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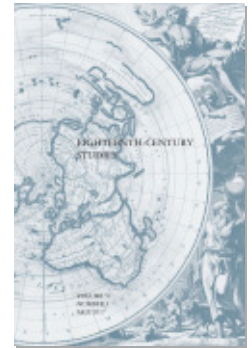
The Other Adam Smith by Mike Hill and Warren Montag (review)

Steve Newman

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(Review)

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educational tract “undermines her own revolutionary aims” by giving the practical German text a metaphysical, Romantic expression (67). With her discussion of Johnson, Johns tests the limits of the Latourian method. She acknowledges that GutsMuths’s text, which outlines a program of physical education for use in schools, does not actively promote a feminist agenda, but argues that it “theoretically left a space for the development of women and people of all classes” (86). Regardless of whether one accepts or rejects this particular argument, the chapter as a whole constitutes a highlight of the book. Brimming with interesting information and insightful analysis, Johns’s discussion shows how the choices of translators have “very real implications for transnational understanding and gender politics” (40).

Chapter 3 examines the impact of the French Revolution on intra-European travel writing, using gendered descriptions of Mount Vesuvius as a case in point. Johns argues that Vesuvius, a symbolic representation of the social and political turmoil caused by the Revolution, “became a natural locus for debating the concatenation of politics and sexual politics” (97). While men engaged with Vesuvius as an example of the sublime for the purpose of self-fashioning, women travelers contextualized the grandeur of the volcano within “life’s eternal landscape” (109), thereby constructing a “feminine sublime” that promoted social connection rather than masculine isolation (112). The argument of this chapter strays from issues of cultural transfer, claiming instead that British and German women travel writers shared the common goal of exposing Vesuvius as a threat.

Chapter 4 returns to the theme of British-German cultural transfer as a catalyst for proto-feminist thought with a discussion of Anne Jameson. Johns follows Jameson on her travels through German-speaking lands, Upper Canada, and Italian Naples, demonstrating how she leveraged her transnational experiences in order to advocate for social reform. As a case study, Jameson perfectly illustrates Johns’s thesis that transnationalism contributed to the proto-feminist cause. However, most of Jameson’s writings fall outside the time period of the book’s title, calling into question the appropriateness of the Personal Union as a historical frame. Indeed, it remains unclear how the political ties between Britain and the Kingdom of Hanover enhanced the examples of cultural transfer discussed in this book.

Bluestocking Feminism and British-German Cultural Transfer, 1750–1837 is above all a call to expand our notions of what constitutes a “bluestocking.” By examining three modes of cultural transfer between Britain and German-speaking Europe—the book trade, the translation industry, and travel writing—Johns convincingly argues for viewing male and female German intellectuals as an important part of the bluestocking network.

STEVE NEWMAN, *Temple University*

Mike Hill and Warren Montag, *The Other Adam Smith* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014). Pp. 416. \$29.95.

The Other Adam Smith is a wide-ranging, subtle, and daring book. Authors Mike Hill and Warren Montag have set themselves an ambitious goal: to engage with Smith’s multifarious oeuvre in a way that acknowledges both its pursuit of

unifying propositions and the elements stubbornly refusing unity, showing how these conflicts emerge out of Smith's own historical moment and how they continue to trouble the various Smiths conjured since his death. Pursuing this "problem of parts rendered whole" within various modern discourses, many of which Smith helps to found—"epistemology, ethics, nationalism, [and] political economy" (6)—the authors repeatedly show how Smith's work is haunted by "the problem of the popular" (8).

In chapter 1, Montag and Hill begin with the "pleasing wonder of ignorance" that Smith identifies in his under-studied "Of the Imitative Arts." The repeated movement from surprise to wonder to admiration is identified with a knowing "we" consisting of those engaged in mental rather than physical work. The labor of that "we" is divided further into various disciplines, with *belles lettres* emerging as the discipline associated with imaginative thinking. And the factitious whole of the intellectual world is itself shadowed by the figure of an indiscriminating, novel-buying public, which depends upon the same tide of print that makes possible Smith's own (di)vision of intellectual labor.

