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THE RELEVANCE OF PROPRIETY AND SELF-COMMAND IN ADAM SMITH'S *THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS*[*]

By Leonidas Montes

Abstract: *Propriety and self-command are distinctive and complex Smithian concepts. This essay attempts to shed more light on the meaning and significance of propriety and the virtue of self-command. After a brief introduction on the recent reappraisal of The Theory of Moral Sentiments (TMS), a short analysis of Smith's crucial idea of sympathy follows. Then the relevance of propriety is discussed and some connections between propriety and the virtue of self-command are explored. Finally, the importance of Smith's self-command is reassessed, paying attention to its origins and philosophical implications. It is noteworthy that, through self-command and propriety, TMS stresses the role of intentions and motivations. By doing so, Adam Smith opens up new threads to rethink personal liberty and its ethical importance for political economy.*

KEY WORDS: Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS), sympathy, propriety, self-command

I. Introduction

Shortly after the first edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS)[1] had been published in April 1759, and some copies had already been delivered, David Hume wrote to his friend Adam Smith to give him an account of its early reception. After Hume introduces some people who had received TMS, he suspends the story claiming that he had been interrupted by a visitor, proceeds with some gossip, refers to another interruption, and finally states: "My Dear Mr Smith, have Patience: Compose yourself to Tranquility: Show yourself a Philosopher in Practice as well as Profession: Think on the Emptiness, and Rashness, and Futility of the common

[*] This essay develops and further expands some ideas that stem from Leonidas Montes, *Adam Smith in Context. A Critical Reassessment of Some Central Components of His Thought*, (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004) and "Adam Smith: Self-Interest and the Virtues," in *Adam Smith: A Princeton Guide*, ed. R. P. Hanley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). I am very much indebted for the unusually detailed, sharp, and helpful comments of an anonymous referee, and the challenging suggestions of the other participants in the intellectual adventure about the origins of PPE at Tucson. Last but not least, "surprise, wonder, and admiration" emerged from that discovery process organized by David Schmidtz, editor of this journal.

[1] For references to Adam Smith, the standard citation based on the complete Glasgow edition of *Wealth of Nations* (WN), *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS), *Lectures on Rethoric and Belles Lettres*, (LRBL) and *Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Corr.), originally published by Oxford University Press and then by Liberty Fund, will be used. Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. A. Macfie (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1984 [1759]); *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. R. H. Campbell, and A. S. Skinner (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1981 [1776]); *Lectures on Rethoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. J. C. Bryce (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1985); *Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. E. C. Mossner and I. S. Ross (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1987).

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Judgements of Men: How little they are regulated by Reason in any Subject … Supposing, therefore, that you have duely prepard yourself for the worst by all these Reflections; I proceed to tell you the melancholy News, that your book has been very unfortunate: For the public seem disposd to applaud it extremely"[2] Hume's narrative is funny and ironical, but he was right: Smith's TMS was very well received and would be celebrated in Britain and also on the Continent. Indeed, TMS was a commercial success—first edition sold quickly—and it became an intellectual achievement that allowed Smith to be invited, as Hume predicts in the same letter, to Europe with the young Duke of Buccleugh during 1764–1766. After this grand tour to the Continent, Smith came back to London, retired to his birth town Kirkcaldy with a generous pension for life and remained working there for the next ten years until the publication of *Wealth of Nations* (WN).

WN was published seventeen years after TMS, in 1776. Soon after its publication, Hume congratulated Smith with his famous letter: "*Euge! Belle!* Dear Mr. Smith: I am much pleased with your performance," acknowledging after some comments that " … these, and a hundred other points, are fit only to be discussed in conversation. I hope it will be soon; for I am in a very bad state of health, and cannot afford a long delay" (Corr., 186–87). Nearly five months later, Hume, probably Smith's best friend, and "by far the most illustrious philosopher" (WN V.i.g.3, p. 790), died peacefully.[3] A year later, in 1777, Adam Smith, abandoning his position as one of "that unprosperous race of men commonly called men of letters" (WN I.x.c.37, p. 148), was appointed to the Board of Customs at Edinburgh, a profitable position that he retained until his death.[4] Early in 1785 Smith had agreed to publish a sixth edition of TMS, declaring "I have a few alterations to make of no great consequence" (Corr., Letter 244, p. 281). But almost three years later he wrote to his editor "I have now taken leave of my Colleagues for four months and I am at present giving the most intense application. My subject is *the theory of moral Sentiments* to all parts of which I am making many additions and corrections" (Corr., p. 310). After a year of "labouring very hard in preparing the proposed new edition" (Corr., p. 319), Smith

[2] Smith, Corr., 34–35.

[3] Smith's beautiful account of his friend's death in a letter to his editor, William Strahan (Corr., 217–21), was published, and it triggered a reaction from religious quarters. Smith reports that this "very harmless Sheet of paper … brought upon me ten times more abuse than the very violent attack I had made upon the whole commercial system of Great Britain" (Corr., 251). Probably for that reason the pragmatic Smith, who avoided conflicts, did not publish posthumously Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* as Hume himself had asked in his will (cf. Corr., 211–12). As David Hume knew his cautious friend quite well, perhaps he performed the last joke to Adam Smith in his will. For a recent and fascinating treatment on Hume and Smith, see D. C. Rasmussen, *The Infidel and the Professor: David Hume, Adam Smith and the Friendship that Shaped Modern Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[4] G. M. Anderson, W. F. Shughart II, and R. D. Tollison, "Adam Smith in the Customhouse," *Journal of Political Economy* 93, no. 41 (1985): 740–59 investigates the twelve years Smith spent at the customs service, concluding that he took this job seriously, and not simply as a sinecure.

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apologized to his editor: "I am very much ashamed of this delay; but the subject has grown upon me" (Corr., p. 320). Finally, a few weeks before Smith's death, the sixth and final edition of TMS was published in 1790.

During Smith's lifetime TMS went through six editions (1759, 1761, 1767, 1774, 1781, and 1790) and WN through five (1776, 1778, 1784, 1786, and 1789). But if TMS was the book that paved Smith's intellectual prestige as Hume had anticipated in his letter to Smith, the historical hegemony of WN soon began to take over. Indeed, during the nineteenth- and most part of the twentieth century, TMS was overshadowed by WN.[5] The success of his political economy placed Adam Smith as the undisputed father of economics, but at a cost: his moral philosophy was ignored. In addition, the overwhelming influence of Bentham and Kant eclipsed TMS. Prominent economists would simply overlook or dismiss TMS as a pastime of the father of economics. Only recently, after the publication of the scholarly edition of TMS in 1976 as part of the definitive Glasgow Edition of Smith's Works and Correspondence (1976–1987) and its re-publication in paperback by the Liberty Fund, a flourishing revival of Smith's ethics has aroused.[6] Modern economics is also living a healthy return to TMS. The best example is, perhaps, experimental economics. In sum, the re-emergence of TMS has brought back the importance of political economy and its original relationship with ethics. The new challenge is how economics, principally constrained by its emphasis on formal models and mathematics, can learn from Smith's moral philosophy.

