The "Spectator" and the Impartial Spectator in *Adam Smith's Pluralism*

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Bio-Sketch: Spiros Tegos is Lecturer of Early Modern Philosophy at The University of Crete. He is preparing a book on the political relevance of Adam Smith's doctrine of manners and its reception by French moderate republicans 1750-1830.

Amidst the recent flourishing of Adam Smith scholarship, Jack Russell Weinstein's book stands apart for more than one reason. The main ground of originality lies in his relentless effort to reclaim vital Smithian concepts in order to rethink controversial contemporary issues in moral philosophy and public discourse. In the forefront of such efforts, this book fills in an important gap in recent scholarship regarding Adam Smith's place within the liberal tradition. The prominence of pluralism as a landmark of any liberal society makes the relative lack of consistent study regarding this issue within Adam Smith's philosophy even more blatant. Weinstein's book finally brings this issue to center-stage. Yet it cuts even deeper. He explicitly strikes a balance between a novel contextual interpretation of Adam Smith within 18th-century philosophy and the history of ideas *and* contemporary currents of thought apparently very distant from the liberal tradition—no matter how we may define the latter. He thus goes far beyond standard narratives about unexpected affiliations or potential anticipations of Smith's crucial concepts. On the one hand he thoroughly explores Smith's place in the genealogy of rationality in order to make clear not only the priority of rhetoric over formal logic but also Smith's argumentation theory as a "psychological account of inference" within which understanding always requires a "narrative structure." Indeed these are not commonplaces within Adam Smith studies. By the same token Weinstein does not refrain from the daring task of engaging Smith in the apparently alien tradition of French "postmodernism," unveiling possible linkages with Foucault's archaeological project. With the partial exception of education that has been studied but not to the extent discussed in this book, Weinstein offers a synthetic view of controversial issues within Smith scholarship resting on the simultaneous analysis of reason and sentiments, thus casting new light on liberal sentimentalism of a Smithian stripe. His methodological baseline consists in robustly contextualizing each theme before explicitly sketching the genealogy of major philosophical issues in question.

Within this extremely rich text, I pause on the somehow standard Smithian theme of the impartial spectator, but which looks quite different once viewed through Weinstein's theoretical lens. My approach will be threefold: first I examine the narrative nature of the impartial spectator, then following Weinstein's line I scrutinize Smith's debt to Mandeville regarding styles of moral discourse. However, I shall move beyond Mandeville, and, filling a gap I detect in Weinstein's analysis, I develop Smith's original complex account of character building in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS IV); finally, I briefly elaborate on a seemingly odd outgrowth of a psychoanalytic interpretation of authority in Smith, completing the portrait of the impartial spectator regarding *auctoritas*.

1. THE STYLE OF MORAL PROSE AND THE IMPARTIAL SPECTATOR

Regarding the moving of rhetoric to center-stage within Smith's philosophy and the replacement of logic by rhetoric and informal logic, the core of Weinstein's reflections

lies in chapters five and six, "Finding rationality in reason" and "Reason and the sentiments." This evidently moves *The Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (LRBL) to the forefront while preserving a priority of the TMS over the other works throughout the book. After having sketched the genealogy of the multiple forms of "rationality in reason" from Hobbes to Shaftesbury via Locke (ch. 5), Weinstein focuses on the intertwining between reason and emotions, a sometime neglected feature of classic sentimentalism. The latter is often conflated with a mere negation or downgrading of reason, often following the Humean dictum "reason is a slave to the passions." Yet reality is more complex and the "rhetoric as reasoning" seems to be a crucial component of Smith's system, important to understanding both his moral theory and his economics. Thus Weinstein reclaims Adam Smith's rhetoric as a "theory of communication" exceeding and completing the conventional understanding of rhetoric as an argumentation theory. He then gives a strikingly original account of Smith's notion of the rhetorical nature of human reason:

> First, logic and rhetoric are intertwined; as descriptions of inference and argument analyses and construction, they are necessary elements in mapping human thought. Second, given the centrality of language in Smith's system, and given the importance of spectator-based sympathy, an individual's role as audience member and as moral actor is an essential part of what it means to be a human being. Therefore, rhetoric becomes a capacity for Smith in the same way that reason does, or, rather, the faculty of reason is a compound faculty containing both the natural rhetorical perspective and natural reason. The faculty of reason is the foundation of narrative rationality because the faculty of reason is itself rhetorical (pp. 135-6).

The importance of narrative structure appears to be Smith's remedy in order to secure a multi-linear "script," the "multiple motivations that inspire a complex character" against Hobbesian determinism relying on a single motivational center of human behavior. This partly recalls McIntyre's understanding of "tradition-bound rationality," the fact that a reasoning tradition "infuses what individuals understand as reason itself" (p. 113) jointly with a *telos* to human activities. Overall, "rationality demands a narrative" (p. 166), or "a plot to the metanarrative," a bold statement yet necessary to make sense of the complex argumentation theory that Weinstein suggests Adam Smith puts in place. In this context, logical and nonlogical elements are intertwined. The invisible hand pattern is a component of a broader system transforming the function of rhetoric and logic within sentimental morality in the sense of a complex theory of a narrative of progress with moments of optimism and pessimism, visions of prosperity and fears of backwardness.

