expected a philosophy free of kirk-dominion to continue to support. In the name of responsible liberalism, they tried to strike a balance between the need for free inquiry and the common Scotsman’s need for moral guidance.

But liberalism of any stripe became a different business as the century closed. In the 1780's political issues such as the war with the American colonies began to drive members of the Church General Assembly into the camp of either "government" or "opposition." After William Robertson's retirement from his position as leader of the Moderate Party, the Moderate leadership attempted to maintain their often fragile majority in the Assembly by a more direct use of patronage, a patronage controlled by William Pitt's man Henry Dundas, "the uncrowned King of Scotland" and manager of government's largesse. If the Moderates did not become what a modern historian has called them, "little more than the Dundas interest at prayer,"⁷⁸ their leaders did come to see the party's survival as tactically connected with the Pitt-Dundas *status-quo*. And what was at first a tactical maneuver became a conservative reaction in the 1790's, when the excesses of the French National Assembly convinced many Moderates that political opposition to the *status-quo* was connected with religious infidelity. The Party whose members once had attacked the slave-trade, championed penal reform, and maintained friendly relations with reputed sceptics such as Hume and Kames now closed its doors and minds to free inquiry. In pastoral letters the Moderates warned against books that propagated atheism and sedition. The Party opposed Catholic Emancipation and rejected an Evangelical plan for foreign missions on the grounds that such mission societies might become centers of republicanism. In perhaps their darkest moment, the Leslie Case of 1805, the Moderates adapted tactics that they once had scorned—raising a dubious charge of heresy against a candidate for a university chair of mathematics.⁷⁹

The conservative fright felt by the Moderates was itself only one aspect of a general panic and vindictiveness that seized official Scotland. As Home Secretary in Pitt's first administration, Henry Dundas had throttled the expression of reforming a pro-French sentiment throughout the country. Through a series of State Trials for Sedition, Dundas had persecuted leaders of the Edinburgh Society of Friends of the People, a society attempting to coordinate political activity in the cause of burgh reform and a wider electoral franchise. Those trials and the reports of Jacobin activities issued by Dundas' "Committees of Secrecy" effectively silenced political reformers and convinced the leaders of Scottish opinion that only strong governmental authority stood between the propertied classes and republican mobs. In that fearful atmosphere Dundas had been able to obtain a suspension of Habeas Corpus, and the Pitt Administration had passed a Newspaper Act (1798) "for preventing the mischief from the printing and publishing" of opposition pamphlets and newspapers, as well as the Seditious

Meetings and Treasonable Practices Bill (1795) to intimidate reform societies. The political spirit of the Scottish establishment was close to that expressed by "Hanging Judge" Braxfield in the Edinburgh trial of Thomas Muir: "The British constitution is the best that ever was since the creation of the world and it is not possible to make it better."⁸⁰ "Never since our own Revolution," Henry Cockburn remembered, "was there a period when public life was so exasperated by hatred, or the charities of public life were so soured by political aversion."⁸¹ Young Francis Jeffrey, reluctantly drawn by his political principles into the small camp of opposition Whigs, lamented in 1796 how hatred generated by political issues had "extended to every department of life, and come to affect every profession."⁸² Among the professions affected was that of university professor; among the departments was the lecture-room of Moral Philosophy.

At the end of the century Dugald Stewart was the pre-eminent moral philosopher active in Scotland, a teacher of "gentle and persuasive eloquence"⁸³ whose liberal political principles made him the target of recurrent criticism. Stewart was found guilty of several sins: he had praised the *philosophe* Condorcet in his lectures and in his *Elements of the Philosophy of Mind* (1792); he had welcomed the first movements of the French Revolution; and his Edinburgh home had become a social center for Scottish liberal thinkers. Stewart was able to retain his university position because, while his politics were liberal, his moral philosophy was a cautious reworking of the more conservative elements in eighteenth-century Scottish thought.⁸⁴ He had studied under Reid at Glasgow; and, after succeeding Adam Ferguson in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, he continued Reid's attack against the moral subjectivism of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume. He publicly rejected the moral determinism preached by Kames, as well as the pantheism or atheism found in Spinoza and the French materialists. "The mind must have something distinct from the objects of sense on which to repose itself," he warned his students while discussing the appeal of Rosicrucianism, theories of animal magnetism, and other quackeries of the eighteenth century. "The principles of our nature on which religion is founded, if they are prevented from developing themselves under the direction of an enlightened reason, will infallibly disclose themselves in one way or another, in the character and conduct." The recent triumphs of scepticism had not set most men free; rather, they had opened the door to "a greater number of visionaires and imposters than had appeared since the time of the revival of letters." Convinced that "every system which calls in question the immutability of moral distinctions has a tendency to undermine the foundation of *all* the virtues," Stewart attempted to distinguish men's