As we know, the father of economics dedicated the last years of his life to TMS, almost ignoring, except some "[a]dditions" for the first and second edition, further revisions to his WN. Indeed, the sixth edition of TMS contained substantial revisions and extensive additions. Almost one-third of the final and definitive TMS corresponds to Smith's work during his final years. Although in this edition of TMS there is, as the editors of TMS have argued, "development but no fundamental alteration" (TMS intro, p. 20), the question about the nature and consequences of these developments has been relatively ignored. And there are good reasons for this reassessment to take place, as Smith stresses the role of virtues in the new Part VI of the final TMS edition, emphasizing the importance of propriety and self-command.

[5] For example, before the publication of the Glasgow edition of WN and TMS in 1976, only 52 editions of TMS versus 340 of WN were published (Keith Tribe, *A Critical Bibliography of Adam Smith* [London: Pickering and Chatto, 2002], 332–54).

[6] For the renaissance in TMS, see review essays by Vivienne Brown, "Mere Inventions of the Imagination," *Economics and Philosophy* 13 (1997): 281–312 and Keith Tribe, "Adam Smith: Critical Theorist?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 37, no. 2 (1999): 609–632; and for recent scholarship on TMS, see Samuel Fleischacker and Vivienne Brown, "The Philosophy of Adam Smith: Essays Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*," *The Adam Smith Review* 5 (2010): 1–11. And for a general and very recent reassessment of Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment scholarship, see Maria Pia Paganelli, "Recent Engagements with Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment," *History of Political Economy* 47, no. 3 (2015): 363–94.

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It is well known that Smith's original use of propriety and self-command in TMS plays a special role within the general sympathetic process. But the relevance of self-command, as a key connecting virtue in TMS, intertwined with propriety, has been rather neglected. Indeed, the "school of self-command" teaches us to be "masters of ourselves" (TMS III.3.22, p. 145), setting a moral standard that diverges and goes beyond the traditional Stoical interpretation of this prominent virtue. And propriety is more complex than the standard meaning of the necessary pitch to reach mutual sympathy. When propriety is analyzed in relation to Smith's distinctive and fundamental virtue of self-command, the importance of intentions and moral motivation emerge. This reading of Adam Smith rebuts a proto-utilitarian interpretation of Smith's TMS.

Both concepts—self-command and propriety—are crucial for understanding Smith's sympathetic process, a process that requires sentiments, but also reason. Certainly, it is this combination of passions and deliberation that makes Smith's moral philosophy stimulating and original to any modern reader—and necessary for modern economics. But before discussing propriety and self-command, it is necessary to briefly summarize Smith's concept of sympathy and its social nature.

II. Smith's Sympathy

Smith follows the Aristotelian tradition of considering human beings as naturally social (*zoon politikón*). Evidently ethics is a social phenomenon, and sympathy, the cornerstone of Smith's moral philosophy, is essentially social. Sympathy, as a necessary principle for moral approbation, requires social interaction. According to Smith a man without society cannot have a sense of good or bad, correct or incorrect, proper or improper behavior:

> Were it possible that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he could no more think of his own character … Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with … and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions. (TMS III.1.3, p. 110)

Sympathy and the idea of the impartial spectator are the foundations of Smith's original approach to ethics. The first sentence of TMS—"How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it" (TMS I.i.1.1, p. 9)—already defines sympathy as a complex principle inherent to human nature. But Smith is aware that common

language might mislead us on what he really means by sympathy. In the beginning of TMS, he claims:

> Pity and compassion are words appropriated to signify our fellow-feeling with the sorrows of others. Sympathy, though its meaning was, perhaps, originally the same, may now, however, without much impropriety, be made use of to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever. (TMS I.i.I.5, p. 10)

By using *com-passion*, Smith is appealing to the original Greek etymology of sympathy. The Greek word for sympathy is *sympátheia.* The prefix *syn* means "together" or "with," which is joined to *pathos*, that is, passions. The analogous word in Latin is com-passion with the Latin prefix *com* as the equivalent of the Greek *syn.* Therefore, the etymological origin of the word *sympátheia* would simply imply "feeling with" or "feeling together with." Literally it would merely mean sharing a fellow-feeling. But sympathy has not the same meaning as compassion. Moreover, it is not only a kind of fellow-feeling related to pity or compassion, as it pertains to "any passion whatever." Differentiating from Hume's sympathy and its relationship with pleasure, Smith first states that sympathy also has to do with "joy and grief." Etymologically, sympathy would more precisely correspond to the modern concept of empathy, as *em-pátheia*, in contrast with *sym-pátheia* actually means feeling "in" the other.

In fact, Smith is fully aware that sympathy's meaning is broader, so he carefully explains and clarifies its real meaning and its implications. In this sense, the causes that motivate our passions are fundamental: "[s]ympathy, therefore, does not arise so much from the view of the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it" (TMS I.i.1.10, p. 12). And to understand and assess the causes, we need more than sentiments or feelings. Therefore, sympathy is not only related to feelings, passions, or emotions, but also requires a process of deliberation that goes beyond its literal etymological meaning. Simply put, sympathy implies not only to imagine oneself in the person's shoes, but also requires knowing or assessing where those shoes are standing. This explains why the role of imagination is so crucial for Smith.[7] Of course I will have fellow-feeling with any passion, but I cannot sympathize " … till informed of its cause" (TMS I.i.1.8, p. 11). I can feel and share any sentiment, but that does not necessarily mean that I can sympathize with them. Sentiments—that broad concept that deserves the title of TMS—are a necessary but not sufficient condition to attain sympathy. There is an important epistemological twist. In sum, Smith's sympathy requires a rational assessment of the circumstances, which implies a deliberative

[7] The importance of "imagination" for Smith's sympathetic process has been widely treated. Already in the second paragraph of TMS, Smith says: "By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation" (TMS I.i.1.2, p. 9).

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process. But Smith's sympathetic process has both *pathos* and *logos.* Or better said, in TMS, sentiments interact with reason.[8]

For Adam Smith human nature is predominantly social, and sympathy, underpinned by the relevance of the impartial spectator, is the core of moral judgment. As human conduct is fundamentally moral—we live and learn our *mores* in society—social interaction shapes moral approbation. However, even though TMS is about sentiments and passions, sympathy requires reason as we have to assess the circumstances. And within Smith's framework of sympathy, virtues play an important role. There is a continuous interaction between sympathy and virtues. In fact, Smith added a complete new section entitled "Of the Character of Virtue" to the sixth and last edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments.* The title of this new part signals his late concern with virtues, a concern that reflects his mature moral thought. Moreover, this preoccupation follows an Aristotelian stance.[9] In what follows, I analyze the distinctive role of propriety, and self-command—a crucial virtue stressed in the last edition of TMS

III. Propriety and Its Context in TMS

The first part of TMS that begins with the definition of sympathy is entitled "Of the Propriety of Action."[10] And in the last part of TMS Smith celebrates some affinity between his ethics with all "those Systems which make Virtue consist in Propriety" (TMS VII.ii, pp. 266–306). But, what does Smith actually mean by "propriety"?