By the same token, one has to bear in mind though that this argumentation theory is oriented towards intersubjectivity, moral conscience involves a gradual immersion in the social tissue of argument procedures: "For Smith, argumentation is tied to growth in social awareness. To mature is to absorb and modify social constructed identity and argument procedures (p. 162)." Thus the key concept of sympathy can only be understood against a background of a "wide theory of argumentation" involving rational deliberation, emotions, reflection and normative criteria (p. 165). The "communicative aspect of sympathy" and the "working of the imagination" are both central themes in the TMS and the LRBL. Therefore Weinstein draws the conclusion that "…The purpose of rhetoric is, in part, the cultivation of sympathy. The proper function of the imagination is based in part on how we make information available to ourselves and others (p. 145)." Evoking this cluster of concepts, Weinstein reclaims the somehow neglected "rhetorical" status of rationality and its vital role alongside education (in the twofold sense of education and socialization/acculturation), for a sympathetic pluralism within the Enlightenment.

Within this original frame of reference, I shall focus on the figure of the impartial spectator. Following his abovementioned line of thought, Weinstein revisits in his turn Smith's most widely known concept, giving his own twist on the interpretation of this controversial idea in Smith scholarship. Fonna Forman (2010) in her insightful study offers a useful summary of the positions adopted in scholarship regarding the nature of conventionalism attributed to the impartial spectator. She categorizes them in three classes: those who considered the impartial spectator as an internalized convention, "a mere *reflection* of prevalent social norms" (Berry, 2003), those who place themselves on the other extreme of the spectrum postulating a robust independence of moral conscience, and finally scholars that endorse a more moderate stance, midway between the two extremes. Weinstein sketches a brief genealogy of the origins of the impartial spectator. Accordingly he locates Smith's pluralism—eloquently defined in the title of chapter 2, One system, many motivations—in the transformation of Hutcheson's and particularly Shaftesbury's conception of personal deliberation and aesthetics within moral deliberation. As he states suc-

cinctly at some point "the impartial spectator—Smith's version of the soliloquy (p. 59)," the "dialogical element found in the *Female Tatler* and other philosophers" (p. 40) leads to Smith's rationality, and consequently to his conception of the impartial spectator. So far so good.

As shrewdly noticed by Weinstein, Smith is very much interested in the form and style of moral conversation and deliberation. In fact, Smith did not only lecture on rhetoric but on rhetoric *and* belles lettres, defining his research project as an inquiry into "the principles of those literary compositions which contribute to persuasion or entertainment." Communication and persuasion through language seems to be the main concern for Smith, but Weinstein perceptively remarks that "Persuasion is, in some sense, beautiful for Smith (p. 136). Taking his cues from Shaftesbury's style, Smith claims in LRBL, according to Weinstein, that "…character affects logical consequence. Smith can challenge inferential connections because he is making both a psychological point and an empirical one. The psychological point is that since the individual makes inferences justified by their own impartial spectator, the nature of their spectators determine the viability of the inferences….In contrast, Smith's empirical point is that spectators make moral determinations on the basis of observations, and inaccurate or distorted information about an actor or his or her context necessarily leads to inaccurate moral judgments" (p. 139).

2. SOCIAL SATIRE AND MORAL PORTRAITS

Weinstein's interpretation of Mandeville's role in Smith is extremely fine-tuned. However, I claim that in emphasizing the role of dialogical elements, especially Shaftesbury's soliloquy, Weinstein downplays a crucial aspect of Mandeville's influence on the formation of the concept of impartial spectator, while he touches upon an equally crucial feature of Mandeville's influence regarding the role of satire in the formation of the impartial spectator.

Steele castigates the separation of style and manners from reason, virtue and religion—"the most polite Age is in danger of being the most vicious" (1711)—while he is endorsing the thesis of manners and politeness as being a modern phenomenon that marks a progress of civil society in the age of civility. It can be plausibly claimed that Mandeville does not conform to the basic requirements of polite satire as he sheds light on the trivial, "minute" aspect, or the dark side of the allegedly venerable moral, literary or socio-political authorities.[1] His style consists in lampooning, instead of gently accommodating, the old aristocracy, while cynically managing, instead of castigating, the nouveau riche, and, broadly, new forms of commercial wealth. In his work, including the understudied *Female Tatler*, Mandeville aims to rescue politeness from the polite moralists, and familiarize the public with the artificial yet necessary function of manners as a social lubricant. Adam Smith seriously confronts this challenge to moral philosophy, and grapples with Mandeville's corrosive view in a number of ways. It is the second hypothesis of this paper that Smith appropriates, though with qualifications, Mandeville's satire of modern moralizing while rehabilitating the importance of anxiety in commercial society that Mandeville lightheartedly downplays. Therefore he amends Mandeville's satire with his own satiric-ironic style in dealing simultaneously with the ridiculous and dramatic aspects of modern urban life. In order to achieve this goal, he sketches characters, a gallery of virtuous, vicious but most importantly ambiguous character portraits: the "coxcomb," the vain, the ambitious "poor man's son"—probably the first sketch of the American dream—but also the enigmatic "lover of systems." Therefore he endorses the role of the moral portraitist in order to capture modern life's tragi-comic complexity and contradictions while cultivating the reader's skills to seize moral ambivalence.