perceptions of moral beauty and deformity from their rational judgments that an action is right or wrong. While the former vary according to moral sensibilities, the latter concern certain attributes of actions that are no more dependent upon our sensibilities than are the primary qualities of matter dependent upon the acuteness of our external senses. For Stewart, as for Reid, man's moral faculty or conscience includes a complex interplay of reason and feeling, "and it is only by attending to both that we can form a just notion of our moral constitution."⁸⁵

By the early nineteenth century, however, neither Stewart's respectfully theistic defense of the immutability of moral distinctions nor the enlightened aspects of the Moderate program—their pulpit emphasis upon prudential virtues, their evolutionary view of doctrinal development—could speak to the significant religious needs within Scottish life. The populations of some industrial burghs had tripled since 1750, bringing a visible increase in crime and degradation. In the wake of the French Revolution and the writings of Tom Paine, both religious infidelity and republicanism spread throughout the laboring classes—a danger that, James McCosh believed, "is not to be arrested by any remedy which the mere philosophical moralists have propounded."⁸⁶ It was the Evangelical Party, with their strong tradition of pastoral concern, that worked to bring new churches and more ministers to the laboring poor, emphasizing not rational religion but an emotional awareness of the Calvinist doctrines of sin, grace, and redemption. In Scotland as in England, the Evangelical emphases no longer seemed offensive to the social establishment: the rise of religious infidelity among the working class had awakened both the Scottish and English upper class to a fresh concern for religious orthodoxy. In Scotland, the Evangelical Party now included men whose intellectual and social gifts rivalled those found among the Moderates. Thomas McCrie's influential *Life of John Knox* (1812) and *Life of Andrew Melville* (1819) revived interest in and sympathy for the zeal of early reformers; by the 1820's the number of students preparing for the ministry was greater than at any time on record; and in 1834 the Evangelical Party gained control of the Church General Assembly.

That Evangelical triumph and the subsequent ecclesiastical "Disruption" of 1843⁸⁷ profoundly affected Scottish moral philosophy. Although academic philosophers such as Thomas Brown, William Hamilton, and James Ferrier attempted to refine and develop the positions of Reid and Dugald Stewart, they were opposed by Evangelical and Free Church leaders who were wary of the common emphasis upon man's fallen reason to be found in eighteenth-century thought. Thomas Chalmers, leader of the Evangelical and then the Free Church

movement, insisted that philosophy in all its branches must subordinate itself to the teachings of Christian revelation. John Cairns, a member of William Hamilton's circle who was awakened to the need for Evangelical zeal, condemned in the *North British Review* the "refined paganism, . . . unbound by any trammels of subscription to creeds or by any living influences of Christianity," that had been taught from the chairs of Moral Philosophy at the Scottish universities: "Hutcheson and Smith propounded their kindred systems from the chair in Glasgow; Reid consented to sink the theologian in the philosopher in the same University; even Hume, had he been a little more cautious, might have reached the same object of ambition in Edinburgh; from which high post of honor, Ferguson, Stewart, and Brown continued for half a century to dilate in their different styles on the beauties of virtue and the authority of conscience, without a single recognition of the Divine influence, which alone can charm virtue into existence and restore into the hands of conscience its fallen sceptre."⁸⁸ To combat what they understood to be the influence of the eighteenth century, Evangelical and Free Church leaders proposed their own candidates for the Scottish university chairs—plunging Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow, and St. Andrews into a series of bitter philosophical and personal disputes.⁸⁹