[8] As J. R. Weinstein, *Adam Smith's Pluralism: Rationality, Education, and the Moral Sentiments* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013) has recently argued " … sympathy is a rational process, cultivated by education" (p. 68) and Adam Smith " … presents an account of human rationality that is representative of a holistic picture of human agency" (p. 264). For a recent philosophical reappraisal of Smith's sympathy see E. Schliesser, *Adam Smith: Systematic Philosopher and Public Thinker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 107–150 and Samuel Fleischacker, *Being Me Being You: Adam Smith and Empathy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2019).

[9] On the renaissance of the influence of Aristotelian and virtue ethics on Smith, see especially Deirdre McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006); Deirdre McCloskey, "Adam Smith, the Last of the Former Virtue Ethicists," *History of Political Economy* 40, no. 1 (2008): 43–71; R. P. Hanley, "Adam Smith, Aristotle and Virtue Ethics," in *New Voices on Adam Smith*, ed. Leonidas Montes and E. Schliesser (London: Routledge, 2006); Hanley "Adam Smith and Virtue," in *The Oxford Handbook of Adam Smith*, ed. Christopher Berry, Maria Pia Paganelli, and Craig Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Maria A. Carrasco, "Adam Smith: Self-Command, Practical Reason and Deontological Insights," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 20, no. 2 (2012): 391–414; Carrasco, "Adam Smith's Reconstruction of Practical Reason," *The Review of Metaphysics* 58, no. 1 (2004): 81–116. Also, the relationship of sympathy and Smith's intellectual virtues is worth exploring (see Hanley, "Adam Smith and Virtue," 230–36).

[10] Furthermore, the three sections of Part I are entitled "Of the Sense of *Propriety*," "Of the Degrees of the different Passions which are consistent with *Propriety*," and "Of the Effects of Prosperity and Adversity upon the Judgment of Mankind with regard to the *Propriety* of Action; and why it is more easy to obtain their Approbation in the one state than in the other" (emphasis added).

As McKenna has argued, "Adam Smith's treatment of propriety, both in his rhetoric lectures and his moral philosophy, is original and extensive."[11] Indeed, propriety and its different senses and meanings in TMS indicate that it is a crucial and distinctively Smithian philosophical concept. Throughout TMS Smith repeatedly refers to "propriety," "propriety of sentiments," "propriety of conduct," "propriety of behavior," to the idea of "acting with propriety," to "love of propriety," to a "point of propriety," a "sense of propriety," a "degree of propriety," and even to a "propriety of action."[12] As a matter of fact, the complex and even elusive concept "propriety" comes up 243 times in the final edition of TMS, more so than "sympathy" (182), "justice" (153), and "spectator" (140).

If the word propriety has its etymological root in the Latin word *proprius*, its origins go back to the Greeks *prépon*, even since Homer, and, of course, to the Romans, especially Cicero, who inherited and adapted the Greek tradition into Latin. During the eighteenth century Cicero was widely read, particularly his masterpiece *De Officiis.* David Hume, in his first *Enquiry*, reflects this setting: "the fame of CICERO flourishes at present."[13] In LRBL and LJ, Smith shows a deep knowledge of Cicero's works. Perhaps from this source emerges Smith's moral meaning of propriety as Cicero's *decorum*, a concept related to the Greek *prépon.*[14] This concept can be translated as "appropriate" or "decent" conduct.

The Latin concept of *decorum*, also etymologically related to *decet* (decent) and *dignitas* (dignity), is an accepted behavior that is socially and morally right. It can also be seen as the state or quality of being correct. That is why we still speak of "proper" behavior. But in general, the original sense of propriety entails the idea of something not common when compared with other things, or something belonging to oneself only. This is a snapshot of the classical moral stage behind Smith's propriety.

Later, in the seventeenth century, propriety was used interchangeably with property. There are some examples in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*[15]

[11] S. J. McKenna, *Adam Smith: The Rhetoric of Propriety* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 5.

[12] Elsewhere he also refers to "perfect," "superior," "complete," "exact," "most exact," and "utmost propriety." Also to "mere propriety," "natural propriety," "noblest propriety," "virtue and propriety," and "beauty and propriety."

[13] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. E. Steinberg (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993 [1748]), 3.

[14] Actually, in *De Officiis*, Cicero uses *decorum* as the Greek *prépon* (*De Officiis* I.xxvii). Moreover, in Cicero, *On the Republic*, xx.70 it is stated that: "The Greeks call it *prepón*; let us call it *decorum.*" G. Vivenza, *Adam Smith and the Classics: The Classical Heritage in Adam Smith´s Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 192–94; Leonidas Montes, *Adam Smith in Context. A Critical Reassessment of Some Central Components of His Thought* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004), 122–28; and S. J. McKenna, *Adam Smith: The Rhetoric of Propriety*, 25–51, all explore some possible classical sources of propriety.

[15] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. R. Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1651]).

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where he uses the words, property and propriety, as equivalents.[16] The same is true of John Locke's famous definition of property in his *Two Treatises on Government* (1681) as "Preservation of their Lives, Liberties and Estates, which I call by the general name, *Property*."[17, 18]

But during the eighteenth century, propriety could also be understood as an extension of Shaftesbury's "politeness," as the Whig criterion for proper behavior,[19] a symbol of gentlemanliness or good manners associated with "proper" behavior. In fact, Samuel Johnson's influential and monumental 1755 Dictionary defines propriety as "peculiarity of possession; exclusive right" and also as "accuracy; justness." The former meaning relates to something that we own, and the latter includes a moral connotation. Although the word still has a modern moral sense in its current and vernacular use, suggesting correct or proper behavior, the moral valence of propriety has practically vanished in common parlance. In contemporary ethics, the term propriety seems to have been displaced by "fitting" and/or "appropriate."[20]

It is noteworthy that while propriety had a broad, popular moral meaning during the eighteenth century, and it was closely linked to the classical rhetorical tradition, it was a word not widely used in the philosophical writings of the period. In fact, Smith's contemporaries, like David Hume, Adam Ferguson, or Thomas Reid, rarely use the concept of "propriety."[21] Smith's case is different: he not only used the word repeatedly and extensively in TMS (as already mentioned, it appears more frequently than sympathy in TMS), but "propriety" also plays a fundamental role within his moral philosophy.[22]

[16] For example, Hobbes would declare "[a]nd therefore where there is no Own, that is, no Propriety, there is no Injustice; and where there is no coercive Power erected, that is, where there is no common-wealth, there is no Propriety" (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 106, original emphasis). Elsewhere he refers to "power as propriety," or "Rules of Propriety" (125), "Propriety of Subjects" (225), and "Propriety in his land" (228).