To what extent is the genre of ridicule tolerated in a polite age? How is it linked to moral life? Following Addison, Steele endorses the thesis of manners and politeness as being a modern phenomenon that marks a progress of civil society in the age of civility. Smith did not follow Hume in his conception of politeness as artificial virtues, and thus his stance on manners and politeness is more ambiguous. He also disapproves of Shaftesbury, as well as of Addison and Steele, in their praise of "true politeness."

Smith built up a satire on the character of the nouveau riche, a case of a ruinous attitude of living following material standards beyond one's means and, concomitantly, the illusion that his obsessive imitation of aristocratic manners, "the frivolous accomplishments of ordinary behavior," is the subject of as much sympathetic attention as is received by true elites.[2] Imitation of courtly politeness fosters moral corruption (as the title of the chapter added to the ultimate edition of TMS notably indicates).[3] Thus it replicates aristocratic shallowness within the circle of moderate virtues. Most importantly it corrupts the moral sentiments of middling ranks as they conflate moderate virtues with immoderate aristocratic manners, and modesty with the flaunting of wealth, *both* legitimate if properly constrained within clear social borders. This constitutes a plea for social stability (TMS VI.ii.1.20).

Before rushing to dismiss this portrait of the nouveau riche as a second-order moral subject, I claim that this is a major issue for the functioning of the impartial spectator. In reality, this ridiculous imitation of aristocratic manners relies on the moral *autism* of the "coxcomb," the term to denote the nouveau riche individual (TMS I.iii.3). The nouveau riche is blind to other spectators' gaze because he is so vain that he cannot realize how ridiculous his social image remains. As a result, this character puts the function of the impartial spectator in serious trouble because he is deaf to social stigma even in the most conventional sense of the term. It seems therefore highly unlikely for him to transgress conventional morality. At the same time, Smith is moving beyond standard opponents such as moral fanatics and other sociopaths. This seemingly innocuous figure of the nouveau riche proves extremely helpful to identify hypocrisy, the standard target of moral theory. Moving beyond classic theology or even moderate approaches within the Church of Scotland, Smith develops an original analysis of the nature of hypocrisy in commercial society. Clearly rejecting any form of casuistic or essentially repressive attitude as inefficient, he is spotting a consensually dismissive class of people: nouveaux riches, people that show off their wealth and status. The type of character that pretends to be socially superior compared to real social identity is more than obvious to any "bystander." This was an apparently very common phenomenon in Scotland of his time. But then how to awake this deeply problematic character and make him aware of his deeply "sociopathic" self-destructiveness? Moral autism prevents the comparison with what is normally achieved in society and consequently any possibility of self-judgment against an ideal standard that transgresses conventional morality. The style of moral discourse is crucial in order for moral discourse to be audible. The spectators should find the situation appealing in order to mobilize their sympathetic imagination, "interesting enough in order for people to attend to them." "Impartiality is a process of comparing standards…the virtue of impartial spectator is itself the result of continual perspective change" (p. 142). In this sense, the above-mentioned role of moral imagination is crucial: "Rhetoric either cultivates or hinders the imagination and thus allows for the creation and regulation of the impartial spectator" (p. 145). Weinstein consistently pauses on Smith's critique of Shaftesbury's style in the LRBL:

> For Smith this style of writing leads to problems because the florid prose inaccurately communicates Shaftesbury's character, when communication is distorted, either intentionally or not…it interferes with the capacity to sympathize. This impairs the sympathetic process and weakens the capacity to make moral judgments (pp. 138-39).

Therefore sympathy and the impartial spectator are much depending on the medium of prose and style of moral discourse, in order to appropriately and efficiently address the audience.

Thus moral prose is a genre that needs stylistic elaboration. In this context I think that Smith develops the tragic but also, predominantly, the ridiculous aspect of actual social characters and the appropriate style of communicating a clear image of them to the public. Smith assumes in the LRBL that the problem of sympathy is a problem of clarity (LRBL i.v.57); Weinstein emphatically pauses on the "communication of ethical cases and judgments. Under Smith's system good writing is both descriptive and prescriptive" (p. 143). In a more anthropological vein, Smith asserts elsewhere that "Men always endeavor to persuade others…everyone is practicing oratory on others thro the whole of his life" *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (LJ A.vi.56). This is one of the building blocks of commercial psychology read through the lens of traditional rhetoric. TMS paired with LRBL follow a different path. The style of moral prose puts in relief the tragic and ridiculous dimensions of social behavior, sending a wave of shock to both the autistic actor and spectator of moral actions. Those genres are the ultimate refuge of moral discourse in order to become effective.

Smith detects tragic traces in commercial vanity. He underlines the aspect of anxiety that pervades the vain man's life and most particularly the *nouveau riche*. There is a dark side of sympathy (Dickie, 2011) the insecurity towards the possibility of negative sympathy or antipathy from the real or hypothetical spectator of one's conduct.[4] Most importantly, Smith focuses on the insecurity inherent in commercial vanity. Finally the vain counterfeiter of status is tormented by fear of disrespect. The "empty coxcomb…solicits with the most anxious importunity all external marks of respect… of being taken notice of in public places with the appearance of deference and attention." He is "anxious to obtain new expressions of esteem, and cannot be kept in temper but by continual attention and adulation" (TMS, VII.ii.4.8-9). Becoming the "proper object of honour and esteem," being immune to public acclamation and respect, conduce to tranquility and fall within the jurisdiction of the impartial spectator. On balance, hypocrisy carries along manifold tor-

ments, and Smith as a moralist reclaims for a modern context the ancient moral ideal of being able to live with oneself.

