

The Scottish Enlightenment

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By the 1760s Scotland had become a centre of learning and letters of international importance. The universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen employed some of the most admired philosophers and scientists in the contemporary world. The classrooms of Adam Smith and John Millar at Glasgow, Adam Ferguson and Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh and the medical professors of Edinburgh attracted students from every corner of the Continent and the Anglo-Saxon world. Edinburgh was the hub of this intellectual universe. Although the Act of Union of 1707 had meant the abolition of the Scots parliament and Privy Council the city was to remain the effective centre of Scottish political and social life until the early nineteenth century. Its law courts, churches and college; its academies, improvement societies and theatres; its salons and taverns, supported a large and complex society of men of letters whose members were drawn from the ranks of the local professions and from the landed elite around which the social and political life of the country revolved.¹

Tobias Smollett's Matthew Bramble enthusiastically described Edinburgh as 'a hot-bed of genius' but his contemporaries generally preferred a more measured metaphor.² The painter Allan Ramsay, one of the leading members of the city's literati in the early 1750s, had described Edinburgh as 'the Athens of Britain',

Where instead of the awkward and monkish pedantry of the old-fashioned Universities, young gentlemen will be initiated in the principles of usefull knowledge and at the same time exercised in all these liberal accomplishments which qualify a man to appear in the distinguished spheres of Life.³

This was to emphasize the moral, political and even patriotic importance of pursuing the polite arts and sciences, and it seems clear that foreign readers of Scottish philosophy and literature valued it for precisely those reasons. During the second half of the century Scottish learning began to penetrate the salons and classrooms of England, France, Germany, Italy and America. The pattern is everywhere the same. In the salons, Scottish learning meant the histories of David Hume and William Robertson, the *Poems of Ossian*, the

philosophical novels of Tobias Smollett and Henry Mackenzie, the moral literary and political essays of Hume, and Mackenzie's *Mirror* and *Lounger*. By the early nineteenth century that list would also have included Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott and the literary and political journalism of Francis Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review*. In the university classrooms of Germany, France and America, Scottish learning meant the philosophical treatises of Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, Thomas Reid, James Beattie and Dugald Stewart, the aesthetic writings of Lord Kames and Hugh Blair and the medical textbooks which were used at Edinburgh University.⁴

This was a distinctive and sophisticated intellectual diet. The Scots had set out to approach what Hume called 'The Science of Man' in a scientific and secular spirit with the clearly stated intention, sometimes laboriously rehearsed, of helping ordinary men and women to lead happy, useful and virtuous lives in an increasingly complex, commercial society. To be sure, traditional moralists might object that this Science of Man was too secular, too closely associated for comfort with religious scepticism and with the notoriously sceptical philosophy of David Hume. However, as we shall see, the fear of scepticism and the desire to found a Science of Man that would serve the interests of Christians as well as of unbelievers were among the hallmarks of Scottish learning in the age of the Enlightenment. For one of the greatest continental admirers of Scottish philosophy, Victor Cousin, the supreme achievement of Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart was that they had succeeded in reconciling the interests of science with those of religion and morality. For him,

Une politique libérale, l'amour de la vertu, un bon sens inexorable, la vraie méthode philosophique, tels sont les caractères généraux de l'école écossaise; c'est à ces titres que nous la présentons avec confiance à la jeunesse de notre pays.⁵

Of what did this Scottish Science of Man consist?⁶ Technically, it was founded on a desire to study scientifically what we should call the contents of the mind and what contemporaries called 'ideas' or 'beliefs'. These ideas made intelligible the external world, God and even the self, and to understand their origins was the key to understanding the principles of morality, justice, politics and philosophy. The Scots thought that it was unscientific to trace the origins of ideas back to abstract conceptions like reason, however convenient that might be theologically. The scientific study of the mind involved an empirical investigation of its operations and of the process of socialization. In his early days, Hume and his critics like Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart thought that the key to understanding the problem lay in studying the constitution of the mind – what they called 'metaphysics'. Others, like Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and Hume himself in his later days, preferred to study the process by which we internalize the moral, social and intellectual ideas and beliefs of our world and acquire ideas of propriety

and virtue; this was a process which contemporaries called ‘moral culture’ or ‘moral education’. But they all believed that the only data fit for a modern philosopher to reason about were those which could be observed.

Intellectually, the importance of this enquiry into the Science of Man lies in the fact that it was the first attempt to make a genuinely sociological study of man, society and history.⁷ For the Scots were able to show how men’s personalities were shaped by their social experience and how the political, economic and cultural institutions of society were shaped by men’s expectations of them. They thought that men were sociable beings who relied on others for the satisfaction of their moral, economic and political needs. They were actors continually playing different roles in different scenes of life, seeking always to maintain a sense of identity while doing so. Society was an organization designed to satisfy the needs of those who belonged to it, and its structure was determined as much by the distribution of property, the division of labour and the mores of its inhabitants as by the form of its constitution. History was the story of the process by which changing property relations and changing expectations as well as the struggles for power and the preservation of constitutional liberties shaped a nation’s progress from a state of rudeness to one of refinement. And through it all ran the moral concern that animated eighteenth century Scottish culture at large – that, properly conducted, such an enquiry would help to build a society of happier men and better citizens.

But why should Scotsmen have been so deeply committed to an intellectual and moral exercise of this sort? Put like this, the question is too vague to be answered. A more useful way of formulating it would be to ask why the Scots should have abandoned, or rather so drastically modified, the traditional language of civic morality which political moralists were accustomed to employ in discussing the affairs of civil society.⁸ The civic humanist tradition in Western political and moral thinking had taught men to value above everything else the sense of moral autonomy that could be won by learning how to live virtuously in civil society. That tradition had taught that men’s capacity for virtue was released when they participated as citizens in the political life of the polity to which they belonged and directed their energies to the defence of the liberties enshrined in its constitution. The Scots took it for granted that a sense of moral autonomy – or, as they sometimes put it, ‘independence’ – represented the supreme source of gratification to which men could aspire, and that this sentiment could only be found by participating in the public affairs of society. But they did not believe that political participation was the only means of releasing it. It was clear to them that savages, living in pre-political, tribal societies were capable of experiencing a sense of moral autonomy. More important, it was equally clear that in modern societies there were many men and women, often living far from the seat of government, who devoted themselves to local

affairs and knew something of these feelings of moral autonomy even though the classic means of participating in the political process were effectively closed to them. Perhaps classic ideas of civic morality attached too much importance to the role of politics in shaping the moral personality of a citizen class and the constitution of a civil society or even a tribe. Perhaps not enough attention had been paid to the civic importance of economic, social and intellectual activity. Perhaps it was time to reconsider traditional ideas of civic virtue in the light of the experience of men living in primitive and civilized societies and from what could be discovered about the principles of human nature. If that were done, it would be possible to develop a science of morals and politics and a true understanding of the nature of civic virtue in a modern age.