The acrimony of those internal disputes discredited Scottish intellectual culture at a moment when that culture was being undermined by other forces. As interpreted in England by Coleridge and in Scotland by Carlyle, German idealism was attracting many younger minds to whom the writings of Hume seemed a sterile scepticism and the writings of Hutcheson, Smith, and Reid seemed superficial and/or inconsistent. "O most intellectual Athenians," Carlyle lamented in the Athens of the North; "what accounts are those you gave us of *Morality* and *Faith*, and all that really makes a man a man! *Can* you believe that the Beautiful and Good have no deeper root in us than 'Association,' 'Sympathy,' 'Calculation'?"⁹⁰ More disturbing to the general Scottish psyche, a series of Royal Commissions had begun to inquire whether Scottish undergraduate instruction should be revised to conform to the Oxford-Cambridge models, with less emphasis upon philosophy and more training in Greek and mathematics. These disruptive influences—religious, philosophical, educational—combined to inhibit much of Scotland's philosophical spirit. Although Reid's and Stewart's writings remained influential among some Continental philosophers, and in the classrooms of American colleges, moral philosophy in mid-nineteenth century Scotland was no longer a vital, organic tradition that could command the respectful attention of many British thinkers.

Defining the life of a philosophical movement is always a risky venture. No list of environmental factors satisfactorily explains the emergence of a mind such as Hume's in the 1730's or the absence of such a mind in the 1830's. In retrospect, however, the rise and fall of Scottish moral philosophy appears to have paralleled certain broad cultural movements—the awakening of middle-class cultural ambitions that was encouraged by the Act of Union; the spread of intellectual tolerance under the eighteenth-century Moderate regime; the growth of confidence in native academic institutions, native intellectual traditions, and the role of rational inquiry within religious life. Despite its significant internal tensions, Scottish moral philosophy appears to have suited the temperaments of enlightened professionals, technocrats, and civic philanthropists, at least until the time when the French and Industrial revolutions reoriented many of the middle-class's psychological and social concerns. If that philosophy did not pay sufficient attention to human moral failings, as its nineteenth-century critics claimed, moral failings were not high on the Scottish eighteenth-century philosophical agenda. Man's flawed, sinful nature had obsessed the theologians of the preceding century; the need of the new century seemed to be the search for a basis for secular confidence and cautious optimism. Vulnerable as it proved to be to changing cultural conditions, enlightened Scotland's moral philosophy was an impressive national achievement. From Hutcheson through Stewart—in a cumulative effort, attacking and learning from each other—Scottish thinkers attempted to develop a system of morals for a secular commercial society. In that attempt they explored the issues, methodology and dangers of modern ethics.

NOTES

1. In his *History of Scotland* (1759) William Robertson described the cultural consequences of the Act of Union: "At length, the union having incorporated the two nations, and rendered them one people, the distinctions which had subsisted for many ages gradually wear away; peculiarities disappear; the same manners prevail in both parts of the island; the same authors are read and admired; the same entertainments are frequented by the elegant and polite; and the same standard of taste and of purity in language is established. The Scots, after being placed, during a whole century, in a situation no less fatal to the liberty than to the taste and genius of the nation, were at once put in possession of privileges more valuable than those which their ancestors had formerly enjoyed . . .": *History of Scotland* (New York: Harper, 1842), p. 322 (Book VIII). A successful historian, the Principal of Edinburgh University (1762-93), and leader of the Moderate Party within the Church of Scotland, Robertson was the very model of an anglicized and anglicizing eighteenth-century Scotsman. For a later analysis of this same cultural movement, an analysis that is more sensitive to what was lost in native Scottish life, see Francis Jeffrey's review of McCrie's *Life of John Knox* (1812) in the *Edinburgh Review*, 20 (July, 1812), Art. 1, 1-29.
2. The Act of 1712 did not deny congregations the right to object to ministers presented by patrons, but the role of congregations within the process of selection was weakened under the eighteenth-century Moderate regime. See J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 278-85.