[17] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1689]), 350, original emphasis.

[18] It is noteworthy that Locke considers "life and liberty" as things that belong to oneself, adding to this broader and expanded meaning of property. Elsewhere Locke refers to " … every Man has a Property in his own Person" (Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, 287, original emphasis). Locke also refers to "[t]he measure of Property, Nature has well set, by the Extent of Mens Labour" (292, original emphasis), and soon after he refers to the "Rule of Propriety" (293). Propriety is also connected to the central concept of *oikeíosis* that relates to sympathy, but also to the self (see Vivienne Brown, "Mere Inventions of the Imagination," *Economics and Philosophy* 13 [1997]: 281–312; G. Vivenza, *Adam Smith and the Classics*; Montes, *Adam Smith in Context*; and Forman-F. Barzilai, *Adam Smith and the Circles of Sympathy: Cosmopolitanism and Moral Theory* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010]).

[19] The narrative of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's "The Spectator" is a good source and example that gives voice to this practical moral idea and its classical sources.

[20] I am indebted to the anonymous referee for calling my attention to this point.

[21] For example, in Hume's *Treatise*, propriety appears only four times: two times connected to "exactness" ("propriety and exactness" and "propriety or exactness"), and then related to "language" and "speech" ("propriety of speech" and "propriety of language"). And it appears only two times in his two *Enquiries.*

[22] Note that in WN, propriety appears only eight times, and always in the common vernacular sense of simply doing something "with propriety."

Propriety certainly relates to sympathy. Already in the beginning of TMS, propriety relates to the emotional level that the agent must achieve in order to fulfill her intention of being the object of sympathy. Following Aristotle's doctrine of the means or his classical *in medio virtus*, it is "a certain mediocrity" necessary to reach "the point of propriety" (TMS ii.intro.1 and 2, p. 27) that will allow the agents to reach mutual sympathy. In brief, propriety aims toward the necessary "point," "pitch," or "mediocrity" needed to attain the concordance of sentiments. In all these important passages, especially the necessity of bringing our sentiments down to a level that others can go along with, Aristotle's influence is evident.

But propriety also implies and requires an effort or an emotional exertion that is bolstered by the impartial spectator and the multifaceted virtue of self-command. Indeed, Smith soon refers to "our natural sense of propriety … to consider what will be the sentiments of the cool and impartial spectator" (TMS I.ii.3.8, p. 38). Then propriety is a human ability that allows the agent to attain a proper disposition of character that will enable any spectator to sympathize. In simple words, it would be the necessary step to reach mutual sympathy. This is the canonical definition or understanding of propriety: the moral character needed for the "concord"[23] of feelings, or the necessary ground that will allow the impartial spectator to go along with the agent "lowering his passion to that pitch" (TMS I.i.4.7, p. 22).

The etymology and the sense of propriety reflects an endogenous characteristic that contrasts with the exogenous consequences of our actions. That is why Smith would refer to "propriety in the motives" (see TMS II.i.3.1 and II.i.3.2, pp. 71–72), or he would simply refer to propriety as "the intention or affection of the heart" (see TMS II.iii.intro.3, p. 93). So propriety can also be seen as an inner sentiment or disposition of character related to intentions and motivations.

When the focus of ethics was turning toward the importance of consequences and the birth of utilitarianism, Smith's revival of intentions and the importance of moral motivation is noteworthy. In fact, Smith was very aware of this incipient trend:

> Philosophers have, of late years, considered chiefly the tendency of affections, and have given little attention to the relation which they stand in to the cause which excites them. In common life, however, when we judge of any person's conduct, and of the sentiments which directed it, we constantly consider them under both these aspects. (TMS I.i.3.8, p. 18)

The pragmatic Smith is also conscious "That the world judges by the event, and not by the design, has been in all ages the complaint, and is the great discouragement of virtue" (TMS II.iii.3.1, pp. 104–5). If the importance of motives and

[23] It is worth noting that Cicero would define *sympatheia* as "consensus" and "concord."

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effects are both present in Smith's moral philosophy, then evidently he is critical, or at least skeptical, of the exclusive emphasis on consequences.[24]

In the second part of TMS, which focuses upon merit, Smith develops the distinction between merit and propriety, underscoring another subtle difference between the two concepts (TMS II.i.intro.2, p. 67). Propriety demands " … not only that we should entirely sympathize with the person who acts, but that we should perceive this perfect concord between his sentiments and our own" (TMS II.i.5.11, p. 78). For merit, on the other hand, "[n]o actual correspondence of sentiments, therefore, is here required" (p. 78). Propriety, in terms of the sympathetic process, demands more. It is about a complete concordance of sentiments with the impartial spectator that demands an effort from both the agent and the person to be considered, to assess the real motivations behind an action. And merit is at a different level. It only requires that we assess the consequences.

In Smith's moral philosophy, just before the ethical roads of deontology and utilitarianism overshadowed TMS, there was no opposition between motivation and effects. On the contrary, they overlap and frequently complement each other. For example, if we remember that benevolence is etymologically the simple intention or desire to do good, and beneficence is the actual conduct that does good, the concordance of a benevolent affection with a beneficial consequence leads to the admired combination of propriety with merit:

> But when to the beneficent tendency of the action is joined the propriety of the affection from which it proceeds, when we entirely sympathize and go along with the motives of the agent, the love which we conceive for him upon his own account, enhances and enlivens our fellow-feeling with the gratitude of those who owe their prosperity to his good conduct. (TMS II.i.4.2, p. 73)

Beneficence combined with benevolence adds moral worth. Smith then adds that the lack of benevolence may hamper the beneficial consequence of an action:

> If in the conduct of the benefactor there appears to have been no propriety, how beneficial soever its effects, it does not seem to demand, or necessarily to require, any proportionable recompense. (TMS II.i.4.1, p. 73)

[24] Smith also complains that Hutcheson, by making virtue consist in benevolence, focuses just on the beneficial effects, omitting the important question of the causes of other virtues. In Smith's own words: "The view and aim of our affections, the beneficent and hurtful effects which they tend to produce, are the only qualities at all attended to in this system. Their propriety and impropriety, their suitableness and unsuitableness, to the cause which excites them, are disregarded altogether" (TMS VII.ii.3.15, p. 304). In his account of sympathy, J. Rust ("Indulgent Sympathy and the Impartial Spectator," in D. F. Hardwick and L. Marsch, *Propriety and Prosperity. New Studies on the Philosophy of Adam Smith* [London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2014], 98–101) echoes the importance of motives.