In other words, one way of looking at the Scots inquiry into the Science of Man is to think of it as a critique of the classic language of civic morality undertaken by a group of men living in a sophisticated but provincial community which had been stripped of its political institutions at the time of the Act of Union in 1707 and still hankered after an understanding of the principles of virtue which would make sense of their present provincial condition. In the essay which follows I want to sketch out the origins and evolution of this enquiry. I want to show that the Scots' concern with the principles of virtue can be related to the traumatic effect of the Act of Union on the Scottish political community. In a long, sophisticated debate about the political and economic crisis in which the country was engulfed in the early years of the century, the Scots discovered that the language of contemporary politics was not well suited to making sense of their present predicament. In the three decades which followed the Union philosophers, politicians and men of letters set out to fashion an alternative language of civic morality. By the 1760s the process was complete, and a new language of civic morality had been created which provided the Scots with a new understanding of civic virtue and that 'sociological' understanding of the Science of Man which is the unique contribution of the Scots to the philosophy of the Enlightenment.

Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun was the ideological father of the Scottish Enlightenment.⁹ He was an intelligent, irascible and anglophobe country gentleman and one of the most learned of all British political writers at the end of the seventeenth century. He had spent much of his early life in exile studying the political systems of the ancient and modern world, acquiring a profound distrust of the growing power of the princes. His understanding of British politics was principally distilled into a short, elliptical and brilliant pamphlet on the militia question which was first published in 1698.¹⁰ Here Fletcher set out to contrast the system of liberty which he thought had been enshrined in a Gothic constitution and the state of political corruption which

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existed in the commercial civilization of his own age. He held that virtue had been possible in Gothic times because the distribution of military power between the king and his barons had established a balance of power favourable to liberty. Trade, learning and luxury had destroyed that Gothic constitution, replacing it with a system of commerce which had encouraged landowners to commute their civil and military responsibilities for a tax on their estates. This had been used to finance the huge bureaucracies and standing armies characteristic of the modern age, throwing power into the hands of the king and setting the liberties of the citizen at risk. Only a parliament of virtuously minded landowners could curb the power of the king by curtailing his revenue and establishing a system of local militias to counterbalance the power of the standing army. And Fletcher had an imprecise, inspirational vision of Britain as a free commercial polity, divided into four provinces of which Scotland would be one. Each would maintain its own militia and each in time would acquire its own peculiar political, social and cultural institutions.

So many different seats of government will highly encourage virtue. For all the same offices that belong to a great kingdom, must be in each of them; with this difference, that the offices of such a kingdom being always burdened with more business than any one man can rightly execute, most things are abandoned to the rapacity of servants; and the extravagant profits of all great officers plunge them into all manner of luxury, and debauch them from doing good: whereas the offices of these lesser governments extending only over a moderate number of people, will be duly executed, and many men have occasions put into their hands of doing good to their fellow-citizens. So many different seats of government will highly tend to the improvement of all arts and sciences; and afford great variety of entertainment to all foreigners and others of a curious and inquisitive genius, as the ancient cities of Greece did.¹¹

This was a model of a genuinely British polity whose provinces would be the guarantors of its liberties in a commercial age. Part of its attraction, Fletcher admitted, was that it provided Scotland with an honourable and important role to play in creating a free Britain. For once reformed and purged of political corruption, she would be the prototype of the sort of province on which the future of British liberty would depend. As far as Fletcher was concerned, reformation meant restoring Scottish 'independence'. He believed that Scotland had once had her own system of Gothic liberty, the power of her kings being held in check by a virtuous baronage. The Union of the Crowns in 1603 and the departure of the Scottish court to London had brought that Gothic age to an end. During the seventeenth century Scotland had fallen into a state of 'dependence' on the English court and her economy had been ruined as a result. This state of dependence lay at the heart of all Scotland's troubles; it was, Fletcher thought, 'the cause of all, comprehends them all, and is the band that ties up the bundle'.¹² The

remedy lay with parliament, and Fletcher urged it not to recognize the Hanoverian succession until 'limitations' had been placed on the crown and the right of free trade with England and her colonies had been conceded by the English parliament. Only then would the bands be broken and national independence restored.

'Independence' rather than 'liberty' was the pivot on which Fletcher's analysis of Scottish politics rested; indeed he was clear that without independent provinces to hold in check the power of the crown there could be no free Britain. But what did independence mean? There is no doubt that Fletcher would have preferred to think of it in purely constitutional terms, and he took it for granted that an independent province without free political institutions was a contradiction in terms. But his understanding of contemporary Scottish politics made him realize that national power had to be seen in socio-economic as well as constitutional terms. Indeed, he thought that the preservation of national independence might have as much to do with strengthening the socio-economic foundations of the state as with imposing limitations upon the monarchy. He devoted two 'Discourses on the Affairs of Scotland' and a series of speeches to the Scots parliament to reviewing Scotland's present political discontents.¹³ He discussed the seven terrible years of famine which had decimated the population, the virtual collapse of Scotland's overseas trade, the bitter faction in church and state and the incessant, infuriating interference of the English court in Scottish affairs. It left him in no doubt about the importance of trade to stimulating economic growth and creating the conditions which made independence possible. Without it, Fletcher believed, the fabric of Scottish society would crumble. Men of all ranks, rich and poor alike, would emigrate and the country would fall into a worse state of dependence upon the English than anything they had experienced so far.