3. The question of the connection between Calvinism and Capitalism has vexed historians and sociologists since the publication of Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The problem has been readdressed in Gordon Marshall's *Presbyteries and Profit: Calvinism and the Development of Capitalism in Scotland, 1560-1707* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), and the controversy is summarized clearly in Roger Mason's "For God and Mammon," a review of Marshall's book in *TLS*, 31 March 1981, 292. If, as Marshall argues, certain seventeenth-century Calvinist divines insisted on productive activity as a mark of divine election, but forbade conspicuous consumption, the necessary reinvestment rather than consumption of capital could have encouraged the development of Capitalism in Scotland when other factors, material and economic, allowed the Capitalist spirit a freer expression. By the early eighteenth century, however, the leaders of Scotland's intellectual community were encouraging material improvement in terms that were not those used by earlier Calvinist divines, although the basic impetus toward good works may have had its psychological basis in the Calvinist scheme of election.
4. For a series of essays that debate the roles of "civic humanism" and "natural jurisprudence" in Scottish attempts to deal with the problems of commercial society, see *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, eds. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983).
5. Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728; reprint ed. New York: Garland, 1971), p. 165 (Treatise I, Section VI).
6. Dr. Blackwell, minister of Paisley, in his *Schema Sacrum* (1712), quoted in Henry Grey Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Black, 1937), p. 398.
7. *The Confession of Faith: Together with the Larger and Lesser Catechisms*, 3rd ed. (London, 1688), p. 31 (Chp 6).
8. Hutcheson, *Essay*, p. xii; George Turnbull, *The Principles of Moral Philosophy* (1740; reprint ed. Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976), I, iv.
9. Hutcheson, *Essay*, p. 209 (Treatise II, Introduction); David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1777; reprint ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 189.
10. Francis Hutcheson, *Reflections Upon Laughter and Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees* (1750; reprint ed. New York: Garland 1971), p. 81 (3rd letter to Hibernicus).
11. Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 2nd ed. (1726; reprint ed. New York: Garland, 1971), pp. 208-9 (Treatise II, Section IV). In his *Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue* (London, 1939) Archibald Campbell attempted to prove that, while self-love is the "first spring" that triggers the powers of a rational mind, our very desire of esteem leads us to a universal love and benevolence for and toward God and our fellow-man (Part I).
12. See Hume, *Enquiry*, pp. 174-5; "A Treatise of Human Nature," *The Philosophical Works*, eds. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (1886; reprinted. Darmstadt: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1964), II, 124, 137, 182, 267.
13. Late in the *Inquiry* Hutcheson uses mathematical arguments to demonstrate that that action is best which achieves the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers. In these moral calculations Hutcheson seems far removed from the empirical-introspective method and the instinctive moral feelings with which his *Inquiry* begins. But his moral mathematics is intended as a guide in making public policy, not as a substitute for our instinctive moral feelings.
14. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1751; reprint ed. New York: Garland, 1976) p. 33 (Part I, Essay II).
15. See Kames, *Essays*, pp. 37-42 (Part I, Essay I).
16. Adam Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (1773; reprint ed. New York: Garland, 1978), pp. 1-2. See also Ferguson, *Principles of Moral and Political Science* (1792; reprint ed. New York: AMS Press, 1973), II, 36, 78-79, 84.
17. Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind* (1813-15; reprint ed. Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press, 1969), p. 97 (Essay III, Chapter I).
18. Hume, "Treatise of Human Nature," *Works*, I, 309.
19. See Ferguson, *Institutes*, pp. 78-80, 102-3 (Part II, Chapters I & III). In the list of definitions "for the use of students in the College of Edinburgh" that introduces the text of the *Institutes*, Ferguson defines Physical Law as "any general expression of a natural operation" and Moral Law as "any general expression of what is good, and therefore fit to determine the choice of intelligent beings A physical law exists so far only as it is the fact; a moral law exists in being obligatory" (*Institutes*, pp. 4-5). On this distinction see also Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755; reprint ed. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1968), pp. 267-68 (Book II, Chapter III).