Turning now to the status of ridicule, Smith mobilizes some moral caricatures, in partly appropriating Mandeville's sardonic style (p. 140). This is a crucial moment because my core claim is that Smith finds a novel way to awaken some moral sensibility in those who seem impervious to any other form of didactic discourse or callous moral conventions. In line with Weinstein, who argues that in the *LRBL*, Smith presents his critique of Shaftesbury as an instance of a broader theory about "argument, inference and character" (ibid). Ridicule is an epideictic genre in rhetoric within which Adam Smith primarily theorizes the moral status of ridicule.[5] It defines it as suitable to what is "in most respects Grand or pretends to be or is expected to be so, [yet] has something mean or little in it or when we find something that is really mean with some pretensions and marks of grandeur" (1.108). Jonathan Swift is declared to be an expert in the former kind of ridicule whereas Lucian is an exemplar of the latter. One could object that these are trifling matters with respect to the issues of "hard-core" moral philosophy, but Smith notes rather astonishingly that:

> both together form a System of morality from whence more sound and just rules of life for all various characters of men may be drawn than form most set systems of Morality (1.125).

In cases where "real foibles and blemishes" of a character are castigated instead of accidental ones, to satirize "is altogether consistent with the character of a Gentleman as it tends to the reformation of manners and the benefit of mankind" (1.88), through the efficient medium of laughter and sarcasm constrained within borders of propriety. As Weinstein succinctly argues: "For Smith then, pathos does a good portion of the work that in classical rhetoric is more typically assigned to logos" (ibid).

The reference to Swift is crucial[6]: Smith sketches a flattering portrait of Swift who targets at least partly the same flaws in his contemporary society that Smith does, the vulgarity of the upstarts (ibid). Swift "ridicules some of the prevailing follies of his Time... chiefly levelled against Coxcombs, Beaus, Belles and other characters where gay follies than the graver ones prevail" (I.119). Indeed, in chapter 4 of part VII of the TMS, on the "licentious system" of Mandeville, depicted as a case apart "of the different accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue," the figure of the vain coxcomb looms large:

> ...who sets his character upon the frivolous ornaments of dress and equipage, or upon the equally frivolous accomplishments of ordinary behaviour. He is guilty of vanity who desires praise for what indeed very well deserves it, but what he perfectly knows does not belong to him. The empty coxcomb who gives himself airs of importance which he has no title to... (TMS VII.ii.4.8).

Weinstein observes that "Smith shows how intertwined class is with the rhetorical and artistic structure of the society" (p. 145). This insight is confirmed through a different angle here. The socially high and the socially low "stations," the "Grand" and the "little" are simultaneously social and moral notions and invoke a specific style of moral prose to be expressed in line with LRBL's dictum that "Prose is naturally the Language of business; as poetry is of pleasure and amusement" (ii.115). Smith seems to be fully aware of the necessity of a novel moral language and a moral prose that reflects unprecedented commercial realities. In this section I have discussed the epideictic genre of ridicule in Smith and its role in moral improvement. By the same token I have emphasized, in line with Weinstein's insights, the interplay between commercial vanity, rhetoric, "belles lettres" and moral prose. In a nutshell, I suggest that it is crucial for Smith to develop a novel ironic style of writing concerning manners and morals, in order to highlight commercial flaws that traditional moral discourse standardly castigates without much efficiency. To this end, I argue that he primarily sketches original portraits of characters, his main category of moral prose, that match the complexity of motivations to wealth getting in commercial context.

3. THE "LOVER OF TOYS," THE "POOR MAN'S SON" AND THE LOVER OF SCIENTIFIC SYSTEMS: ADAM SMITH'S FABLE OF HUMAN OBSESSION

By and large, Adam Smith's appropriation of Mandeville cuts even deeper. There are other instances in the TMS where Mandevillean themes loom large. I suggest that such a case is TMS IV.i, clearly an intriguing discussion of the multiple motivations of wealth getting in commercial society. In this context I would like to challenge Weinstein's recurring critique of the alleged conflation of vanity with moderate ambition about "bettering condition" (TMS I.iii.2). By the same token I shall notice an omission that could possibly enrich Weinstein's line of thought: the lack of consistent study of TMS IV and its main character, the poor man's son. I now

discuss the interconnectedness of Smith's theory of systems and systemized knowledge and the gallery of characters emerging in TMS IV.

In the TMS, the striving for social recognition is attributed to sympathy, while the deference to the socially powerful has been interpreted—as I shall examine in due course here—as an apotheosis of high status from the low status agents, due to the generalized "sympathy from the whole of mankind" that high status unexceptionally gains (cf. Tegos, 2014). On this score, I subscribe to the interpretation of vanity as a *corruption* of the natural tendency to "bettering condition." However, Smith quite clearly presents alternative, multiple centers of motivations, and a variety of characters that ranges from major to minor yet significant moral portraits, from the vain to the prudent, through figures such as the poor man's son that go beyond vanity and moderate ambition. The poor man's son's love of luxury is doomed to remain unsatisfied and is conceived in a non-hedonistic manner by the poor man's son himself. Thus we need to dissect more carefully this odd character.