There was an ambiguity of the greatest importance in Fletcher's thinking. His analysis of British politics had shown that political corruption was closely connected with the growth of trade, commerce and a division of labour which had given birth to a professional army and a professional bureaucratic class. But his analysis of Scottish politics had shown that in a modern state a free society without an expanding system of trade and commerce was a contradiction in terms. Fletcher hoped that this contradiction would be resolved by a free parliament which would somehow ensure that trade and commerce did not lead to new forms of corruption. But the English were alarmed by the political turmoil in Scotland and by the prospect of a disputed Hanoverian succession and would offer the Scots free trade only in exchange for dismantling the Scots parliament and direct government from London.¹⁴ And so from 1703 to 1707 the Scots were obliged to consider whether free trade or a free parliament was more important to preserving the independence of their country. The fact that they finally agreed to the

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English parliament's terms is evidence of the power of political management. But it is also evidence to the strength of an ideological conviction that it was possible to conceive of Scotland as an independent nation even without free political institutions.

The irascible, anglophobic Fletcher took no part in this final debate about the Anglo-Scottish union; its paradoxes were clearly too much for him. But the influence of his analysis of Scottish politics is everywhere apparent. It was taken for granted by all who took part in it that independence rather than liberty lay at the heart of the debate.¹⁵ But it is clear that few Scots believed that the story of Scotland's struggle to preserve her independence had ever had much to do with free political institutions. Indeed it was hard to believe that Scotland had ever had a free constitution. Nearly all writers thought, like the Earl of Cromartie, that Gothic Scotland had been a licentious not a free country whose history had been a sorry tale of 'the former horrid Wars, Raperies, Invasions, Incursions, Murders, Exiles, Imprisonment even of our Sovereigns of which our ancient Histories, while we were in a Separate State gave us so many sad examples'.¹⁶ Indeed the only possible explanation of how Scottish independence had been preserved lay in the warlike manners of a licentious baronage which had fought hard to keep the English at bay. This was an explanation with which no one disagreed, and one of the questions which lay at the heart of the Union debate was how that warlike spirit could be recaptured in the modern age. That meant finding institutions which would release the patriotic zeal of the heirs of that old baronial class. No one, not even Fletcher, had much faith in parliament as it stood, and the pamphlets contain some startling projects for its reformation.¹⁷ What is even more startling is that those who supported the idea of a Union with England believed that Scotland's independence would actually be *more* secure without its parliament, provided it was included within the framework of a free British constitution. William Seton of Pitmedden put it like this.

In general, I may assert, that by this Union we will have access to all the advantages in commerce the English enjoy; we will be capable, by a good government, to improve our national product, for the benefit of the whole island; and we will have our liberty, property and religion, secured under the protection of one Sovereign and one Parliament of Great Britain.¹⁸

Seton clearly believed that the patriotism and civic virtue of a citizen class could be released through non-political institutions, and he was not alone in thinking so. Many Scots recognized that the preservation of Scotland's future independence would have more to do with securing her social, economic and cultural fabric than with securing her constitution. In fact those who took part in the debate were very reluctant to use political terminology to describe their country, preferring more ambiguous terms like 'Nation', 'People',

'Country' to describe a kingdom with an ancient history, an underdeveloped economy and an underdeveloped constitution. One or two writers even thought of Scotland as a market system which supported a peculiar social system and required peculiar institutions to maintain it.¹⁹ In fact, in responding to the pressure of political events, the Scots found that they were groping for an alternative to a political language which did not make sense of their own political predicament. They could see that in a commercial world states had developed a complex provincial structure which the existing language of politics did not seem to recognize. What they sought was a language responsive to the economic, social and historical experience of provincial communities and realized that the virtue of a provincial citizen class was more likely to be released by economic and cultural institutions than by a national parliament remote from the provincial citizen's world. And they warned that a polity that did not respect the independence of its provinces could not possibly be said to be free.

The passing of the Act of Union and the abolition of the Scots parliament was to sharpen the problem of discovering alternative modes of participation to that which parliament had once provided. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Tatler* and *Spectator* essays were to provide the Scots with the clue they needed. Their essays, published in London between 1709 and 1712, were instantly republished in Edinburgh – interestingly, in view of their English associations, by a Jacobite publisher, James Watson.²⁰ And they were to be repeatedly extracted and imitated throughout the century. It is testimony to the depth to which they penetrated Scottish culture that they provided a genre for men like David Hume and Lord Kames to exploit, that the last influential imitation of this style of moral journalism, Henry Mackenzie's *Mirror* and *Lounger* and the style which was to replace it, Francis Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review*, were the work of Edinburgh writers. And it is surely no coincidence that contemporary writers who were anxious to trace the origins of Scotland's intellectual revival were accustomed to doing so by referring to the publication of those two seminal works.²¹

The importance of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* as instruments for the reformation of manners has long been recognized.²² They provided an entertaining and popular account of the process of social interaction which was designed to help ordinary men and women lead happy and virtuous lives in a commercial world.²³ Addison and Steele saw that it was all too easy for men and women to become mindless slaves of fashion, prejudice and habit and to lose their self-respect and independence of mind in the bustle of ordinary life. They knew it was pointless to tell their readers to fly from society and seek a life of stoic virtue in solitary retreat. That was advice only fit for heroes and eccentrics. It was better to seek a life of virtue within commercial society itself but away from the world of business, politics and

fashion. The key lay in the *salons*, coffee-houses and taverns of modern cities. Here men and women met each other as friends and equals and were able to enjoy the sense of ease that good conversation could bring. Addison and Steele saw coffee-house conversation as a form of social interaction that taught men tolerance, moderation and the pleasures of consensus. It also taught them to look on their own behaviour with a critical detachment which was difficult to acquire in public life. It taught them to be adaptable, thoughtful and pragmatic in their attitude to social relations and to ideas and to lead decent, pleasant lives according to the principles of propriety. To put it another way, Addison and Steele set out to show men and women who had been raised in a classical tradition that the coffee-house could play as important a part in providing them with a sense of moral identity as the *polis* had done in the case of the citizens of ancient Greece and Rome.