20. Kames, *Essays*, p. 40 (Part I, Essay I).
21. Hutcheson, *System of Moral Philosophy*, p. 140 (Book I, Chapter VIII); Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759; reprint ed. New York: Garland, 1971), p. 350 (Part IV, Section II); Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers*, p. 138 (Essay III, Chapter III).
22. Hume sometimes used apparently teleological language in the *Enquiry*, referring to "that supreme will which bestowed on each being its peculiar nature" and to phenomena "wisely ordained by nature." But, as Reid recognized, Hume's naturalistic system provides no guarantee that we could not have been made with different moral constitutions—e.g., a constitution that provided us with natural delight in witnessing another's pain.
23. Hume, "Treatise of Human Nature," *Works*, II, 150, 373.
24. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 171 (Treatise II, Section III). See also *Inquiry*, pp. 143, 290; *Essay*, pp. 74, 189, 227; *System*, pp. 73-74, 165-66. George Turnbull adopted Hutcheson's explanation in his *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, I 189, 291, 364.
25. Kames, *Essays*, p. 377 (Part II, Essay VII).
26. Hume, "Treatise," *Works*, II, 162; Smith, *Theory*, p. 91.
27. Reid, *Essays*, p. 353 (Essay IV, Chapter XI). See also Dugald Stewart, "Outlines of Moral Philosophy," *Works of Dugald Stewart* (Cambridge: Hilliard and Brown, 1829), III, 432.
28. Ferguson, *Principles*, II, 77 (Part II, Chapter I). See also *Principles*, II, 16, 75-76 and *Institutes*, p. 124.
29. From the report of the Committee investigating Simson's theological doctrines, quoted in Burleigh, *Church History of Scotland*, pp. 287-88. See also James K. Cameron, "Theological Controversy: a Factor in the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment," in *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, eds. R.H. Campbell and Andrew S. Skinner (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), pp. 118-20.
30. Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, ed. John Hill Burton (London and Edinburgh: Foulis, 1910), p. 94.
31. Hutcheson was charged by the Presbytery of Glasgow with claiming that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others, and that men can have a knowledge of good and evil without a knowledge of God. Campbell was brought to trial upon the publication of his *Discourse proving that the Apostles were no Enthusiasts* (1730). Both Hutcheson and Campbell were acquitted, to the dismay of the Evangelical party. Earlier in the century William Law, minister of Crimond, had been deposed for preaching that virtue is more natural to the human mind than vice; and Prof. Leechman of Glasgow, who Hutcheson had hoped would "put a new face upon Theology in Scotland," would be tried for theological heresy in 1743.
32. See Hutcheson, *System*, pp. 35-36; *Essay*, p. 177; *Inquiry*, p. 303.
33. Kames, *Essays*, pp. 63-64 (Part I, Essay II).
34. Reid, *Essays*, p. 95 (Essay III, Part I, Chapter I).
35. Ferguson, *Principles*, II, 113 (Part II, Chapter II).
36. See, for examples, Hutcheson, *Essay*, pp. 188-189, and *System*, pp. 131-32; Smith, *Theory*, pp. 203-6; Reid, *Essays*, p. 374; James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science*, (1790; reprint ed. Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1976), pp. 373-408. George Turnbull devoted the second volume of his *Principles of Moral Philosophy* to an attempt "to shew" [sic] that the scripture doctrine concerning God, providence, human nature, virtue or human perfection, and a future state, is so far from being inconsistent with reason that it is capable of clear proof from principles of reason" (II, iii). In his *Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue* Archibald Campbell begged his reader "(and I hope I may do it without any indecency) not to regard me as either Jew or Christian, but as some heathen philosopher who has nothing to guide him in his inquiries but the bare light of Nature" (p. 2).
37. See Hutcheson, *Reflections*, p. 48; Turnbull, *Principles*, I, 421; Reid, *Essays*, pp. 256-57; Beattie, *Elements*, p. 39; Smith, *Theory*, pp. 292-93.
38. For examples of this movement in published works, see Hutcheson's discussion of Perfect, Imperfect, External, Alienable, and Inalienable Rights in Section VIII of Treatise II of his *Inquiry*; Hutcheson's Book II ("Containing a Deduction of the more specific Laws of Nature and Duties of Life") and Book III ("Of Civil Polity") in *System*; Beattie's Part Third ("Politicks") of Vol. II of *Elements*; Ferguson's Chapter III ("Of Jurisprudence or Compulsory Law") and Chapter VI ("Of Politics") in Vol. II of *Principles* Stewart's Book III ("Of the Various Branches of Our Duty") of *The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*.
39. Hutcheson's title to Book II of Vol. I of his *System*.
40. For a discussion of Witherspoon's ambivalent debt to Hutcheson's *System of Moral Philosophy*, see Jack Scott, ed. *An Annotated Edition of Lectures on Moral Philosophy by John Witherspoon* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1982), pp. 1-53 and annotations