Smith distinguishes between and is concerned with both merit and propriety, but merit attained with propriety is the real object of moral admiration. Virtuous actions have moral excellence (*areté*) if they come from proper motives. This important characteristic of Smith's ethics has been wonderfully summarized by Knud Haakonssen as "a most extraordinary combination of an ideal of intentions with an actual ethics of consequences".[25] [26]

Smith distinguishes between and is concerned with both merit and propriety; he holds that each enlivens the other and moral appraisal more generally, and that merit attained with propriety is the real or ultimate object of moral admiration. But it seems misleading to say that propriety is necessary for moral merit. There are plenty of actions that warrant merit/demerit in virtue of their consequences, but where our appraisals are muted to the extent that we sympathize or don't with the motives of the agent.

In terms of virtues, Smith insists that "[t]o act according to the dictates of prudence, of justice, and proper beneficence, seems to have no great merit where there is no temptation to do otherwise … Self-command is not only itself a great virtue, but from it all the other virtues seem to derive their principal lustre" (TMS VI.iii.11, p. 241). All other virtues without "the great, awful and respectable" (TMS I.i.5.1, p. 23) virtue of self-command appear to be morally inferior. They might represent proper moral behavior, but not necessarily the excellence of moral virtue understood as *areté*. Therefore, it is important to reassess self-command as a virtue linked to propriety that allows other virtues to stand out. But first we should investigate some connections between propriety and self-command.

IV. Propriety and Self-Command

From the beginning of TMS, propriety is closely connected with the virtue of self-command. In the first appearance of self-command in TMS, Smith praises "what noble propriety and grace do we feel in the conduct of those who, in their own case, exert that recollection and self-command which constitute the dignity of every passion, and which bring it down to what others can enter into!" (TMS I.i.5.3, p. 24). This crucial virtue helps the agent to reach the pitch for the concordance of sentiments necessary for mutual sympathy. It is not at all surprising that Smith continues to develop this

[25] K. Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator: The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 65.

[26] In the same line, Emma Rothschild argues that Smith rejects Hume's proto utilitarianism, as in his sympathetic process "the convergence of sentiments depends on judgements about motives, as well as about consequences" (Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment*, [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001], 231). Nowadays there is a general consensus that Adam Smith is not a proto-utilitarian, and there are also good grounds to defend Smith as a precursor of a deontological position (see Samuel Fleischacker, "Philosophy in Moral Practice: Kant and Adam Smith," *Kant-Studien* 82, no. 3 [1991]: 249–69; Fleischacker, *A Third Concept of Liberty: Judgment and Freedom in Kant and Adam Smith* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999]; and Montes, *Adam Smith in Context*, 118–22).

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connection throughout the whole TMS, a connection that is exalted and reinforced with the final additions to the sixth and last edition that was published shortly before Smith's death in July 1790. And this late development is important.[27]

In fact, in the third part of TMS we find the third chapter entitled "Of the Influence and Authority of Conscience." The majority of this chapter consists of additions made to the final edition of 1790. In this chapter the sense of propriety is reinforced by the role of the "supposed impartial spectator" and the virtue of self-command. Smith argues that "[t]he degree of self-approbation with which every man, upon such occasions, surveys his own conduct, is higher or lower, exactly in proportion to the degree of self-command which is necessary in order to obtain that self-approbation. Where little self-command is necessary, little self-approbation is due" (TMS III.3.26, p. 147). Therefore, the "degree of self-command" is necessary for self-approbation.

The sense of propriety also implies a sense of duty. And propriety reaches a new moral dimension with "the great, the awful, and respectable" (TMS I.i.5.1, p. 23) virtue of self-command. The moral challenge of the inner self is to assess the motivations in order to reach an action that entails "praiseworthiness." In Part II, in a long passage fully added for the sixth and final edition of TMS, Smith declares:

> Praise and blame express what actually are; praise-worthiness and blameworthiness, what naturally ought to be the sentiments of other people with regard to our character and conduct. The love of praise is the desire of obtaining the favourable sentiments of our brethren. The love of praiseworthiness is the desire of rendering ourselves the proper objects of those sentiments. So far those two principles resemble and are akin to one another. (TSM III.2.25, p. 126)

The moral contrast between simple praise and praiseworthiness underlines the relevance of an inner moral assessment. In the completely new added sixth part of TMS, entitled "Of the Character of Virtue," the third section of this new addition is entitled "Of Self-Command." And this section comprises nearly half of the entire new part on virtues. As Smith explains in the conclusion of the sixth part of TMS, the virtue of self-command plays a central role within Smith's four chief virtues, that is, self-command, prudence, justice, and beneficence:

[27] On the general evolution of the different editions of TMS, L. Dickey, "Historicizing the 'Adam Smith Problem': Conceptual, Historiographical, and Textual Issues," *Journal of Modern History* 58, no. 3 (1986), 579–609 underlines some differences between the first and the sixth editions. And W. Eckstein, "Introduction to *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*," reprinted in *Adam Smith: Critical Responses*, edited by H. Mizuta, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2000 [1926]), 12–49, in his introduction to the 1926 German translation of TMS, already compares Smith's six editions. See also Leonidas Montes, "Adam Smith as an *Eclectic* Stoic," *Adam Smith Review* 4 (2008): 30–56, for this evolution in relation to the Stoics' influence.

> But though the virtues of prudence, justice, and beneficence, may, upon different occasions, be recommended to us almost equally by two different principles; those of self-command are, upon most occasions, principally and almost entirely recommended to us by one; by the sense of propriety, by regard to the sentiments of the supposed impartial spectator. (TMS VI.concl.2, p. 262)

The Smithian relationship between self-command and propriety is crucial as they are both fundamental for sympathy. Paraphrasing Kant, propriety and self-command would be blind without sympathy, but sympathy without propriety and self-command would be empty. To corroborate this point on the close connection of self-command and propriety further, let me briefly elaborate on the possible classical sources and certain characteristics and interpretations of this distinctively Smithian virtue. It is important to clarify why Smith chose self-command as the virtue most closely connected to propriety. And it is also important to elucidate the real meaning and sense of this central virtue.

V. The Meanings and Implications of Smith's Self-Command

Before developing the origins, meanings and interpretations of self-command, it is necessary to remember that Adam Smith developed and strengthened the importance of self-command in his sixth and final edition of TMS. In fact, self-command appears fifty-two times in TMS, and over 70 percent of its appearances correspond to his final additions to TMS.[28] As I will argue below, Smith's mature emphasis on self-command is consistent with his own evolution regarding Stoicism.

In addition, it is worth underlining that the word "self-command" was rarely employed in eighteenth-century moral discourse. For example, it does not appear in Hume's *Treatise* or his *Essays*, and it appears only three times in his *Enquiries.*[29] The use of self-control or even self-restraint in the neo-Stoic tradition of simple control of passions was much more common.