In TMS IV, the novelty as regards the analysis of utility is based on reclaiming the notion of system (Cooper, 1999).7 In a bold move, Smith straightforwardly links desire for gain and admiration of "beautiful and orderly systems," vanity and aesthetic admiration of the "palaces and the oeconomy of the great" (TMS IV.i.9). Earlier in the TMS, the striving for social recognition is attributed to vanity, while the deference to the socially powerful has been interpreted as an apotheosis of high status from the low status agents due to the generalized "sympathy from the whole of mankind" that high status unexceptionally gains (cf. Tegos, 2014).

In TMS IV, if we examine, however, why the spectator distinguishes with such *admiration* the condition of the rich and the great, we shall find that it is not so much on account of vanity or the superior ease or pleasure which they are supposed to enjoy, as of the numberless artificial and elegant contrivances for promoting ease and pleasure. He does not even imagine that they are really happier than other people: but he imagines that they possess more means of happiness. And it is the ingenious and artful adjustment of those means to the end for which they were intended, that is the principal source of *admiration* (TMS IV.i.8, emphasis added).

The poor man's parable in the TMS IV.i is one of the most striking and discussed parts of the TMS. More specifically there has been a certain amount of discussion regarding the interpretation of the "poor man's son" fable and its place within Adam Smith's *oeuvre*. In this context, Mandeville's shadow looms large. I'm bound to think that there is a smoking gun in Smith's overall construction of the poor man's character as *a lover of system*. I would then shift the focus from the routinely debated moral status of luxury to the status of the love of system.

Smith seeks to palliate the coxcomb's excessive ambition by highlighting his ridiculous obsession of imitating aristocratic manners and the poor man's son's ordinary obsession with wealth, by putting forward the latter's ambiguous tragic-ironic status. His generic character of "lover of system" depicted ironically as a "lover of toys" constitutes a key component of his gallery of characters. In fact, an important aspect of the poor man's son often passes unnoticed; the poor man's anxiety and restlessness recalls a kind of manic-depressive personality in the non-technical and widely popularized sense of the medical term.[8] The main reason for this oversight resides in a more serious oversight: the poor man's son's character is a species of a broader genre, and his obsessions are species of obsessions proper to a broader family of characters, the "lovers of toys." And for those who rush to overlook these thoughts as overstatements, Smith issues a warning as he often does; minute things contain important messages. The style and the content of the passage are strongly reminiscent of Mandeville:

> How many people ruin themselves by laying out money on trinkets of frivolous utility? What pleases these lovers of toys is not so much the utility, as the aptness of the machines which are fitted to promote it. All their pockets are stuffed with little conveniences. They contrive new pockets, unknown in the clothes of other people, in order to carry a greater number…Nor is it only with regard to such frivolous objects that our conduct is influenced by this principle; it is often the secret motive of the most serious and important pursuits of both private and public life (TMS IV.i.6).

The particularly striking aspect of this passage is the emphasis on the universality *and* the triviality of this obsession: "the secret motive of the most serious and important pursuits" such as politics, or science and philosophy, is this love of system that can be encountered in its most elementary form in the "lover of toys," a gadget junkie in today's parlance. Note that the lover of toys, apparently the most ridiculous case of love of system that Smith provides, displays self-destructive features—"how many people ruin themselves by laying out money on trinkets of frivolous utility"—that strongly recall the language Smith uses in his narrative of the demise of feudal lords in *Wealth of Nations* (WN III.

iv.15) (The feudal lords ruined themselves consuming "baubles and trinkets of frivolous utility"). In the case of the lover of toys and the lover of science, both share the same love of system, the same obsession with order, instead of regard to utility or functionality of the orderly system. It is their prime albeit secret motivation. Furthermore, the inventiveness of this ordinary obsession strongly recalls the spontaneous inventive power attributed to the division of labour (WN I, i.8) but also Hume's natural inventiveness with which the human species is endowed in *Treatise*, III. At this juncture, Smith's prose parallels Mandeville's in the most unexpected way. Indeed, it suffices to pick up any description of avarice, greed or prodigality from the *Fable of the Bees* (FB), and the similarity is striking: "Prodigality has a thousand inventions to keep people from sitting still, that frugality would never think of; and as this must consume a prodigious wealth, so avarice again knows innumerable tricks to rake it together, which frugality would scorn to make use of" (FB I, 105).

Yet the anxiety inherent even in the slightest form of the trivial lover of toys, takes on a particularly disquieting form in the context of the ambitious poor man's son. This semi-tragicomic, semi manic-depressive figure shares the same obsessive anxiety with all path-breaking scientists or social reformers (TMS IV.i.11), not to mention that this obsession has civilized Planet Earth through hard labor and finds itself behind the spirit of capital accumulation of entrepreneurs in commercial society (TMS IV.i.9). In TMS IV, Smith seems to imply that a universal trait of human imagination—the love of system—gains new life in commercial contexts where, in contrast to earlier socio-economic stages, opportunities for the acquisition of wealth are more abundant, and synonymous with social ascent for larger strata of the population. Thus the poor man's son as a case of the love of system destined to flourish in commercial society, entails an ambiguous assessment—a blend of surprise, admiration, laughter and sadness—and demands the finest ironic skills to be fairly gauged that go beyond Mandeville's satire.