- passim*. Hutcheson's moral and political theories were major elements in the curricula of the College of New Jersey (Princeton), the College of Philadelphia (Univ. of Pennsylvania), Newark Academy (Univ. of Delaware), the College of William and Mary, and King's College (Columbia). In his *Inventing America* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), Gary Wills has claimed that Hutcheson's *System* was "the principal textbook of American colleges on the eve of our Revolution" (p. 294) and that "the real lost world of Thomas Jefferson was . . . the invigorating realm of the Scottish Enlightenment at its zenith" (p. 180). But Wills's claims for Scottish influence upon Jefferson and the *Declaration of Independence* have been disputed by Ronald Hamowy in "Jefferson and the Scottish Enlightenment," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 36 (October 1979), 503-23.
41. Dugald Stewart, *The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, 9th ed. (Philadelphia: Butler 1866), p. 133 (Book II, Chapter II).
 42. James Mackintosh, "Discourse on the Study of the Law of Nature and Nations," *Miscellaneous Works of Sir James Mackintosh* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1856), p. 33.
 43. Scottish moral philosophers from Hutcheson through Stewart believed that Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* allowed no moral standards beyond those established by divine law, civil law, and the law of "opinion or reputation"—that is, no moral standards or concepts that are natural to man *as man*. When that Lockean model was combined with the accounts of apparent cruelty and "unnatural" behavior among foreign people in "the state of nature," it was easy to conclude that moral standards are entirely the product of environment, education, and fashion. For examples of the Scottish rebuttal of that conclusion, see Smith, *Theory*, pp. 371-412; Beattie, *Elements*, pp. 61-63; Stewart, *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, pp. 135-36, 203-4.
 44. The phrase is found in Hutcheson's *Inquiry*, p. 204 (Treatise II, Section IV).
 45. For a review of what has been called the "stage theory" of cultural development, see Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1945), pp. 148-72; Paul Stein, "Law and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scottish Thought," in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, eds. N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 148-68; Duncan Forbes, "'Scientific' Whiggism: Adam Smith and John Millar," *Cambridge Journal*, 7 (1954), 643-70; Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 99-130.
 46. Stewart, *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, p. 192 (Book II, Chapter III).
 47. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. xi.
 48. Hume, *Treatise, Works*, II, 374.
 49. Kames, *Essays*, p. 120 (Essay II, Chapter VIII).
 50. See the quotations from Oswald's rambling *Appeal* in Gavin Ardley's concise *The Common Sense Philosophy of James Oswald* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 11, 16, 57.
 51. See Reid, *Essays*, pp. 376-77 (Essay V, Chapter II).
 52. Stewart, *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, p. 191 (Book II, Chapter III).
 53. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. xv. Hutcheson accepted Locke's epistemological model, but argued in the *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* that Locke's moral theory is unintelligible without the supposition of a moral sense.
 54. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 155 (Treatise II, Section II).
 55. In his *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* Hutcheson increased the number of internal senses to include a "public sense" and a "sense of honour".
 56. Bentham claimed that he had learned to see utility as the test of all virtue from reading Book III ("Of Morals") of Hume's *Treatise*. See Jeremy Bentham, *A Fragment on Government and An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. Wilfred Harrison (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948), p. 50, n. 2. In fact, it was Hutcheson who first gave Scottish statement to the utilitarian principle, "that action is best which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers," in his *Inquiry*, p. 177 (Treatise II, Section III).
 57. Although he denied that the moral sense involves self-interest, Hutcheson acknowledged that incentives to virtuous action from self-interest have an important role in moral life: "Such are these from the sanctions of divine laws by future rewards and punishments, and even the manifest advantages of virtue in this life: without reflection on which a steady *course of virtue* is scarce to be expected amidst the present confusion of human affairs": *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, p. 300 (Treatise II, Section V). Moreover, in the years between the publication of his *Inquiry* (1725) and the later *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) Hutcheson appears to have recognized more fully the strong pull of selfish emotions. In the *System* he describes "the general tenor of human life" as "an incoherent mixture of many social, kind, innocent actions, and of many selfish, angry, sensual ones" (p. 37, Book I, Chapter II). In this later work man's natural benevo-

lence is "a calm impulse" that makes itself felt only "when the soul is calm . . . and when the selfish appetites and passions and desires are asleep" (p. 10, Book I, Chapter I).