But the Scots believed that coffee-house conversation could teach them the principles of civic virtue as well as of propriety. Throughout the eighteenth century Scottish intellectual life, and that of Edinburgh in particular, was to be meshed into a complex and constantly changing network of clubs and societies devoted to the improvement of manners, economic efficiency, learning and letters.²⁴ For it was believed that those who took part in such activities would help to secure their country's independence and acquire a sense of civic virtue. Some of these clubs were little more than glorified drinking clubs – it was not for nothing that the Edinburgh literati earned the nickname 'the eaterati'.²⁵ Others were highly formal, highly institutionalized organizations. Some drew their members from the ranks of the humble, others from the city's social and professional elite. Although we know far less of their activities than we would like, we know enough to be able to identify the Addisonian vocabulary which had penetrated their proceedings. Words like 'conversation', 'friendship', 'moderation', 'easiness', 'taste', 'politeness' and 'improvement' crop up continually in their records. So does a distinctive patriotic vocabulary. Thus the members of Allan Ramsay's Easy Club (1712–15) linked discussion of a *Tatler* or a *Spectator* essay with the improvement of Scots literature in the hope that this would 'maintain in us love to our Native Country which we See day by day decaying and Animate to us projects for her interest'.²⁶ The Rankenian Club (1716–74) devoted itself to the discussion of morals, metaphysics and aesthetics in the hope that 'liberal conversation and rational enquiry' would help to improve the manners of the nation by 'disseminating freedom of thought, boldness of disquisition, liberality of spirit, accuracy of reasoning, correctness of taste and attention to composition'.²⁷ In other words, the Scots seemed to have believed that the adaptable, modest principles of Addisonian propriety, undertaken in a patriotic spirit could be developed into a system of civic morality which was appropriate to the needs of the provincial citizen preoccupied with preserving the independence of his community. Moreover it was an activity that

could be undertaken in the knowledge that it was by these means that the liberties of modern Britain could be preserved.

It was to be the principal intellectual achievement of the Scottish Enlightenment that its philosophers were able to show how this provincial language of civic morality could be used as an instrument for discussing the moral, political and economic organization of commercial civilization at large. But in charting its subsequent history it is worth noticing two developments, one negative, the other positive, which were to be of integral importance to its development. The first was the striking absence of any challenge from the church to the development of an essentially secular language of civic morality. The reasons for this are by no means clear, but the story clearly has much to do with the history of the kirk in the 1690s.²⁸ For much of that decade its political life was dominated by an elderly, zealous, antinomian-minded clergy, many of whose members had spent the years between the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution in exile or in hiding. Under their leadership, the kirk was to become a divisive force in national politics, obsessed with strict Presbyterian orthodoxy, vigorously intrusive into the affairs of schools and universities, prepared even to engineer the execution of a young man, Thomas Aitkenhead, for blasphemy in 1696. This was the culmination of a vigorous campaign against the supposed laxity of the government in enforcing laws against heterodoxy. By 1707 this elderly elite seems to have had its day. Riven by internal dissent, under pressure from younger, more moderate ministers, the kirk was to be bitterly divided over matters of doctrine and church government for a generation. Its weaknesses thus exposed were quickly exploited by government. Legislation was passed in 1712 to reintroduce lay patronage and curb the worst excesses of antinomianism. By the 1720s the affairs of the General Assembly of the Kirk had been brought firmly under the control of government managers. At the same time clerical education was to be deeply influenced by reforms within the universities whose sails, as we shall see, had been trimmed to meet the ideological needs of a secularly minded gentry elite.

The precise importance of the reformation of the Scottish universities – Edinburgh and Glasgow in particular – for the development of a peculiarly Scottish language of civic morality is hard to assess at present. In the 1690s the two universities had been little more than seminaries, designed to prepare young men of relatively humble backgrounds for the kirk and to give the sons of the gentry a smattering of classics and philosophy. In the first three decades of the century, however, both universities had become increasingly responsive to the educational needs of a civic-minded gentry and professional class.²⁹ In the case of Edinburgh this had involved a lengthy process of reorganization designed to turn the college into an institution which could provide young men of rank and property with the sort of education that they had once been able to acquire at Leiden and Utrecht.³⁰ In the case of

Glasgow it involved providing a secularly orientated education for young men destined for the kirk.³¹ By the 1730s Edinburgh's reformation was complete. A prospectus for 1741 demonstrated the importance the professors attached to the teaching of natural theology, natural law, medicine, civil history and rhetoric and belles lettres, and it also demonstrates the importance they attached to Locke, Newton, Grotius, Pufendorf and Boerhaave.³² What it conceals, however, is the evident importance attached to the philosophy of Cicero and Shaftesbury, Addison's intellectual ancestors, and to the philosophy of Berkeley whose metaphysics were discussed by the Rankenian Club and seriously taught in John Stevenson's Logic class.³³

It is possible to see exactly the same influences at work in Glasgow, although here they were brought into focus by the teaching of two professors of the greatest importance, Gershom Carmichael and his pupil Francis Hutcheson. Carmichael, who taught philosophy as regent and professor from 1694 to 1729, introduced his students to the study of moral philosophy by lecturing on Grotius and Pufendorf.³⁴ Hutcheson, who was professor of moral philosophy from 1729 until his death in 1746, used the philosophy of his teacher, the psychology of Locke and the ethics of Cicero and Shaftesbury to develop an approach to the study of the origins of ideas of morality and virtue resting on genuinely empirical foundations.³⁵ Hutcheson had attended classes at Glasgow in the 1710s and had spent the next years in Dublin. There he had encountered the literary and political world of Irish civic humanism and had contributed essays to the *Dublin Journal*, that attempt by Dublin's literati to study the philosophical implications of Addison's moral teaching. It was here and later at Glasgow that he set about the difficult task of developing a model which would enable him to distinguish between those moral ideas which were the product of sentiment and social experience and those which rested upon some principle which lay beyond experience. In so doing, he hoped that he would be able to develop a neo-Ciceronian science of morals that would help to underpin Christian belief and improve the civic capacity of his students, feeding them with a 'spirit of enquiry' and a love of 'conversation' which would assist in the 'culture of the heart' which was 'the main need of all moral instruction' and the key to understanding the principles of religion and virtue.³⁶

This was the intellectual and ideological world into which David Hume, the pivotal figure in the history of the Scottish Enlightenment, was born.³⁷ No one was more concerned with the moral wellbeing of his contemporaries; no one was more sensitive to the language of contemporary morals and politics. No one did more to develop a language of civic morality that would help his contemporaries to understand themselves and the principles on which modern society was organized and, by so doing, help them to lead happier, more virtuous lives. Like Hutcheson, a philosopher he greatly admired, Hume was anxious to create a science of morals and he set out to

do this in his first and greatest book, *The Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40). It is a long, complicated and difficult work, which Hume seems to have planned when he was about 17 and finished when he was 29. He believed that Hutcheson had not carried his discussion of the origins of moral ideas far enough. He was able to show, most disconcertingly, as far as Christians were concerned, that reason did not and could not possibly play a part in furnishing any of the ideas upon which our understanding of morality, justice, politics and religion were founded and upon which our sense of moral autonomy depends. Those ideas were beliefs, acquired in the course of ordinary life which were to be thought of as more or less plausible interpretations of ordinary experience. In other words, it was imagination, custom and habit and not reason which furnished us with those beliefs which made experience intelligible and a happy, decent and virtuous life possible.

