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Review
Reviewed Work(s): On Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations': A Philosophical Companion by Samuel Fleischacker
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Source: *Mind*, Vol. 116, No. 461 (Jan., 2007), pp. 161-165
Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Mind Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4121844
Accessed: 23-03-2017 01:04 UTC

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objection being raised here. There is no reason to think that it is any easier to simultaneously grasp a complicated pattern of evidence non-consciously than it is to do so consciously.)

My own conclusion on this point is that a plausible version of evidentialism must allow things that are not currently in mind to count as evidence, even if it is not easy to specify exactly how this should be done. Indeed, I have some inclination to say that even things that are stored in some non-mental way, as in notes or other sorts of writing that the person is familiar with and in a position to easily retrieve, should at least sometimes count as evidence, thus going beyond the bounds of Feldman's specification of the total possible evidence. From the standpoint of the philosophical tradition, this is no doubt a very odd suggestion. But it is also very odd from the standpoint of common sense to hold that someone who is investigating some complicated issue is in effect required to memorize all of the resulting data before it can count as evidence for him. No one really does this, and thus a view that requires it is surely suspect.

But while I have serious doubts on these points and a variety of others, my overall judgement is that this book is a really outstanding and extremely valuable contribution to epistemology, one that anyone concerned with epistemological issues should read and absorb—to the great betterment of the field.

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doi:10.1093/mind/fzm157

On Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations': A Philosophical Companion, by Samuel Fleischacker. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004. Pp. 329 + xvii. H/b $39.50, P/b $19.95.

Adam Smith's writings have recently undergone something of a revolution. At first, and for almost two centuries, Smith was hailed as the founding father of capitalism, with his 1776 *Wealth of Nations* (WN) a manifesto for private property, free trade, and free markets. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, however, several scholars claimed that Smith was really not a classical liberal after all but more like a progressive liberal: his concerns for the poor, his worries about the damage that excessive division of labour can do to workers, and his criticisms of merchants and monopoly corporations all indicating, to some at least, that he was at least as concerned with 'positive' as with 'negative' justice. So while Adam Smith neckties could be seen around Washington, DC during the Reagan years, scholars were claiming Smith for the progressives. Some indeed

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went so far as to claim that Smith was a proto-Marxist. Today scholarly opinion of Smith's politics runs the political gamut. One might therefore reasonably ask: Will the real Adam Smith please stand up?

Enter Samuel Fleischacker's 'philosophical companion' to Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. This book advertises itself as the first ever 'philosophical' commentary on the WN, and the blurb on the back jacket from Charles Griswold, a noted Smith scholar and philosopher himself, states, 'Until now, nobody has published a truly philosophical, let alone comprehensive and philosophical, commentary on Smith's great work of political economy'. Given how much has been written about WN since its first publication, claims to comprehensiveness and absolute novelty certainly raise expectations. But Fleischacker's book meets the expectations. It may not be entirely comprehensive—at least not in the sense of commenting on everything in WN or commenting on it section by section—but it is an entire book written by a philosopher and dedicated to explicating and interpreting central themes in WN. Moreover, though Fleisch-acker's claim that 'thus far there has been no book devoted to [WN] by a philosopher' (p. xvi) is technically true, there has been quite a bit of attention paid by philosophers to WN recently. Yet those qualifications notwithstanding, Fleischacker's mastery of WN as well as other of Smith's works, Fleischacker's own philosophical acumen, and his elegant writing style all make the book well worth reading for anyone interested to understand Smith's contributions to political economy.

As he states at the outset, Fleischacker does not 'defend any overarching thesis about Smith' (p. xv); rather, he raises by turns several philosophical issues of central concern to political philosophy or political economy—like human nature, justice, and private property—and astutely shows, in more or less self-contained chapters, how they are dealt with in WN. Fleischacker also discusses Smith's methodology, including what his example might still offer economists and philosophers today, and Smith's policy recommendations, including whether Smith would be a contemporary conservative or liberal. The book's organization thus suits it well to classroom use or to desultory reading. Having no single thesis also makes it somewhat difficult to review, but let me simply discuss briefly a few of the controversial claims Fleischacker makes, with the disclaimer that I pass over in silence many of the interesting discussions and insights that fill up the book.