4. INTERNALIZATION OF SOCIAL AUTHORITY: A CHALLENGE TO THE IMPARTIAL SPECTATOR'S AUTHORITY?

In line with Weinstein's spirit of updating Smithian sentimentalism by mobilizing the language and terminology of contemporary discourses, there are potentially interesting links to establish between central Freudian psychoanalytic concepts and the figure of the impartial spectator. As noted, Weinstein discusses the impartial spectator's multi-layered status throughout his book. Yet there is no significant attention paid to the psychoanalytic implications of the Smithian impartial spectator. Initially, D.D. Raphael noticed similarities between Smith's conception of conscience as internalized social regard and Freud super-ego. He then dismisses any further analogies because, according to him, Smith's analysis involves the internalization of both "favorable and unfavorable attitudes" (Raphael, 2007), while Freud's emphasis is predominantly placed on fear and broadly on internalized repression. Fonna Forman in her aforementioned book clearly thinks that there is some analogy between the Freudian concepts revolving around the idea and practice of internalization (including super-ego) and the Smithian "psychological processes by which an individual internalizes and then reproduces her world" (Forman, 2010, p. 91) Smithian self-command, in this view, is considered far more optimistically, or in a more conservative perspective, as insensibly9 internalizing social norms without major psychological costs to be feared for a culture as a whole. Then she remarks that this internalized social conscience has raised worries in Smith himself, due to its excessive conformism ranging from the first to the last edition of the TMS, as he witnesses the unpredictable, rapid progress of the commercial society of his time. The figure of the impartial spectator sketched in the TMS's first editions appears largely inadequate to account for the corrupting potential of advanced commercial societies.

I think we could complete this picture by spotting a quite unexpected potential anticipation of another Freudian concept, the concept of idealization, sketched in "Mass psychology and Analysis of the 'I'" ego. Quite interestingly, this analysis is to be found in Smith's account of the internalization of social distinction, a reminder of the centrality of divers processes of internalization for Smith's moral psychology. In his chapter on ambition and the origin of distinction of ranks, adopting an ironic tone, Adam Smith emphasizes the quasi-idolatrous attitude of ordinary men toward greatness:

> A stranger to human nature, who saw the indifference of men about the misery of their inferiors, and the regret and indignation which they feel for the misfortunes and sufferings of those above them, would be apt to imagine, that pain must be more agonizing, and the convulsions of death more terrible to persons of higher rank, than to those of meaner stations (TMS I.iii.2.30).

On this head, Smith's account of the "natural disposition to respect"[10] controversial kings such as Charles I is striking. He lucidly recalls that there is no utilitarian motivation

behind our tendency to worship the great, "Neither is our deference to their inclinations founded chiefly or altogether, upon a regard to the utility of such submission and to the order of society, which is best supported by it" (TMS I.iii.2.3). "The kings are the servants of the people. To be obeyed, resisted deposed or punished, as the public convienency may require, is the doctrine of reason and philosophy; but it is not the doctrine of Nature" (TMS I.iii.2.3). Oddly enough Smith's main thesis is that crowd psychology is fundamentally similar to the superstitious factional spirit of intimidated believers, let alone those mentally mutilated by the woes of commercial life among the modern crowd. Therefore it is doomed to fluctuate between a "habitual state of deference," the most deep-rooted affection towards authority in human psychology of common people, and rare uprisings against royalty when, exceptionally, the "most furious passions fear, hatred and resentment" seize the "bulk of the people." In other words, the rare enthusiastic transgressions of the respect due to authority are followed by long periods of superstitious reverence of greatness. Resuming the theme of the style of philosophical prose, at this point one can see the anticipation of a novel style of moral discourse that will account for complex moral and socio-psychological realities in a more adequate way than traditional accounts of moral and social authority.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

I shall conclude by stating the extreme synthetic value of Jack Weinstein's book, that succeeds in moving forward Adam Smith studies in the sense of a lively dialogue between contemporary scholarship, history of ideas, and the philosophy of the 18th century. This dynamic move enables scholarship, among other things, to reclaim the legacy of classic rhetoric for the understanding of socio-economic, political and moral early modern issues. In this paper I do not discuss all aspects of Weinstein's contribution, although I found intriguing his comparative account of Smith's project and method with Foucault's archaeology of knowledge. I rather focus on the conceptual genealogy of the impartial spectator, that leads me to a shift of attention from Shaftesbury/Hutscheson to Mandeville's legacy in Smith. In line with two crucial insights regarding Smith's project found in this book, the complex motivation/one system thesis, and the emphasis on rhetorical narrative for a pluralistic, commercial society, I further develop two points: the importance of satire in moral prose and consequently the twin tragi-comic status of ridiculous nouveau riche in the formation of an efficient moral prose matching complex commercial realities. Filling in a gap in Weinstein's narrative, according to my interpretation, I elaborate on the theme of complex commercial motivations, focusing on the enigmatic portrait of the poor man's son found in TMS IV.i. Finally, I complete the discussion of socialization/acculturation of moral sentiments developed by Weinstein, with a psychoanalytic addendum regarding the internalization of authority, a rather visionary Smithian anticipation of contemporary debates in social sciences and political theory on the relationship between the mental and the social. This parallels and possibly extends Weinstein's sense of Smith's relevance for problems of our times.