Hume held that happiness was the end to which all human life was directed, and as society provided men with those ideas which made life intelligible and happiness possible, men could only find happiness in society. For Hume, as for Addison, the happy man was adaptable, gregarious, thoughtful and active, responsive to the opinions of his friends and to the works of the learned. But what interested him, more than the process by which men internalize the values of the world around them, was the meaning of virtue. Every man aspired to a life of virtue and believed that happiness and virtuous living were integrally connected. For Hume, virtue consisted in teaching ourselves to be critical of our beliefs, learning how to review them in the light of the experience which had brought them to life. Cultivating sceptical habits of this sort would help to release men from the bondage of myth and prejudice which corrupted the mind and generated enthusiasms which could stand in the way of human happiness. But Hume thought that all virtue was a species of civic virtue. The only reason men consented to government was because they believed that it was necessary for the preservation of their happiness. That, he thought, had everything to do with the preservation of political stability upon which an orderly life depended and it had little or nothing to do with the struggle to preserve abstract ideas of liberty as so many of his English contemporaries believed. Indeed Hume devoted much of his time in his remarkable *History of England* to demonstrating that a concern with such abstractions had been largely responsible for the political commotions of the seventeenth century. But the preservation of political stability had much to do with recognizing the nature of that social experience which had furnished ordinary men and women with the ideas and beliefs which made life intelligible to them. In his political essays Hume went to some trouble to present commercial society in pluralistic terms, as a society with a complex division of labour, composed of a multitude of ranks and orders of men living in different regions of the kingdom which possessed their own ideas of morality, justice and religion. No commercial society could be

stable, Hume thought, whose government did not recognize and respect the variety of its social and regional structure. No citizen could possibly think of himself as virtuous unless he acknowledged that his own happiness and that of society at large were interconnected, unless he realized the importance of preserving political stability and respecting the regional integrity of the different communities of the kingdom.

There was, Hume thought, no more important variable in the equation of modern politics than its provincial structure. In his essay 'Of a Perfect Commonwealth' he sketched out a startlingly Fletcherian model of a modern polity which stressed the importance of preserving the integrity of local communities and of maintaining a carefully balanced relationship between central and local government if political stability and happiness were to be preserved. Moreover, Hume seems to have thought that it was in these provincial communities that the virtuous citizen was most likely to be found. For he directed his moral and political writing at the serious-minded men of middling rank who were rich enough to be independent of the great, but not too rich to be able to tyrannize the poor. These, he believed, were the men upon whom the political, economic and cultural fortunes of modern Britain depended. It was in the coffee-houses and taverns of modern provincial cities that such men could enjoy the serious conversation that Hume and his friends enjoyed in contemporary Edinburgh. They could see that independence of mind, provincial independence and happiness were synonymous and that, taken together, they represented the end to which the modern citizen should direct his endeavours.

There was much in Hume's political and moral writing for intelligent and virtuously minded Scots to savour and it is this, I think, that accounts for his remarkable position in Edinburgh society. He was generally recognized to be an arbiter of public taste, an important patron of polite learning and remarkably enough, a mentor of the younger moderate clergy.³⁸ And if his notorious religious scepticism threatened to distance him from some of his contemporaries, his good nature and an agreement to differ on matters of religion which it was occasionally necessary to spell out in detail, were generally enough to make his social position unassailable.³⁹

It is in the history of the Select Society, however, that the true extent of Hume's influence on Scottish culture can best be seen. During the 1720s the Scots' preoccupation with alternative modes of political participation had taken a new turn. The Honourable the Society for Improvement in the Knowledge of Agriculture had been founded in 1723, and its large and aristocratic membership had been mostly recruited from the ranks of the nobility and gentry of central Scotland. As such it was one of the earliest agricultural improvement societies in the West and the model for many that followed it.⁴⁰ But soon its members' interests began to broaden. They began to devise plans for improving the economy as a whole and even prepared

legislation which was passed through parliament for doing so. What is interesting about these activities is that many of the projects they undertook had already been tried out by the old Scots parliament before the Union. In other words, the Honourable Society had begun to acquire what may be called para-parliamentary functions. It seemed as though an aristocratic governing class was beginning to see that participation in projects for economic improvement was an acceptable alternative to political participation for Scotsmen who were anxious to identify themselves as virtuous citizens and custodians of the independence of their country in the changed conditions of a post-Union world.

The Honourable Society was defunct by 1745, killed off, no doubt by the agricultural depression of 1740–2 and by the Jacobite rebellion. By the 1750s, however, a new generation of young men of rank and property had begun to look for an institution which would release their own capacities for virtue. What they found was the Select Society.⁴¹ The Select Society was a small literary society, founded by a small group of literati which included moderate ministers like William Robertson and Hugh Blair, rising advocates like the future Lord Chancellor Loughborough and the future Lord Monboddo, university professors like Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, and men of letters like David Hume and Allan Ramsay. Within a few months of its foundation, the society had been transformed as young men of rank and property, ambitious clergymen and lawyers clamoured for membership. As it grew in size it began to change in function. By 1755, in addition to holding regular debates, the society had begun to sponsor an elaborate and expensive series of projects for improving the economy and culture of Scotland. In spite of all these changes, however, the original group of literati continued to control every area of its activities and ensured that the society's primary function would be to debate the questions they had chosen for it.⁴² In other words, the literati found themselves directing an aristocratic and politically minded society whose para-parliamentary functions had grown out of its members' primary interest in literary debate. The pursuit of literature had been established as an acceptable alternative to political participation for those seeking a life of civic virtue. In the process the literati had become identified with the civic leadership of post-Union Scotland. Edinburgh had become a Modern Athens in a strict sense. It was a true republic of letters in which men sought public reputation by becoming excellent in the arts and sciences.

