

Outline for ADAM SMITH

I. Adam Smith

- A. Life
- B. The Scottish Enlightenment and Hume
- C. Smith on Human Nature - The Theory of Moral Sentiments
- D. The Stage Theories of "Philosophical History"
- E. Overview of The Wealth of Nations
- F. "Das Adam Smith Problem"
- G. Bibliography

A. Life

1723 - Born in Kircaldy Scotland probably on 5 June

1737-40 - Student at Glasgow University; Francis Hutcheson his teacher

1740-46 - student at Oxford University, England - hated it

1748-51 - gave public lectures in Edinburgh

1751-64 - Professor at Glasgow College, meets Hume

1759 - The Theory of Moral Sentiments published

1764-66 - tutor to the Duke of Buccleuch. Meets Physiocrats in France, begins WoN.

1766-76 - Kircaldy and London, working on WoN, published in 1776.

1778-90 - Commissioner of Customs in Edinburgh

1790 - dies 17 July in Edinburgh

Smith never married; was devoted to his mother; also enjoyed the company of others (he was constantly joining clubs); and his most remembered personal characteristic was his absentmindedness: he would copy another custom official's name instead of signing his own; or put buttered bread in the teapot then complain about the beverage; or go out in his nightgown.

G. Bibliography

Primary Sources - The standard reference is now the 6 volume "Glasgow edition" of The Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith. The volumes include, in addition to WoN and TMS (1976), Correspondence (2nd. ed., 1987), Lectures on Rhetoric and Belle Letters(1983), Essays on Philosophical Subjects (1980), and Lectures on Jurisprudence(1978). For generations the standard edition of WoN (still available in one volume from U. Chicago Press) was one first published in 1904 and which carried a lengthy introduction by Edwin Cannan. Cannan (1861-1935) was Professor of Economics at the LSE from 1895-1926, and was known for his crusty lectures in which everyone in British political economy was criticized, including Smith but especially Cannan's rival at Cambridge Marshall. He also was the first editor (in 1896) of some of Smith's lectures on jurisprudence.

Biographies - The earliest biography was a paper read to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1793 by Dugald Stewart entitled "Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith, LL.D." (1794). Stewart (1753-1828) held

the chair in moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh from 1785-1810 and was the foremost British academic of his time. He was a member of the Common Sense Philosophers, teacher of such luminaries as Sir Walter Scott, J.R. McCulloch, Thomas Chalmers, Lord Palmerston, Francis Horner, and James Mill, and actually knew Smith. The next major biography was John Rae's Life of Adam Smith (1895). Rae drew from Stewart, though added material discovered by other scholars in the intervening time. A 1965 Kelley Reprint of Rae's book carries a classic introduction by Jacob Viner lamenting the sorry state (at the time) of Smithian scholarship and commenting extensively on the (at times dubious) accuracy of Rae's Life. Two early 20th century contributions are W.R. Scott Adam Smith as Student and Professor (Glasgow: 1937) and C.R. Fay, Adam Smith and the Scotland of his Day (Cambridge: CUP, 1956). Also see:

Campbell, R.H. and Skinner, A., eds. The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment (Edinburgh: Donald Publishers, 1982).

Evensky, Jerry. Adam Smith's Moral Philosophy. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Foley, Vernard. The Social Physics of Adam Smith. (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 1976). An ambitious attempt to unravel the origins and nature of Smith's entire project. Organized as a mystery story, with a wonderful stage-setting first chapter about Smith on his deathbed directing his papers to be burned.

Griswold, Charles. Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment. (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).

Haakonssen, Knud, ed. The Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Phillipson, Nicholas. Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

Myers, Milton. The Soul of Modern Economic Man: Ideas of Self-interest, Thomas Hobbes to Adam Smith. (Chicago: U Chicago Press, 1983).

Ross, Ian Simpson. The Life of Adam Smith. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

Taylor, W.L. Francis Hutcheson and David Hume as Precursors of Adam Smith. (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1965).

Winch, Donald. Adam Smith's Politics: An Essay in Historiographic Revision. N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Wood, John C. Adam Smith: Critical Assessments. 2nd series, 7 volumes. (London: Routledge, 1994). Routledge has taken over the Critical Assessments series from an earlier publisher, Croom Helms. Each one contains a collection of journal articles on the figure in question. Most other famous economists (e.g., Marx, Keynes, Ricardo, Mill, Marshall) have volumes in the series.