Fleischacker claims that Smith is a 'proto-Wittgensteinian' 'common sense' philosopher (p. 23), falling philosophically and chronologically between Hume and Thomas Reid. Smith is not overly concerned with theory, but neither does he reject it altogether; instead he is concerned to elicit general rules from empirical observations, rules that are tentative and ever subject to revision upon further investigation and experience. That explains why Smith is not a 'natural rights' theorist and has few, if any, principled arguments against state interference in individuals' private activities (chs. 8 and 9). Smith's method is rather to look to history, to see that things like free trade and freely 'gravitating' market prices allow the most efficient allocation of resources, and to make

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policy recommendations accordingly. Hence Fleischacker persuasively argues that, despite similarities in their conclusions, Smith is not properly part of the natural law or natural rights tradition associated with people like Pufendorf, Grotius, and Locke.

That would seem to make Smith something of a utilitarian, as Fleischacker himself suggests when he has Smith rhetorically asking 'Why not simply use whatever means are available to solve a problem?' (p. 275). Yet Fleischacker elsewhere claims that 'Smith's moral theory is deeply opposed to utilitarianism' (p. 47; cf. p. 145), and he argues at some length that Smith cannot properly be considered a utilitarian (Ch. 3). In his 1759 *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS), Smith argued that moral standards are ascertained by asking what an 'impartial spectator' would approve or not in any given situation. Fleischacker correctly takes this to mean that Smith 'is not a relativist', but he then claims that Smith 'has no resource for distinguishing between the "right" and the merely "historically conditioned" responses of an impartial spectator' (p. 169). The Smithian impartial spectator is a historical generalization, the joint product of countless actual spectators' decisions in countless actual situations. He is thus an idealization, but, crucially, one based in reality. Something like prices: they change over time and they reflect our evolving social reality, but they are none the less real things and not subject to any one person's whim. That means that Smith is neither a radical subjectivist nor a moral transcendentalist: his moral objectivity occupies instead a 'middle way', reflecting the fallible but empirically grounded results of human beings' investigation into what rules, protocols, and mores in fact best allow them to satisfy their interests.

That seems to make Smith a broad utilitarian after all, and it would seem to give him just the 'resource' Fleischacker claims is missing to distinguish between 'right' and merely 'historically conditioned' moral norms—namely utility. When, as Fleischacker points out, Smith argues in TMS that utility is not what immediately recommends to us our moral judgements, Smith does not thereby imply that utility is irrelevant to our moral judgements. On Smith's view our usual method of determining an action's moral rightness or wrongness is whether it comports with what the impartial spectator would judge, but the impartial spectator's judgements are themselves informed by an evolutionary process that changes, slowly and gradually, over time. So Smith is a nuanced utilitarian: he believes that it is on the basis of our perceptions of actions' utility or disutility that we generalize rules of conduct, and that these rules of conduct get concretized, subject to future emendation, in the persona of an impartial spectator. This method strikes me as fulfilling perfectly Smith's desire to emulate Newton by balancing principled theory with empirical reality.

This account also fits with Smith's conception of 'justice', which, as Fleischacker rightly notes, Smith on the one hand describes as comprising the three simple, inviolable rules of respecting others' life, liberty, and property, but which, on the other hand, Smith seems to allow the state to transgress when circumstances warrant (chs. 8 and 10). Those circumstances, according to

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Smith, arise when policies or activities would benefit everyone but would not repay private investment—such as canals, roads, and partially subsidized elementary schools—as well as a handful of other measures whose purpose is to alleviate the mental 'torpor' Smith thinks workers would develop and the lack of respect the poor would get in commercial societies. Fleischacker discusses these passages carefully and concludes that Smith cannot rightly be considered a 'right wing' thinker: 'I am inclined to think Smith's strong moral concern for the poor, and view of them as equal in decency and desert to everyone else in society, would have led him more toward the left than the right of [today's] political spectrum' (p. 265).