The society's debating programme is fascinating.⁴³ While few of the 159 questions that were chosen for debate were unusual in themselves, their wording indicates that they had been chosen by men who were responsive to a peculiarly Scottish language of civic morality and to the writing of Hume. The questions dealt with interpersonal relations, with the political, economic and cultural organization of civil society and with the role of virtuous citizens

in managing the public affairs of a country rapidly progressing from rudeness to refinement. Many of the questions were those on which Hume had written and on which Adam Smith was lecturing at Glasgow. Only about one-fifth dealt with purely theoretical questions (e.g. 'Is there such a thing as Taste?'). The rest dealt with the role of law, political institutions, economic management and culture in preserving the fabric of society. The language in which they were couched shows that the committee that drafted them had the same reluctance to employ a narrowly political vocabulary as the men who had debated the Union. Thus terms like 'Nation', 'Country', 'People' were used rather than 'Monarchy', 'Aristocracy', 'Republic', 'Commonwealth' or even 'Civil Society'. In the same way, instead of invoking the idea of liberty as the standard by which public achievements should be measured, the Question Committee preferred to speak of 'Utility', 'Public Advantage' and above all 'Happiness'. Their language, in other words, was the language of Scottish politics, fortified by that of Hume. And it was designed to show that the citizens of a modern provincial community could acquire virtue by learning to be adaptable in their reactions to the government of their country as well as in their own private conduct.

But it was a language that had its own inherent doubts and uncertainties. This becomes clear from the debates about the reform of the law of entail and the militia question – the only two debates it is possible to reconstruct. The first encouraged some to ask whether the rise of commerce in Scotland had not threatened to undermine the independence of the nation it was supposed to preserve.⁴⁴ For the rise of commerce threatened the position of those ancient landed families on whose shoulders the task of preserving the nation's independence had always rested. As Sir John Dalrymple put it, 'A Nation without families will either become unfeeling to its liberties or abuse them'.⁴⁵ The militia debate raised the same question in a different way.⁴⁶ By 1760 parliament had finally agreed to allow the English counties to raise a militia to cope with the threat of a French invasion. It was confidently expected that the Scottish counties would shortly be allowed to do so too. But they were not. For the English parliament and the English ministers quite unreasonably feared that to arm the Scottish counties would encourage a Jacobite revival. The situation greatly excited the Select Society which debated the matter more than any single question between 1756 and 1762. Leading members of the society led a campaign to force parliament to allow Scotland a militia, and two of its members, Adam Ferguson and Alexander Carlyle, wrote influential pamphlets on the matter.⁴⁷ It was generally held that the unequal treatment of Scotland by parliament threatened to compromise Scotland's independence. Unless it was repelled it would demonstrate that Scotland had sunk in a state of civic corruption. The problem was that while the Union had encouraged the rise of commerce and released Scotsmen's capacity for virtue, they had not yet found effective means of

translating the warlike spirit of their ancestors into modern forms. Unless the Scots proved that 'the ancient Scottish spirit' was not yet exhausted in a commercial age and learned that patriotism and the love of empire was a higher and more noble sentiment than the mere love of happiness and adaptability, the Scots would soon earn the contempt of the English and fall into a state of moral dependence upon them.⁴⁸ And if that happened, Carlyle exclaimed, 'It had been good for Scotland that there had been no Union.'⁴⁹

The Select Society's militia men were wedded to the idea that the rise of commerce and the growth of happiness had been good for Scotland, but they were troubled by the thought that there might be no higher virtue than mere adaptability. What they sought was a more lofty view of virtue that was rooted in a desire to preserve Scottish independence but would not obstruct the progress of commerce. What they found was Ossian.⁵⁰ Ossian's was the preposterous face of the Scottish Enlightenment. His discovery was a testimony to the gullibility of the Select Society's militia men and to the strength of their desire to develop a new conception of virtue. Ossian was the creation of a young, unscrupulous man, James MacPherson, who was sent to the highlanders by Alexander Carlyle, Adam Ferguson and their friends to discover the epic by a Celtic Homer that they were sure must exist. No such epic existed, but MacPherson was perfectly content to construct one out of the fragments of Celtic verse he had been able to find. His patrons provided him with money, a publisher and editorial assistance, and Hugh Blair wrote a brilliant, subtle and influential essay on Ossian which was to present the fictitious bard in the guise in which he was to appear to his readers on the Continent and in the Anglo-Saxon world for the next century.⁵¹ This introduction, first published in 1763, presented Ossian as a bard, chieftain and hero, the last survivor of a doomed civilization that would shortly fall to the Roman sword. For Blair, Ossian's heroic virtue consisted in his stoic resignation in the face of the inexorable forces of historical change and in his desire to release his virtue by celebrating the triumphs of its heroes in tearful, sentimental songs. Blair and Ossian showed how modern provincials, whose fortunes lay on the side of progress, could alleviate any guilt they might feel at making a virtue out of adaptability by celebrating the past with nostalgia and sentiment and in song.⁵²

The history of the Select Society is evidence that post-Union Scotland possessed a political elite which was anxious to present itself as the watchdogs of their country's independence. It is evidence too of the remarkably high political regard which that elite attached to the pursuit of polite philosophy and letters. But it is also evidence that the Scots' understanding of civic morality was embedded in a language which had been designed to make sense of the political experience of their own country and that of commercial civilization at large. The roots of this language lay in the debate about the Union, and its founding fathers were Fletcher, Addison and David Hume. In

this language, virtue was defined as the pursuit of happiness, happiness was defined in terms of maintaining political stability, generating economic growth and preserving the cultural integrity of an independent province of Britain. Improvement undertaken by para-parliamentary societies devoted to economic engineering and cultural improvement was seen as the instrument by which virtue might be released. For without such instruments a community would lose its sense of moral independence, leaving its citizens no alternative but to respond to its fallen fortunes with sentimental acts of Ossianic resignation.