Chapter 2 takes up Smith's spectatorial and sociable ethics. Although Smith would seem to be committed to a communal form of sympathy in contrast to the more selfish approaches of Hobbes and Mandeville, a closer look reveals that the scope of this sympathy is severely circumscribed. Its boundaries are marked by the beggar, with his gross embodiment, repulsive poverty, and un-Stoic whinging for sympathy. The excluded beggar is himself a figure for the "tumultuous combinations" that Smith places beyond the pale, the poor multitude within the United Kingdom or the immiserated masses pressed into the service of a rising British empire. The paradoxical individualism of Smith's sympathy is brought into sharper focus by Spinoza, whose truly transindividual ethics allows the subject to feel, and then work to alleviate, the pain and anger of a multitude whose desires are thwarted by an inequitable society (135–38).

Historiography is the discursive focus of chapter 3 as Hill and Montag explain how "popular Jacobitism" challenges "stadial historical progress" and represents a wider challenge to the idea of "martial virtue" that Scottish historians hoped would be "a way of canalizing insurgency on behalf of the state monopoly of violence that was also supposed to stem the deleterious effects of capitalist luxury" (25). Along the way, the authors offer a nuanced account of "Jacobite memory work" described by Murray Pittock and others that runs parallel to the questions at the heart of Hume's skeptical epistemology: "the displacement of individual reason by a network of things, the related emphasis of means over ends, and the troubling abundance of chance" (162). Chance is embodied in the unruly multitude, and, again, the novel proves to be its favored genre. But its demotic energy is tamed by the invention of the historical novel, which banishes romance and bloody politics to a past outstripped by the implacable progress of stadial history (209–10).

Finally, in chapter 4, the authors brilliantly home in on and then unpack a key element in Smith's political economy—the debate over whether the state should intervene in controlling the price of grain—in order to pose an urgent question: Do Smith and those who seek to take up his mantle believe that people have a right to subsistence, a right to life? The answer turns out to be "no." Smith sees the question as unnecessary, since a properly (un)regulated market will make it impossible for the wages of the multitude ever to fall below what they need in order to buy grain. Smith's would-be heirs, including Malthus and then von Mises and Hayek, purport to "demonstrate . . . the fundamental irrationality of such a right" (312).

The result is what the authors, playing off of Achille Mbembe's "necro-politics," call "necro-economics": *laissez faire* requires *laissez mourir*: "The concept of letting die forms the un-thought of neoliberalism, surfacing intermittently but never openly avowed and integrated into its theoretical apparatus" (313). In the end, though, we see that the totalizing aims of necro-economics are denied in the very book that first codified it, *The Wealth of Nations*. For the latter's paean to the division of labor is disturbed by a sauntering country laborer who refuses Smith's vision of efficiency, and *The Other Adam Smith* ends with an impassioned presentation of what the laborer's recalcitrant body represents: "It is this struggle that imprints the right to subsistence in indelible letters of flesh and blood in the people's book of life" (342). This figure stands as a rebuke to the book's opening figure—Alan Greenspan, who in testifying before Congress after the Crash of 2008 is among the many of different political stripes who reduce Smith to a monolith, whether Greenspan's neoclassical market fundamentalist or Giovanni Arrighi's advocate for state management of the economy.