58. See letters from Hume to Hutcheson, 17 September 1739 and 10 January 1743, in *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), I, 32-34, 45-48.
59. Hume, "Treatise," *Works*, II, 334.
60. Hutcheson had considered the workings of sympathy in *Inquiry*, pp. 153, 156, 233-34, 238; *Reflections*, p. 15; *System*, pp. 19-21. But Hutcheson distinguished sympathetic pleasures from moral pleasures by noting that sympathetic pleasures may arise from the happiness of others when our own attitudes or actions have not contributed to that happiness.
61. Hume, "Treatise," *Works*, II, 247.
62. Hume, "Treatise," *Works*, II, 347; *Enquiry*, p. 268.
63. Smith, *Theory*, p. 6 (Part I, Section I). Hume already had paid close attention to the principle of sympathy, but Smith differed from Hume on the role of the perception of utility in our moral approbation or disapprobation (*Theory*, pp. 358-69, 468-69).
64. Robert Burns, "To a Louse" (1786).
65. See A. M. Kinghorn, "Literary Aesthetics and the Sympathetic Emotions—A Main Trend in Eighteenth-Century Scottish Criticism," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 1 (July 1963), 35-47; Philip Flynn, "Scottish Aesthetics and the Search for a Standard of Taste," *Dalhousie Review*, 64 (Spring 1980), 5-19.
66. See Hutcheson, *Essay*, p. 73 and *System*, p. 86; and Hume's essay "Of Tragedy" and *Enquiry*, pp. 222-23; Kames, *Essays*, pp. 16-18; Beattie, *Elements*, pp. 151-52; Dugald Stewart, "Outlines of Moral Philosophy," *Works*, III, 414, 447 and *Philosophy*, pp. 120, 255; Henry Mackenzie's essays in *The Lounger*, Nos. 27, 28, 50.
67. Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (Chp. LV). For a discussion of Mackenzie's ambivalent attitude toward sensibility, see Harold W. Thompson, *A Scottish Man of Feeling: Some Account of Henry Mackenzie, Esq.* (London and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1931), pp. 107-55, 178-213. See also the *Mirror* and *Lounger* tales and essays by various hands that concern the dangers of excessive sensibility: *Mirror*, nos. 10, 39, 42-44, 47, 51, 96, 101; Nos. 20, 27-28, 50.
68. Archibald Alison to Thomas Campbell, 2 March 1809, *Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell*, ed. William Beattie (1849; reprint ed. New York: AMS Press, 1973), II, 174.
69. *Edinburgh Review*, 13 (January 1809), Art. 1, 255, 253. In *ER*, 31 (March 1819), Art. II, 492-93, Jeffrey modified his 1809 position on the moral character of Burns' writings, mollifying some of Burns' supporters who had been angered by the earlier review.
70. Henry Lord Cockburn, *Journal of Henry Cockburn* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1874), II, 91. Cockburn resolutely retained his facility in Scotch. Jeffrey, his fellow Whig reformer whose own accent was not quite English or quite Scotch, invoked the nostalgia for both country and childhood in his review of the *Reliques of Robert Burns*: "It [Burns' Scotch] is the language of a whole country—long as independent kingdom, and still separate in law, character, and manners . . . and, if it be true that, in later times, it has been, in some measure, laid aside by the more ambitious and aspiring of the present generation, it is still recollected, even by them, as the familiar language of their childhood, and of those who were the earliest objects of their love and veneration": *ER*, 13 (January 1809), Art. I, 259.
71. T. C. Smout has warned that, "when we use the expression 'middle class', it is as well to remember that it is only a convenient shorthand to describe a large number of these groups in urban society [lawyers, ministers, merchants, school-masters, manufacturers, and office-holders] who were not often seen by contemporaries to have anything very significant in common with one another," unless it were "the dizzy sense of opportunity which pervaded the towns from 1760 onwards" (Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830* [New York: Scribner's, 1969], p. 363).
72. Reid, *Essays*, p. 480 (Essay V, Chapter VII). The eclectic Turnbull had anticipated this argument in his *Principles*, I, 172.
73. Reid identified animal, mechanical, and rational principles in human nature—a triad subsequently adopted by Beattie and Stewart. The rational principles—"What is good for us upon the whole" and "What appears to be our duty"—are the slowest of our nature. Reid had no objection to the term *moral sense*, used earlier by Hutcheson and Kames, as a designation of our moral faculty, but he insisted that moral sense be understood as involving an act of judgment as well as perception (*Essays*, pp. 231-32, 398-99).
74. Reid, *Essays*, p. 231 (Essay III, Chapter VI).
75. Reid distinguished virtue from "natural affections" by the presence or absence of resolution, "a fixed purpose with regard to our future conduct." For example, the *virtue* of benevolence is a fixed purpose or resolution to do good when we have the opportunity, from