The problem of the relationship between propriety and virtue was the central problem embedded in this language of civic morality, and it was one which greatly exercised the Scottish philosophers. Addison and Hume had shown how easy it was for men of reasonable substance to internalize ideas of morality, justice and political obligation in the course of ordinary life and to acquire ideas of moral autonomy and happiness in the process. Did this mean that there was nothing more to virtue than learning how to adapt oneself to change? Did it mean that virtue was no more than a species of propriety, a system of values which were somehow conditioned by experience of ordinary life? Such ideas allowed sentimental novelists like Tobias Smollett and Henry Mackenzie to present portraits of commercial society composed of men and women of different ranks, orders, professions and regions who were animated by different ideas of propriety, and they had raised the question whether a country with so diverse a culture could possibly find a true standard of virtue.⁵³ William Robertson, John Millar and jurists like Lord Kames and Sir John Dalrymple, reflecting on the process by which men living in different types of civilization internalized different ideas of justice, speculated on the role of property and different modes of production in shaping laws and legal institutions.⁵⁴ In the process they helped to lay the foundations of a new materialist approach to the study of history which stressed the primacy of economic and cultural variables in shaping men's ideas and generating social change.

This understanding of history and society was perfected by Adam Smith, and it is in his work that the rich potentialities of the Scottish language of civic morality is most clearly visible.⁵⁵ He was appointed to the chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow in 1752 and devoted the next eleven years to a series of lectures on morals and jurisprudence. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), the published monument to his moral philosophy lectures, Smith examined the process by which men's moral sentiments and their ideas of propriety and virtue were shaped in the ordinary process of social interaction.⁵⁶ Smith was an unashamed advocate of the commercial civilization of his own day. Here, he believed, men had been freed from the corrupting values of dependency which were characteristic of feudal civilization. As he observed, 'Nothing tends so much to corrupt and enervate and

debase the mind as dependency and nothing gives such noble and generous notions of probity as freedom and independency.’⁵⁷ In commercial society men could confront each other as consumers and producers and could acquire a sense of fair play and propriety by ‘higgling and bargaining’ in the market places of the towns and cities of a modern polity.⁵⁸ In Smith’s theory, the *polis* and the coffee-house had become a market place, the citizen had been redefined as *homo economicus*, winning his sense of moral autonomy by participating in the regionally based economic life of the commercial world. Commerce, independence and happiness had become the watchwords of the citizen in the civic world of the Scottish Enlightenment.

But how was commercial civilization to be preserved? In the *Wealth of Nations* (1776) Smith showed that the laws which governed the economic relationships upon which the happiness of society depended bred their own forms of corruption. ‘The wretched spirit of monopoly’ was everywhere at work among the merchants and manufacturers of the modern world, encouraging a movement towards mass-production which threatened a regionally based system of production and the integrity of that regional market system upon which the happiness of ordinary men depended.⁵⁹ Such a tendency would encourage the creation of a brutish proletariat, incapable even of forming ideas of propriety. It would create suspicion and anxiety within local communities. It would lead to a system of government wedded to ideas of interference in economic management, war, empire and the high taxation which would be necessary to finance a colossal public debt. It would lead to a slowing of the rate of economic growth and to an undermining of the happiness of ordinary people. In Smith’s theory virtuous statesmanship was needed to preserve the fabric of the commercial society he so greatly admired. But his discussion of morals had shown, in the most disconcerting way, that in the last resort virtue was only a form of propriety, moulded subtly and insensibly by social experience. Did that not mean that in time even virtuously minded men might learn to approve of monopoly capitalism and fail to see the dangers it posed to ordinary human happiness? To be sure, Smith believed that philosophers and men of middling rank were better placed than most to understand the true interests of society. But by the end of his life, depressed by illness and the loss of his family and friends, he could not be so sure. And rather like Blair’s Ossian, he began to wonder whether philosophers were not condemned to understand the decline of a noble form of civilization which they were powerless to prevent.⁶⁰

Some thought that Hume and Smith had misunderstood the constitution of the mind and the principles of morality and virtue. Adam Ferguson, a militia man and professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh from 1764 to 1785, was deeply troubled by the notion that virtue was simply a species of propriety and feared that if Smith was right, classic ideas of citizenship were dead.⁶¹ He saw in human nature a Heraclitean tension between a love of

propriety and a love of conflict. The first promised ease and comfort; the second, which was rooted in men's natural restlessness and love of perfection, promised excitement and a heightened sense of friendship. For Ferguson gaming and political intrigue were to modern men what competitive and dangerous games were to children and what the love of fighting for its own sake was to the savage. This restlessness, this 'greatness of mind', this 'propensity to excel', lay at the heart of men's capacity for virtue.⁶² It was common to all men in all civilizations and from it stemmed that love of community, patriotism, adventure and innovation upon which true human happiness and the survival of human society depended. Like Smith, Ferguson looked with gloomy foreboding on the increased specialization that commercial society had brought with it, threatening to dampen men's restless spirit, lessening the opportunity for achieving excellence and exposing society to new forms of corruption.

Ferguson was a popular and influential moralist in the universities of America and on the Continent. But his popular success was greatly overshadowed by that of his successor in the Edinburgh Moral Philosophy chair, Dugald Stewart. Stewart was one of the most influential moralists in the Western world at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.⁶³ He was not an original thinker. His self-appointed task was to develop and propagate the philosophy of his teacher, Thomas Reid, who taught moral philosophy at Marischal College, Aberdeen from 1751 to 1764 and then moved to Glasgow to fill Adam Smith's chair, much to the latter's annoyance. At Aberdeen Reid had gathered round him a group of philosophers who were alarmed by the sceptical tendency of Edinburgh philosophy and by that of Hume in particular.⁶⁴ In the eyes of one of them, James Beattie, this philosophy was

The bane of true learning, true taste and true sense; [it is] to it we owe all this modern scepticism and atheism; [it] has a bad effect upon the human faculties and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life.⁶⁵

Reid's own philosophy was founded on a critique of the metaphysical foundations of Hume's philosophy and upon which the Edinburgh writers and Smith's discussion of morality was based.⁶⁶ In his complex and highly technical *Inquiry into the Human Mind* (1764) he had set out to show, rather as Hutcheson had done, that there were various orders of belief – about the self, the existence of the external world and God – which were shared by all men and embodied in all languages. Such ideas could not possibly be explained satisfactorily in Humean terms as products of experience. No doubt social experience played an important part in shaping our manners, but these were to be clearly distinguished from those intuitively based, fundamental beliefs of common sense which were impervious to time and experience. It was on

such ideas that the principles of morality, science and religion were founded, and it was by learning how to distinguish between these ideas and those rooted in social experience and prejudice that men could learn the meaning of virtue and religion and discover the moral disciplines which were necessary to cultivate them.