This book is emblematic in respecting current Adam Smith scholarship by meticulously quoting and discussing major as well as minor works, while being iconoclastic in mobilizing Adam Smith's thought to interact with formal logic *and* French post-structuralism. Being iconoclastic is definitely a Smithian virtue, as Weinstein's mode of inquiry plainly reminds us.

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NOTES

1 A helpful synthesis of the critique of "free thinkers" sketched by figures such as Joseph Steele or Berkeley, who coined the term "minute philosophers" is found in Castiglione (1986).

2 "Politeness is so much the virtue of the great that it will do little honour to any body but themselves. The coxcomb, who imitates their manner, and affects to be eminent by the superior propriety of his ordinary behavior, is rewarded with a double share of contempt for his folly and presumption. Why should the man whom nobody thinks it worth while to look at, be very anxious about the manner in which he holds up his head, or disposes his arms while he walks through a room?" (TMS I.iii.2.5/54-5).

3 "This disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and the powerful, and to despise, or, at least, to neglect persons of poor and mean condition, though necessary both to establish and to maintain the distinction of ranks and the order of society, is, at the same time, the great and the most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments." (TMS I.iii.2.3).

4 Kerkhof's (1995, pp. 230-31) insightful paper sheds light on the underrated aspect of sympathy related to insecurity and anxiety, and reads it as a Mandevillean response to the omnipresence of pride: the conscience that we "constantly overvalue ourselves" makes most of the people nervous. Yet he does not pay particular attention to the fact that anxiety is almost constantly tied to commercial vanity.

5 LRBL, 92: "Ridicule is appropriate when it issues from an appropriate sentiment and communicates clearly the nature of the object that gave rise to the sentiment."

6 Regarding the relationship between Smith and Swift and, broadly, for the importance of style in the prose of moral philosophy and in practical moralizing in Smith, see Hanley, 2008.

7 See especially II.1.3, III.3.3, where the universe is conceived as a "set of interlocking, co-dependent 'systems." On other notions of system of which Smith was probably aware, see Mitchell, 2006, pp. 63-7.

8 For helpful insights about nervousness in early consumer society, see Porter, 1992.

9 TMS III.3.3: "Habit and experience have taught us…"

10 In this context, the appeal to eastern adulation is telling: "Great King, live for ever! is the compliment which, after the manner of eastern adulation, we should readily make them, if the experience did not teach us its absurdity…His air, his manner, his deportment, all mark that elegant and graceful sense of his own superiority, which those who are born to inferior station can hardly even arrive at" (TMS I.iii.2.2, 4).

Was Adam Smith an Optimist?

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Jack Russell Weinstein claims "Adam Smith was a man of his time, an Enlightened scholar with the optimism that came from a scientific belief in progress and moral betterment" (2013, p. 239). Claims like this are spread across Weinstein's volume and are not supported by textual evidence.

I fear that this lack of textual evidence may not just be because of the adoption of a more narrative approach, but because evidence for this "inevitable" progress that Weinstein claims to see in Smith may not be as clear as Weinstein wants it to be.

One can read Smith's *Wealth of Nations* ([1776] 1981) not as a declaration of the inevitable march of history toward a better future, but as a scream of fear that the future may be bleak and worse than the present.

Smith attacks the mercantile system as a parasitical system which may cause the stagnation of the British economy. The British economy, like any other economy, is not subject to perpetual improvements, but may become more stationary, or regressive. China was an expanding economy for centuries, but then it became stationary for centuries, with little hope for improvement. "China had been long one of the richest, that is, one of the most fertile, best cultivated, most industrious, and most populous countries in the world. It seems however, to have been long stationary" (WN i.viii.24). Smith goes as far as to say that there does not seem to be much difference between the description of Marco Polo and the ones by Smith's contemporaries (WN i.viii.24). Bengal was an expanding economy and had all the potential to remain such, given the fertility of its land, yet it turned into a regressing economy. In Bengal "notwithstanding [subsistence should not be very difficult] three or four hundred thousand people die of hunger every year" (WN I.viii.26). The American colonies were a growing economy, but Britain was no longer one. In Smith's view there was more growth in North America than in England (WN i.viii.23). Only America has a growing population, testified to by the fact that a widow with children will remarry immediately since the children are considered an asset. In Britain on the other hand, the same widow with the same amount of children would not be able to remarry because her children would be considered a liability:

> [A] young widow with four or five young children, who, among the middling or inferior ranks of people in Europe, would have so little chance for a second husband, is there [in North America] frequently courted as a sort of fortune. The value of children is the greatest of all encouragements to marriage. […] [T] here is a continual complaint of the scarcity of hands in North America. The demand for labourers, the funds destined for maintaining them, increase, it seems, still faster than they can find labourers to employ (WN I.viii.23).

Smith is afraid that if Britain succumbs to lobbyists and mercantilists, it may go the way of Bengal rather than its North-American colonies. The "optimism that comes from a scientific belief in progress" is not evident.

