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Tolonen, Mikko

2014

Tolonen , M 2014 , ' Book review : The idea of commercial society in the Scottish
EnlightenmentThe idea of commercial society in the Scottish Enlightenment, by Christopher
J. Berry. ' , Intellectual History Review , vol. 24 , no. 2 , pp. 272-274 . <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2014.883798>

<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/156266>

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2014.883798>

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This article was downloaded by: [University of Helsinki]

On: 12 February 2014, At: 06:44

Publisher: Routledge

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office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Intellectual History Review

Publication detailsview

aware of current developments, as the splendid notes of this book reveal, but he has decided to remain unmoved by the varying waves of Enlightenment debate (Jonathan Israel, for example, is not referred to). Berry's way of seeing the Scottish Enlightenment, although now constructed around a particular theme, is similar to the approach he took earlier regarding social theory. The book ranges roughly from Hume to Smith, and smaller sources are used to support the main storyline. Berry, who almost exclusively works with published materials, is deeply immersed in his sources. Disagreement among Scottish thinkers is acknowledged, emphasised and analysed to an extent, yet the book thrives on unity. Relevant additions compared to Social Theory are, for example, a broader take on Robert Wallace and the balanced role given to Kames. All this adds up to an illuminating analysis of a concept (or an idea) of commercial society that brings together important threads that Berry has dealt with since the 1980s, but the main emphasis is on interpreting Adam Smith's view of commercial society in a comprehensive Scottish context. Deliberate selectiveness is, of course, something that Berry acknowledges.

The book might have benefited from more direct articulation of the main arguments. While relevant scholars are discussed, Berry does not present his work as an outright challenge to current lines of scholarship, which it nevertheless is. Occasionally the reader is left with the task of determining these points of contention. For example, Berry's reasons for disputing the relevance of the French neo-Augustinian context for the Scottish Enlightenment are not made clear.

The most relevant matter for debate is probably the way Berry juxtaposes the Scottish Enlightenment's idea of commercial society and the republican tradition in intellectual history. Berry's analysis gets to the core of a discussion that may have lost some momentum recently, which lingers on, namely the relevance of the republican interpretation of early modern intellectual history in Europe. Berry's suggestion is that republican thinking did not function as a decisive context for eighteenth-century Scots. As he demonstrates, even when some stock republican arguments about luxury and related issues were used by Smith and others, they were inevitably detached from a republican context.

For Berry, eighteenth-century Scots shared a vision of the historical development of commercial society (he refers to Smith, Hume, Robertson and Millar in particular, and also Ferguson), whereas characters like Blair are used selectively and Monboddo is dismissed. Berry does well to emphasise that four-stage theory, contrary to popular belief, was rarely used by eighteenth-century Scots and should rather be seen as a fiction of the natural history of society. At the same time, the exact relationship between the historical development of civil society and the stadial theory of progress of society does not become altogether clear. That relationship, however, is important for the argument about the view of commercial society. If there is no real alternative for commercial society, or, if most Scots are not framing the question in these terms, then there is considerably less normativity involved in discussing about it.

At times, Berry's desire to emphasise unity simplifies some of the complex questions regarding commercial society and politics, in particular. The deep and interesting comparison between Hume and Wallace for example is not really developed beyond the population debate. This may reflect the fact that many of Wallace's essays remain unpublished and are thus outside the book's scope. But even based on Berry's sources one could give quite a different account of the role of the political in relation to commerce, as viewed by some of the Scots. If, however, the emphasis is on the interpretation of Adam Smith's idea of everyman as a merchant in its wider Scottish context, then one should accept that some differences in tone regarding the nature of commercial society are lost (the relevance of hierarchy and the nature of monarchies spring to mind).

In one sense, Berry's account of commercial society in the Scottish Enlightenment reads as an apology for the Scots (in contrast, to some extent, to John Robert for the

Enlightenment). It is of particular significance for Berry that the Scots were the ones who discovered the idea of commercial society and in this book, Berry's interpretation deserves to be widely read, although the cover price of this book (£65) makes it hard for students especially to buy a copy of their own. Hopefully a paperback edition will be available soon.

Mikko Tolonen

University of Helsinki

mikko.tolonen@helsinki.fi

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2014.883798>