Throughout TMS, the real meaning of self-command is diverse and complex. Self-command seems to have had different meanings for Adam Smith. First, it appears related to control of passions as "the great, the awful, and respectable, the virtues of self-denial, of self-government, of that command of the passions which subjects all the movements of our nature to what our own dignity and honour, and the propriety of our own conduct require" (TMS I.i.5.1, p. 23). Smith then writes that "[s]elf-command, which constitutes the dignity of every passion … we reverence that reserved, that silent

[28] Self-command appears in thirty-six paragraphs of TMS. Of them, twenty-five paragraphs correspond to those added to the final sixth edition of 1790.

[29] See Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* E 7.19 and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* M 6.14 and M App 4.2. It also appears a couple of times in his *History of England*, but no appearance has relevance beyond its vernacular neo-Stoic sense.

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and majestic sorrow, which discovers itself only in the swelling of the eyes … that concerted tranquility, which it requires so great an effort to support" (TMS I.i.5.3, p. 24), resembling the Epicurean *ataraxia*, or tranquility of mind that governs the passions of our nature.

In the final edition of TMS, Smith considers that a young child who enters "the great school of self-command" studies how "to be more and more master of itself" (TMS III.3.22, p. 145). And it also has a strong sense of classical "manliness," related to the cardinal virtue of fortitude as "the man of real constancy and firmness, the wise and just man who has been thoroughly bred in the great school of self-command … has often been under the necessity of supporting his manhood" (TMS III.3.25, p. 146).[30] It is then connected to the martial virtues: "hardships, dangers, injuries, misfortunes, are the only masters under whom we can learn the exercise of this virtue [self-command]" (TMS III.3.37, p. 153).[31] And Smith even refers to the "absolute" self-command of the American savages (TMS V.2.9, pp. 205–6), which definitely implies a complete physical and psychological self-denial.

A first reading gives the impression that self-command is related to control of the passions, to the cardinal virtue of temperance (*temperantia* for the Romans and *sophrosúne* for the Greeks) or even to the classical virtue of courage (*fortitude* and *andreía*). But following the editors of TMS, it has been commonly argued that self-command "is distinctively Stoic" (TMS intro, p. 6). Although the influence of the Stoics on the Scottish Enlightenment is significant and undeniable, their importance for Adam Smith has been overestimated.[32] The most common argument that has been given for

[30] This reflects the classic relationship between *virtus* and manly courage. Cicero would state that "it is from the word man that the word *virtus* is derived" (Cic.Tusc II.xviii).

[31] From these last two quotes, both added to the final edition of TMS, it can be inferred that self-command combines the Greco-Roman virtue of courage with the Christian cardinal virtue of *fortitudo.* Self-command has the physical and visible connotation that courage had for the classics, and the endogenous or subjective sense that fortitude had for the Christians (for the Greeks or Romans a handicapped individual could not have had the virtue of courage; for the Christians, yes). Therefore when Martha Nussbaum ("'Mutilated and Deformed': Adam Smith on the Material Basis of Human Dignity," in Nussbaum, *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble But Flawed Ideal* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019]) refers to Smith's "macho stoicism," interpreting his manly virtues from today's perspective, she disregards this important political and historical context (I am indebted to Nussbaum for sharing in private correspondence an early version of her chapter).

[32] Many authors have pinpointed this difference. For example, Maria A. Carrasco, "Adam Smith: Self-Command, Practical Reason and Deontological Insights," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 20, no. 2 (2012): 391–414; F. Forman-Barzilai, *Adam Smith and the Circles of Sympathy: Cosmopolitanism and Moral Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); I. S. Ross, *The Life of Adam Smith*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); E. Schliesser, "Review of D. D. Raphael, The Impartial Spectator: Adam Smith's Moral Philosophy and Leonidas Montes, *Adam Smith in Context: A Critical Reassessment of Some Central Components of His Thought*," *Ethics* 118, no. 3 (2008): 569–75; Maria A. Carrasco, "Adam Smith's Reconstruction of Practical Reason," *The Review of Metaphysics* 58, no. 1 (2004): 81–116; Montes, *Adam Smith in Context*; Leonidas Montes, "Adam Smith as an *Eclectic* Stoic," *Adam Smith Review* 4 (2008): 30–56; Vivenza, *Adam Smith and the Classics*; Fleischacker, *A Third Concept of Liberty*; C. L. Griswold, Jr., *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment*; and recently Michele Bee and

considering self-command as essentially Stoic is, explicitly or implicitly, related to the widely discussed Stoical concept of *apátheia*. But Smith plainly and bluntly rejected this notion.[33] Indeed, a closer analysis of the virtue of self-command is a good starting point to understand that Smith's account of virtues is more complex than a simple Stoical inheritance.[34]

What distinguishes Smith's self-command from simple Stoic self-control is that "command" gives this virtue a sense of direction. It is not only a Stoical virtue focused on what not to do. In fact, self-command relates to a person who knows what not to do, but also what *to* do. This might explain the importance Smith attributes to the meaning of self-command as a moral basis for his other main virtues. What is more, in Part VI of TMS Smith concentrates further on prudence ("his Own Happiness") and beneficence ("Happiness of other people"), devoting, as already underlined, more than half of this new part to a full section on self-command. Indeed, Smith's self-command gives moral excellence to prudence, justice, and beneficence:

> To act according to the dictates of prudence, of justice, and proper beneficence, seems to have no great merit where there is no temptation to do otherwise. But to act with cool deliberation in the midst of the greatest dangers and difficulties; to observe religiously the sacred rules of justice in spite both of the greatest interests which might tempt, and the greatest injuries which might provoke us to violate them; never to suffer the benevolence of our temper to be damped or discouraged by the malignity and ingratitude of the individuals towards whom it may have been exercised; is the character of the most exalted wisdom and virtue. Self-command is not only itself a great virtue, but from it all the other virtues seem to derive their principal lustre. (TMS VI.iii.11, p. 241)

This "great virtue," reinforced in the sixth and final edition of TMS, has a clear and simple etymological connection with the Socratic virtue of *enkráteia*. The actual etymological meaning of *enkráteia* confirms this very simple intuition. The Greek word *eg-kráteia* literally means "inner power" or "power within oneself," making self-command a literal translation of this

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Maria Pia Paganelli, "Adam Smith, Anti-Stoic" (January 16, 2019). Center for the History of Political Economy at Duke University Working Paper Series, 2019–02. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3316874 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3316874.

[33] For Smith, "the stoical apathy is, in such cases, never agreeable, and all the metaphysical sophisms by which it is supported can seldom serve any other purpose than to blow up the hard insensibility of a coxcomb to ten times its native impertinence" (TMS III.3.14, p. 143). See also (TMS VI.iii.18, p. 245), and (TMS VII.ii.1.43, p. 292).