In addition, it is difficult to see optimism or progress when Smith speaks of an economic system as a living body, with economic privileges granted by the government functioning like diseases. Privileges granted by the government make a body sick. They can even kill it:

> The whole system of her industry and commerce has thereby been rendered less secure [by the monopoly of the colony trade]; the whole state of her body politick less healthful, than it otherwise would have been. In her present condition, Great Britain resembles one of those unwholesome bodies in which some of the vital parts are *overgrown*, and which, upon that account, are liable to many dangerous disorders scarce incident to those in which all the parts are more properly proportioned. A small stop in that great blood–vessel, which has been artificially swelled beyond its natural dimensions, and through which an unnatural proportion of the industry and commerce of the country has been forced to circulate, is very likely to bring on the most dangerous disorders upon the whole body politick. The expectation of a rupture with the colonies, accordingly, has struck the people of Great Britain with more terror than they ever felt for a Spanish armada, or a French invasion. … The blood, of which the circulation is stopt in some of the smaller vessels, easily disgorges itself into the greater, without occasioning any dangerous disorder; but, when it is stopt in any of the greater vessels, convulsions, apoplexy, or death, are the immediate and unavoidable consequences (WN IV.vii.c.43).

And while it is true that a poor worker in Britain is better housed than a savage king (WN I.i.11), those accommodations come at a dear price, the atrophy of the minds (V.i.f.50) and the "drowsy stupidity" (V.i.f.51) of the great masses of people. "Mental mutilation, deformity and wretchedness" is an epidemic as serious and as damaging as leprosy: they "deserve the most serious attention of government; in the same manner as it would deserve its most serious attention to prevent a leprosy or any other loathsome and offensive disease, though neither mortal nor dangerous, from spreading itself among them; though, perhaps, no other publick good might result from such attention besides the prevention of so great a publick evil" (WN V.i.f.60). If there is progress in Smith, it is not necessarily inevitable or something to take for granted.

The moral betterment that Smith allegedly promotes may also be questioned. Smith does say that time changes morals, but it is difficult to say that that change is inevitably for the better.

After all, this "progress" brought about by the inexorable march of time transforms men from brave and courageous warriors to weak and fearful soldiers, which is not necessarily an improvement in Smith's eyes (LJ 1766, pp. 538-541). The change in attitude of people toward war also challenges an alleged moral betterment. The prosperity that goes with what Weinstein calls "Smith's commitment to the natural spread of universal opulence" (p. 245) allows government to rely on public debt rather than on taxes to finance wars. So wars will become both longer and more numerous. And this is just to satisfy the mean rapacity of big merchants and manufacturers and the deluded dreams of empire of lazy citizens who enjoy reading war news in the comfort of their living rooms. Smith tells us indeed that the self-interest of great merchants and manufacturers causes the system of justice to degenerate into a system of lobbies, and the system of lobbies becomes a source of the most severe injustices. The government grants favors to organized interests at the expense of the majority of the members of society, and the laws become so unjust that "the cruellest of our revenue laws, I will venture to affirm, are mild and gentle, in comparison of some of those which the clamour of our merchants and manufacturers has extorted from the legislature, for the support of their own absurd and oppressive monopolies. Like the laws of Draco, these laws may be said to be all written in blood" (WN IV.viii.17).

The blood Smith refers to is not just a colorful image of the lack of moral restraint of merchants' manufactures, but it is a condemnation of their immoral conduct which results in their willingness and ability to bring the country into wars "for the sake of that little enhancement of price which this monopoly might afford our producers" (WN IV.viii.53). And as mentioned, their fellow-citizens do not display high moral standards or significant moral betterment either: they "live in the capital, and in the provinces remote from the scene of action…enjoy, at their ease, the amusement of reading in the newspapers the exploits of their own fleets and armies, enjoying their dreams of empire" (WN V.iii.37).

Smith also analyzes how the alleged "natural spread of universal opulence" brings about a sovereign's morally irresponsible spending. Smith explains that the sovereign will squander his revenues on frivolous trinkets (WN V.iii.2-3)

during times of peace. When war comes, debt will be incurred, which "will in the long run probably ruin all the great nations of Europe" (WN V.iii.10). Not the most optimistic view of the world's future.

This universal opulence to which Smith is allegedly committed also unleashes sordid and childish passions, rather than moral betterment. When opulence started spreading, the "most childish, the meanest and the most sordid of all vanities" (WN III.iv.10) of barons and great landlords hopelessly attracted them to the glitter of a "pair of diamond buckles perhaps, or […] something as frivolous and useless" (WN III.iv.10). So that "As soon, therefore, as they could find a method of consuming the whole value of their rents themselves, they had no disposition to share them with any other person" (WN III.iv.10). In addition to these accusations, Smith repeats the point five paragraphs later. The lords run after "trinkets and baubles, fitter to be the play-things of children than the serious pursuit of men" (WN III.iv.15). This language does not describe what I would think of as moral betterment. There may be unintentionally a betterment of society as a whole, but it is difficult to see any moral improvement in a vanity which can now bloom almost without limits.

Weinstein's claims of Smith's optimism and belief in progress seem therefore weak and partial, more like straw-men built to make a different point, rather than a genuine description of Adam Smith. Smith may be optimistic, but his optimism is a very complex one, with awareness of nuances and problematic issues. Ignoring the sophistications and the shades of Smith's analysis in a book on Smith is, to this reader, writing a book about something other than Smith.

Weinstein's agenda is terrific and interesting on its own terms. It therefore leaves the question of why he uses Smith in such a deformed way when he could have made the argument without Smith. As much as I praise Weinstein for his interest in exploring pluralism, I wish he had portrayed Adam Smith more realistically and with textual evidence.

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