While there is much to learn from and admire in *The Other Adam Smith*, there are Adam Smiths it neglects, though the authors of the book conscientiously cite scholars whose views differ from theirs and are too aware of their own anti-unitary argument to argue that their Adam Smith is *the* Adam Smith. Take, for example, their representation of Smith's views of the top and bottom of the status hierarchy: on one side, his opposition to slavery is restricted by Hill and Montag to "the hazards of insurrection" (185); no mention is made of his rueful comment about slavery that "Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the refuse of the jails of Europe" (*Theory of Moral Sentiments* 206) or of his claim that slavery is the effect of a "love of domination and authority" (*Lectures on Jurisprudence* 186). This might qualify the claim that the contempt we supposedly feel for the beggar indicates the limits of Smith's social imagination, and also speaks to his concern for "martial virtue." Also absent is Smith's critique of the wealthy and our admiration of them, which grows more pronounced in his final revision of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: "This disposition to admire, and almost to worship the rich and the powerful, and to despise, or, at least, to neglect persons of poor and mean condition, though necessary both to establish and to maintain the distinction of ranks and the order of society, is, at the same time, the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments" (61). In this fine equivocation between the necessities of both social and moral order, we see the degree to which Smith is himself conscious of the tensions within the commercial society that he is theorizing and the theorizing itself. Also underplayed are the at times conflicting drives that produce these attitudes: our desire to be approved of by others, a strange absence from a book in which Hegel plays a pivotal role; our drive to "better our condition," which the authors tendentiously claim is not "some primal drive" (237) in Smith; and our paradoxical desire for utility that moves us to value means over ends. This does not mean that Smith should not be read against the grain, but that the grain here is sometimes insufficiently brought into focus.

There are also questions to raise about the relationship posed between Smith's most consistent antagonist—the multitude—and various forms of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century culture. The authors assert that "Reading itself only became important as a form of social agency during Smith's time" (10). Historians of the Early Modern era would have good reason to quarrel with the exclusivity and historical discontinuity entailed in this statement, even if we were to stretch "Smith's time" back to include the rise of periodicals and coffeehouses

in the later seventeenth and earlier eighteenth centuries and grant that the debate around reading changed with the rise of a different media system. Then there is the matter of the forms of popular culture that are highlighted to the exclusion of others. The focus on the novel as the genre associated with “the people” in *The Other Adam Smith* is justified in part by the claim that “the first debates about genre as a popular cultural affair occurred under the heading of novel” (195). But elite commentary on popular song as a form pre-dates contention over the novel as a popular genre, and it is foundational to the rise of belles lettres crucial to the modern division of labor, intellectual and manual. Admittedly, Smith’s discussion of popular song is sparse, but he does mention it repeatedly and consequentially in the essay with which Montag and Hill begin, “Of the Imitative Arts.” It would have been interesting to see the authors bring their searching intelligence to eighteenth-century popular song, absent in the text, and especially to Robert Burns, a poet who admired Smith’s work and whose poems and songs intervened crucially in debates over nationality, the material and conceptual labor of popular culture, and other issues.

In a volume that ranges so widely, it is not surprising to find a few mistaken or tendentious claims and some desiderata. We are at one point urged, “Let us not forget that [John] Wilkes was a Scot” (173). Actually, this would be a good thing to forget because it is not true, though the notion of a self-hating Scot might be productively applied in a qualified way to many actual eighteenth-century Scots. The portrait of Vicesimus Knox as an arch-conservative (99) might have been balanced by an acknowledgment of his opposition to Britain’s declaration of war against Revolutionary France, among other things. It is also surprising that no attention is paid to Smith’s style; chapter 3 does not engage much with Smith directly; and the methodological shifts between chapters can sometimes be jarring.

But such heterogeneity is also one of *The Other Adam Smith*’s attractions, and it would be churlish to end on the faults of a book with so many virtues. The authors have yoked a fine sense of Smith’s work as a whole, with its bold system seeking and its subtle elaborations and hesitations, to a strong and sophisticated grasp of the manifold discourses that inform and have been shaped by Smith. The result is a challenging and largely persuasive book that takes its place with Jack Russell Weinstein’s *Smith’s Pluralism* (Yale University Press, 2013), *The Oxford Handbook of Adam Smith* (Oxford University Press, 2013), edited by Chris Berry, and other valuable recent contributions to Smith studies. Anyone interested in Smith or in the intertwining of eighteenth-century philosophy and its historical moment should read this book. So should those interested in the uses and abuses of Smith that are bound to continue in the wake of the so-called populist elections in the United States and abroad.