[34] It is certainly not easy to define stoicism and the real meaning of some of the Stoics' key concepts. For example even a philosopher like Martha Nussbaum refers to the concept of *apátheia* as "what the Stoics said it was. It is extirpation" (Nussbaum, "Pity and Mercy: Nietzsche's Stoicism," *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Richard Schacht [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994], 401) or "the Stoic does not hesitate to describe the wise person as totally free from passion" (ibid., 390). I believe there are certainly more nuances to these judgments.

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Greek term (for example, the word *démos-kráteia* is "power of the people"). And Xenophon, in his *Memorabilia*—a text widely read during the eighteenth century—portrays Socrates as referring to *enkráteia* as the "foundation of all virtues" (X.Mem, I.v.4, 1997, p. 67).[35]

Smith was most likely familiar with the importance of self-command in the classical philosophical tradition. He managed Latin and Greek quite well.[36] Therefore, it is likely that Smith was well aware of the Greek word *enkráteia*, its origins and its sense when he wrote about self-command, and developed the meaning and importance of this virtue in the final edition of TMS.

The editors of TMS restrict the meaning of self-command to a combination of "[t]he Christian ethic of love with the Stoic ethic of self-command" (TMS I.i.51, p. 23–24, note 1). The persistent idea of self-command as a Stoic virtue has been pervasive. Indeed, more recently Nussbaum refers to Smith's self-command and its deep affinity with Stoicism, concluding that "his key concept of self-command is a thoroughly Stoic idea."[37] However, if we accept that self-command reflects the meaning of *enkráteia*, this Smithian key virtue is not necessarily a Stoic virtue.

In Smith's TMS, *enkráteia* is not exclusively related to a simple stoical restraint of passions. And the reason is clear: the classical Greek tradition also relates *enkráteia* to what one has to do. For example, Aristotle refers to *enkráteia* not only as endurance of pain, but also as "victory over desire"[38] and connects it with the cardinal virtue of temperance (*sophrosúne*).[39] This idea of victory over passions implies that *enkráteia* has a sense of direction and possession of oneself. At this stage, it is worth recalling Smith's passage of the young child who " … thus enters into the school of self-command, it studies to be more and more master of itself, and begins to exercise over its own feelings a discipline which the practice of the longest life is very seldom sufficient to bring to complete perfection" (TMS III.3.22, p. 145).

[35] It is worth noting that Smith, who had certainly read *Memorabilia*, elsewhere praises Xenophon's style as "easy and agreeable" (LRBL Lecture 19, ii.53, p. 107).

[36] Although knowledge of Latin was common during the eighteenth century, Smith was an Edinburgh literati, unusually well versed in Greek. Evidence of Smith's command of Greek is found in the impressive collection of works by classical writers in Smith's library (H. Mizuta, *Adam Smith's Library: A Supplement to Bonar's Catalogue with a Checklist of the Whole Library* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008]), his command of Greek in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, and his repeated emphasis on the study of the Greek language in his letters to Lord Shelburne concerning the education of his son (cf. Corr., pp. 28, 29, and 31). Henry Mackenzie, labeled then as the Addison of Scotland by Walter Scott, is reported to have referred to Smith as " . . . an exception. He had twice Dr. Johnson's learning—who only knew one language well, the Latin—though he had none of his affection" (P. W. Clayden, *The Early Life of Samuel Rogers* [London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1997 (1887)], 166–67).

[37] Nussbaum, "Adam Smith on the Material Basis of Human Dignity."

[38] Aristotle, *EN*, VII 1150.a.32.

[39] For the history and importance of the Greek classical cardinal virtue of *sophrosúne*, related to the cardinal virtue of *temperantia*, and its close relationship with *enkráteia*, see H. North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

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More recently Carrasco has argued for a distinction between the "premoral habit" of self-command, and the "moral virtue" of self-command. The former is necessary for the agent to be practically rational, and the latter relates to the ends that the agent chooses to pursue. Carrasco claims that self-command is "a practical habit, an expression of practical reason."[40]. This suggestive interpretation also diverges from the standard reading of self-command as a Stoic virtue. And it further implies a distinction or contrast between motivations and ends. Indeed, within the sympathetic process, the role of self-command can be thought of as a process tending to an outcome, very much in line with Aristotle´s idea of *eudaimonia.* That is, an understanding of teleology not only as an end, but as the process toward that end.

As already argued, self-command is the only Smithian virtue assessed by its *propriety*, regardless of its effects or consequences (cf. TMS I.i.3.5, p. 18 and II.i.I.1, p. 65). The special relationship between propriety and self-command, stressed in the final edition of TMS, implies that we must think about self-command in terms of propriety. So, if we assume that self-command has a sense of direction, this crucial virtue can also be related to individual free choice.[41] Therefore, it could be argued that the complexity and distinctiveness of Smith's self-command combines a negative and then a positive aspect of freedom. That is, it evolves from an inner stance (self-assessment) to an outward one (self-direction). This process demands an evolution from introspection to moral action. The former adds moral excellence to the consequences of the latter. This movement and interaction between motives and consequences explains and reflects the close connection between self-command and propriety.

As motives and effects are related and intertwined, both Smithian concepts help us to understand the morality behind free choice and consequences. In simple words, perhaps Adam Smith, as a founding father of classical liberalism, could not have fully approved of Berlin's famous distinction between negative and positive liberty.[42] Both are important for Adam Smith: they are intertwined as the value of real merit is exalted by

[40] Carrasco, "Adam Smith: Self-Command, Practical Reason and Deontological Insights," 399.

[41] This important connection is not original. Otteson, *Adam Smith's Marketplace of Life*, already emphasized the idea that self-command "presupposes the notion that one can freely choose to act in one way or in another way" (238–39), and argues that free human choice is "embodied in Smith's notion of the virtue of self-command" (291). And Edward Harpham suggested that "[o] ne could argue that the ideal of self-command itself demands a certain amount of negative liberty if it is [to] be realized" (E. J. Harpham,"The Problem of Liberty in the Thought of Adam Smith," *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 22, no. 2 [2000]:215–37, at 236).

[42] In this line of thought, R. P. Hanley, "Freedom and Enlightenment," in the *Oxford Handbook of Freedom*, ed. David Schmidtz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) questions the nature and consequences of Berlin's distinction between positive and negative liberty, and convincingly argues that they are intertwined in Smith, Rousseau, and Kant. Keith Hankins, ("Adam Smith's Intriguing Solution to the Problem of Moral Luck," *Ethics* 126, no. 3 [2016]: 711–46), working on Smith's moral luck, has uncovered interesting connections between motives and outcomes.