- a conviction that it is right and that it is our duty. The *natural affection* of benevolence is a propensity to do good from natural constitution or unreflecting habit, without regard to rectitude or duty (*Essays*, pp. 73-89). See also Stewart, *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, pp. 61, 83, 425-26.
76. See Hutcheson, *System*, pp. 78-79, 102, 234; Hume, *Enquiry*, pp. 172-73, 227-39 and "Treatise," 347; Smith *Theory*, pp. 501-4.
 77. See Reid, *Essays*, pp. 29-30, 86; Oswald as quoted in Ardley's *Common Sense Philosophy of James Oswald*, pp. 31, 87; Beattie, *Elements*, pp. 54-56; Stewart, *Philosophy*, pp. 209-22, 268-324 and "Outlines," 466-67, 474.
 78. William Ferguson, *Scotland, 1689 to the Present* (New York and Washington: Praeger, 1968), p. 227.
 79. See Ian Clark, "The Leslie Controversy, 1805," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 14 (1963), 179-97.
 80. Quoted in Peter Mackenzie, *Life of Thomas Muir* (Glasgow: M'Phun, 1831), p. 107. For a general study of Scotland in the 1790's see Henry W. Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution* (1912; reprint ed. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969). For a review of Dundas' activities, see Simon Maccoby, *English Radicalism, 1786-1832* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955).
 81. Henry Lord Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey, with a Selection from His Correspondence* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1852), I, 63. Cockburn was in the ambiguous position of being both a member of the political Opposition and Henry Dundas' nephew. But his description of political Scotland in his *Life of Lord Jeffrey and Memorials of His Time* (1856) has been verified by modern historians. For an analysis of Cockburn's mixed feelings of the Scottish past and present, see Karl Miller, *Cockburn's Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976).
 82. Jeffrey to Robert Morehead, 2 April 1796, in Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, I, 81.
 83. Sir James Mackintosh in the Preface to Stewart's *Philosophy of the Active Moral Powers of Man*.
 84. While this is true of Stewart's writings in moral philosophy, I do not intend to suggest that Stewart's work does not deserve attention. His analyses of European philosophical history are still valuable documents for the historian of ideas. For example, Peter Medawar finds in Stewart's writings an important anticipation of the "hypothetico-deductive method" that Medawar believes to be the true methodology of successful science. See Medawar, *The Art of the Soluble* (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 150-51.
 85. Stewart, *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, pp. 410-11 (Book III, Chapter III), pp. 191, 192 (Book II, Chapter III).
 86. McCosh quoted in George Elder Davie, *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and her Universities in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1961), p. 266.
 87. In 1838-39 the Scottish Supreme Court and the British House of Lords ruled that the Church of Scotland derived all its powers from specific Acts of Parliament, repudiating the concept that the Church was an independent spiritual community. In the meeting of the General Assembly of 1843, approximately 190 ministers and elders chose to abandon the civil advantages of establishment so that they might maintain freedom of conscience and ecclesiastical independence from the State. The succeeding churchmen formed the Church of Scotland Free, setting up Free manse and schools to parallel those of the Church of Scotland. In this paragraph the term *Evangelical* refers to those of Evangelical temper who remained in the Church of Scotland, men who often allied themselves with the Free Church members in an attempt to elect godly candidates to the University chairs.
 88. *North British Review*, 14 (February 1851), Art. 1, 165.
 89. See Davie, *The Democratic Intellect*, pp. 272-338.
 90. Thomas Carlyle, writing in December 1826, *Two Note Books*, ed. C.E. Norton (1898; reprint ed. Mamaroneck, N.Y.: Appel, 1972), p. 84.