Stewart added little to Reid's discussion of the mind. His concern was to show that it provided a vital clue to a proper study of philosophy, science and politics. This could provide modern citizens with an understanding of civic morality that would fit them to play a useful role in public life and provide an alternative to the dangerously sceptical understanding of virtue built into the philosophy of Hume and Smith. At the same time, he was to become the philosopher of a new theory of citizenship which substituted the ideal of the virtuous expert for that of the virtuous citizen, and saw the attainment of wisdom as an alternative to participation in public affairs as the key to preserving the happiness of mankind. In this, Stewart, like so many Scots before him, was philosophizing about his countrymen's present political concerns. For Stewart was an active, clubbable member of Edinburgh's literary society and he was in a position to see that the Select Society, for all its para-parliamentary glamour, had not succeeded in providing his contemporaries with a credible means of releasing their sense of virtue. By the late 1750s the society was in trouble. Subscriptions were unpaid, attendance at debates was thin and members who were growing older and steadily advancing in their careers had less time for para-parliamentary pastimes. By 1764 the society was dead and its place was being taken by a new set of debating societies like the Belles Lettres Society, the Pantheon Society and the Speculative Society which were composed of young men destined for careers in the professions and political life.⁶⁷ They debated the same sort of subjects as the Select Society but steered clear of para-parliamentary involvements. It was as though these young men were anxious to internalize the language of civic morality the Select Society had institutionalized so that they could use it to inform their understanding of how they should pursue their careers in the established professional life of the country. They had abandoned the classical republican ideal of participation in parliament or para-parliamentary institutions as a means of releasing their virtue. Rather, they had begun to think of the virtuous citizen as the expert whose skills could be put to public use in an effort to help it towards improvement and happiness. It was in this Ciceronian spirit that moderate clergymen like William Robertson, Alexander Carlyle and Adam Ferguson had set out to redirect the affairs of the kirk and the universities into the paths of improvement and it was an exercise they conducted with conspicuous skill and success.⁶⁸ In the same way Kames and Dalrymple had set out to found a science of jurisprudence which could be used by virtuously minded legislators and judges to further the course of improvement.⁶⁹ Most

important of all, public boards of improvement like the Board of Trustees for Trade, Manufactures and Fisheries, the Commission for the Forfeited Estates and the Highland Society, which were filled with Select Society members, evidently served as more effective agencies for generating improvement and releasing ideas of virtue than para-parliamentary institutions founded on antique classical republican principles.

Stewart's moral teaching marks the end of the classical republican phase in Scottish intellectual history and the final recognition that the Scottish philosophers had indeed reduced the principles of virtue to ideas of propriety which ordinary men and women could acquire in the course of ordinary life. Stewart took it for granted that the rise of commerce and the progress of society had led to the diffusion of wealth and 'a more equal diffusion of freedom and of happiness' than had ever existed before, and he had none of Smith's reservations about the moral consequences of the technological innovation which he associated with the rise of monopoly capitalism.⁷⁰ For Stewart, technological innovation would simply mean that men were released from the bondage of mechanical labour and would be free to cultivate the mind. His only interest was in showing how a class of public servants could be created with enough virtue and wisdom to preserve commercial society. What he feared was the moral corruption that ideas of virtue rooted in propriety had let loose. Such ideas were the product of 'the sceptical tendency of the modern age' encouraging doubt, anxiety and loss of confidence and were 'equally fatal to the comfort of the individual and to the improvement of society'.⁷¹ Stewart thought that the answer lay in the 'culture of the mind' and in creating an elite versed in the true principles of human understanding. To be sure, this sort of wisdom could only be learned from an understanding of metaphysics and was therefore not accessible to the vulgar or the ignorant. But it would furnish those with intelligence, ambition and a love of virtue with the intellectual and moral equipment to make them wise men who could help to mould the laws of their country and preserve the happiness of society. For, as Stewart observed,

Happiness is, in truth, the only object of legislation which is of *intrinsic* value; and what is called *Political Liberty*, is only one of the means of obtaining this end. With the advantage of good laws, a people, although not possessed of political power, may yet enjoy a great degree of happiness; and on the contrary, where laws are unjust and inexpedient, the political power of the people, so far from furnishing any compensation for their misery, is likely to oppose an insurmountable obstacle to improvement, by employing the despotism of numbers in support of principles of which the multitude are incompetent to judge.⁷²

Stewart was the philosopher of a new influential and singularly unsubtle idea of citizenship. He was the apostle of the expert, confident and instructed, willing to assist in the ordinary process of government, concerned above all

with increasing its managerial efficiency in the interests of preserving public order in an increasingly turbulent age. It was a conception of virtue that had risen from the ashes of a classical ideal now fatally tainted with ideas of propriety and it was one that showed absolutely no concern with the provincial structure of modern Britain. For in an age of monopoly capitalism and international war Britain was best regarded as a polity whose internal political and economic structure could be well regarded as single and simple. And for those who uneasily feared for the independence of local communities there was the nostalgic balm of Ossianic stoicism and, rather later, of Sir Walter Scott's historical novels, to ease the wound.

If Stewart's philosophy marks the retreat of Scotland's intellectuals from the neo-classic ideas of civic morality that had been their distinctive contribution to Scottish civic culture, it also marks their retreat from that remarkable inquiry into the moral, economic and intellectual principles which shape the human personality and society at large which had so deeply concerned men like Hutcheson, Hume, Smith and Ferguson. Above all, it marks their retreat from that desire to investigate the principles of propriety which had been the cornerstone of their investigation of the Science of Man and the principles of civic morality which a commercial age required. We live in a sociologically minded world and we rightly value the intellectual force of men who succeeded in laying the groundwork of a science which is integral to our understanding of ourselves. I have only given glimpses of the intellectual glories of their work. Instead, I have emphasized the evolution of that discussion of civic morality which derived, so it seems to me, from the peculiar history of their country in the century after the Union and served as a language-system which gave Scotland's intellectuals access to some of the central problems that were to preoccupy them as authors of a new Science of Man. It was because the Scots grappled with these problems that they earned the respect of their contemporaries at home and abroad. For while it was their understanding of the principles of human nature, social organization and historical change which has commended itself to posterity, it was their concern with the principles of propriety, virtue and citizenship that made Scotland a Modern Athens in the eyes of an enlightened world.