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propriety, and self-command adds value to those actions that emerge from proper motives. The significance of this interpretation of self-command as a kind of enabling virtue that allows us to do what is appropriate is explicit in the last edition of TMS. In point of fact, self-command also appears as a different virtue when compared with prudence, justice, and beneficence. The final two paragraphs of Part VI, completely added for the final edition of TMS, are worth fully reproducing:

> The virtues of prudence, justice, and beneficence, have no tendency to produce any but the most agreeable effects. Regard to those effects, as it originally recommends them to the actor, so does it afterwards to the impartial spectator. In our approbation of the character of the prudent man, we feel, with peculiar complacency, the security which he must enjoy while he walks under the safeguard of that sedate and deliberate virtue. In our approbation of the character of the just man, we feel, with equal complacency, the security which all those connected with him, whether in neighbourhood, society, or business, must derive from his scrupulous anxiety never either to hurt or offend. In our approbation of the character of the beneficent man, we enter into the gratitude of all those who are within the sphere of his good offices, and conceive with them the highest sense of his merit. In our approbation of all those virtues, our sense of their agreeable effects, of their utility, either to the person who exercises them, or to some other persons, joins with our sense of their propriety, and constitutes always a considerable, frequently the greater part of that approbation.
>
> But in our approbation of the virtues of self-command, complacency with their effects sometimes constitutes no part, and frequently but a small part, of that approbation. Those effects may sometimes be agreeable, and sometimes disagreeable; and though our approbation is no doubt stronger in the former case, it is by no means altogether destroyed in the latter. The most heroic valour may be employed indifferently in the cause either of justice or of injustice; and though it is no doubt much more loved and admired in the former case, it still appears a great and respectable quality even in the latter. In that, and in all the other virtues of self-command, the splendid and dazzling quality seems always to be the greatness and steadiness of the exertion, and the strong sense of propriety which is necessary in order to make and to maintain the exertion. The effects are too often but too little regarded. (TMS VI.concl.5 and 6, p. 264)

In relation to the virtues of prudence, justice, and beneficence, Smith speaks "of their agreeable effects, of their utility".[43] But the broader and different

[43] One referee has sharply suggested that justice, as a negative virtue for Smith, would not fit within this framework. It is a good point, but the debate about whether for Smith justice is only

sense of self-command is linked to our moral conscience and to the inner experience of the supposed impartial spectator who is capable of assessing the propriety and praiseworthiness of our behavior before we can evaluate its consequences. In this reading, self-command is an important virtue that can enable moral admiration. Therefore, it is not surprising, as it has been already cited, that for Smith "self-command is not only itself a great virtue, but from it all the other virtues seem to derive their principal lustre" (TMS VI.iii.11, p. 241).

According to this analysis, self-command is a distinctively Smithian virtue possibly inspired by the Socratic virtue of *enkráteia.* And this virtue also embodies the Aristotelian tradition of *sophrosúne* that contrasts and complements the specific nature of Smith's more consequentialist or utilitarian virtues (prudence, justice, and beneficence). If these three virtues have a utilitarian nuance, self-command has a Kantian overtone and, through the cardinal virtue of *sophrosúne*, a clear Aristotelian and virtue ethics background.[44] Indeed, the intellectual adventure of assessing the importance of Aristotle and virtue ethics in TMS and its relationship with the virtue of *enkráteia* and the classical cardinal virtue of *sophrosúne* is worth exploring and developing.[45] And the Smithian synthesis between motivations and consequences is fascinating.

VI. Conclusions

For Smith human beings are essentially social animals in the Aristotelian meaning and sense. And sympathy is not only compassion or fellow feeling. Indeed, sympathetic interaction demands a practical process of deliberation that involves a rational assessment of circumstances following the sentiments or passions that trigger the sympathetic process. In this

negative—Smith famously said that "We may often fulfil all the rules of justice by sitting still and doing nothing" (TMS II.ii.1.9, p. 82)—is open. He certainly supports and strongly endorses commutative justice, but there are some inklings toward distributive justice (for example, see Samuel Fleischacker, *On Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: A Philosophical Companion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[44] Maria A. Carrasco, ("Adam Smith's Reconstruction of Practical Reason," *The Review of Metaphysics* 58, no. 1 [2004]: 81–116) has argued that "Smith's system can also be plausibly seen as a theory of practical reasoning" (ibid., 81) and that self-command would be "an expression of practical reason" (Carrasco, "Self-Command, Practical Reason and Deontological Insights," 399).

[45] See Vivenza, *Adam Smith and the Classics*; R. P. Hanley, "Adam Smith, Aristotle and Virtue Ethics," in *New Voices on Adam Smith*, ed. Leonidas Montes and E. Schliesser, (London: Routledge, 2006); Hanley, "Adam Smith and Virtue," in *The Oxford Handbook of Adam Smith*, ed. Christopher Berry, Maria Pia Paganelli, and Craig Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Deirdre McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006); McCloskey, "Adam Smith, the Last of the Former Virtue Ethicists," *History of Political Economy* 40, no. 1 (2008): 43–71; Carrasco, "Self-Command, Practical Reason and Deontological Insights," 391–414; Carrasco, "Adam Smith's Reconstruction of Practical Reason," 81–116; and Alexander Broadie, "Aristotle, Adam Smith and the Virtue of Propriety," *The Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2010): 79–89.

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interpretation, the original and distinctively Smithian concepts of propriety and self-command are crucial and influential within this framework.

The sense of propriety, related to self-command and Smith's impartial spectator, transcends its canonical understanding of the necessary pitch to achieve mutual sympathy. It is not simply the necessary ground for the sympathetic process. The "faculty of propriety" helps the agent to attain mutual sympathy. But also relates to the importance of moral intentions. Therefore, the real meaning of propriety, sustained by the classical tradition of Cicero's *decorum*, is broader.

In the final edition of TMS Smith developed more extensively the relationship between propriety and the virtue of self-command. Moreover, he strengthened the importance of the "great virtue" of self-command. Self-command has a sense of direction, and Smith was probably influenced by the Socratic virtue of *enkráteia* and the Aristotelian tradition of the classical cardinal virtue of *sophrosúne.* Self-command is a central virtue that gives "lustre" to the other three Smithian chief virtues of justice, prudence, and beneficence. And as self-command also relates to the inner moral self, the import of moral motivations is fundamental for Smith's sympathetic process. In Smith's own words, the "school of self-command" teaches us to become masters of ourselves. This subtle yet profound hint transpires Smith's concern with human freedom and moral autonomy.

The philosophical implications are relevant: self-command combines negative liberty with positive liberty, motivation with action, intentions with consequences. If Adam Smith was not a forerunner of utilitarianism, he foresaw the importance of motivations, circumstances, and consequences. In sum, Adam Smith might represent, for the history of philosophy, a middle road between utilitarianism and Kantianism that highlights liberty and autonomy. Within this road, human beings and society are the main focus for the father of economics. And the real nature of Smith's legacy, with its emphasis on the importance of ethics for political economy, is a healthy and necessary call for modern economics.

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