Fleischacker rightly reminds us of Smith's genuine and abiding concern for workers and the poor, and he seems right to suggest that Smith believed the poor often did not get the dignity and respect they deserved. But that does not prove Smith is on the 'left' of the political spectrum, since people on the 'left' are of course not the only ones with concern for the poor. And Fleischacker's claim that 'Those who call themselves "libertarians" generally complain about unions but not about corporations, make all sorts of excuses for government activity taken in the name of defense, and suggest, without apparent concern for the justice and safety issues that Smith recognized, that education and transportation be put entirely in private hands' (p. 269) reveals a lack of familiarity with recent libertarian thought—as evidenced by the fact that Fleischacker does not discuss any real libertarians. He might have considered, for example, Randy Barnett's *The Structure of Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Richard Epstein's *Simple Rules for a Complex World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) or *Skepticism and Freedom* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), or Jan Narveson's *The Libertarian Idea* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001). One might also have expected some discussion of prominent libertarians whose work draws directly on Smith, in particular Friedrich Hayek.

More seriously, however, Fleischacker's speculations about what policies Smith might recommend were he alive today—state-mandated pollution standards, mandatory 5% of lifetime earnings paid by companies to any of their workers they fire, a mandatory 'bicameral form of governance' for corporations 'in which one chamber would consist of employee representatives along with representatives of the communities in which firms are located, while the other chamber continue[s] to consist of stockholders' (pp. 273–9), etc.—seem to betray one of Smith's central principles, namely that no third party can know what actions others should take to best serve their interests. In both TMS and in WN Smith repeatedly trumpets the folly and viciousness of would-be rulers who falsely believe they possess the requisite knowledge to make such decisions for others. Indeed, this is one of Smith's most important insights, if judged by the use to which later theorists put it, and it is one of the central reasons he recommends limiting the power the state has over ordinary individuals. Thus Smith would say that whether a bicameral form of govern-

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ance, for example, is a good idea cannot be known by people not involved in the company considering it. Smith could not know it, Fleischacker could not know it, and neither could any politician. Fleischacker is aware of this Smithian insight elsewhere (e.g. Ch. 11, esp. pp. 233–6), but when he comes to making his own recommendations for state policy Fleischacker does not seem to appreciate the general character of Smith's challenge.

Let me conclude by saying that despite my reservations about some of Fleischacker's interpretations, I in fact learned a great deal reading this book. I particularly recommend Fleischacker's treatment of Smith's philosophy of science (Ch. 2), his discussion of self-interest in TMS and WN (Ch. 5), and his treatment of the meaning of the phrase 'invisible hand' (Ch. 7), but all of his discussions are enlightening in one way or another. Anyone interested in understanding Smith would profit from thinking through the issues Fleischacker raises. Fleischacker's book thus does an important service both to Smith's writings and to those who are interested in them.

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doi:10.1093/mind/fzm161

Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar, by Michael N. Forster. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004. Pp. xiii + 247. H/b £19.95.

As the title indicates, Forster's book is dedicated to exploring Wittgenstein's idea, put forward in his later philosophy, that grammar is 'arbitrary'. By 'grammar' Forster understands Wittgenstein to mean the 'rules which govern the use of words and which thereby constitute meanings or concepts' (p. 7). To say that these rules are arbitrary implies, among other things, that 'alternative' grammatical principles 'either have actually been used or are at least possible and conceivable' (p. 21). Forster thus sees Wittgenstein's ideas concerning the arbitrariness of grammar as cutting against the grain of recent philosophy, namely the kind of anti-pluralism and anti-relativism enshrined in Donald Davidson's arguments against the possibility of multiple, incommensurable 'conceptual schemes'. Forster considers these kinds of recent arguments and positions to be the result more of 'questionable philosophical instincts than … good reasons' (p. 1), and so he believes that Wittgenstein's ideas, suitably refined and augmented, may have a salutary effect on the current philosophical scene. The book is thus not just an exercise in Wittgenstein exegesis (though it is very much concerned to get Wittgenstein right and to engage, sometimes pugnaciously, with rival readings), but a contribution to contemporary debates.

The book is divided into two parts. The first is devoted to spelling out the thesis that grammar is arbitrary. Forster is careful to note that Wittgenstein

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