is, it is a 'political achievement resulting from active institutional decisions and regulatory vigilance, in order that the distribution of resources may redound in benefit of the entire society and not merely of a few' (p. 371). Again, the condition of freedom is the political-institutional design that makes possible a meeting amongst *equals* – the encounter of a 'society of peers' or equally free (materially independent) individuals who can, through commerce, display their personalities in accordance with their own life plans. This is 'freedom of undertaking' understood as the freedom of each person to carry out their own project without suffering the arbitrary interference of others. The market is only free, it only permits the encounter and fosters the development of individuals, when 'firebreaks' are in place to avoid abuses and when a strict vigilance over its proper functioning is maintained. These 'firebreaks' are the political-institutional mechanisms that are able to guarantee a '*laissez-faire*' (let *do*) situation in which all participants can '*do*' – that is, in which all have real opportunities – and in which all of those asymmetries of power that threaten the independence of a group of participants have been eradicated.

From the perspective of the twenty-first century it is clear that Smith's dream failed. The 'great transformation' – the industrial capitalism that permitted the accumulation of wealth and the development of dependent labour – did not meet any 'firebreak' that would prevent the destruction of republican freedom. But Casassas calls for another look at the project of the Scottish thinker, in order to understand the hows and whys of the state intervention that he so fervently supported. And in this way, by re-examining the question of the material foundations of freedom, it may be possible to discover and construct appropriate 'firebreaks' for our time that will be able to extirpate – politically – the asymmetries of power and the links of social and economic dependence which, by impeding the civil liberty of individuals, end up blocking their potential for full development.

## AUTHOR'S RESPONSE

### David Casassas's response to review by Maria A. Carrasco

#### *Liberalism before liberalism? One comment vis-à-vis Maria A. Carrasco's review*

I can only be thankful to Maria Carrasco for a loyal, comprehensive reconstruction of my presentation of what I call Adam Smith's 'commercial republicanism'. In this reply I shall only discuss what Carrasco sees as the 'risk' of the book: that of 'developing an interpretation of Smith's texts that is somewhat unilateral, failing to recognize and discuss the abundant arguments of other scholars that situate Smith closer to liberalism'. This will allow me to clarify the historical-methodological backdrop of my work.

*The City in Flames* is a book that tries to get rid of the misleading *liberal* appropriation of texts, authors, and political movements that emerged *before the rise of liberalism* and kept and reworked key features of the republican tradition. In effect, nineteenth- and twentieth-century liberal hermeneutics tries (and manages) to draw a picture of political and intellectual moments – those of Locke, Kant and Smith, for instance – that have little to do with the kind of theorization of freedom and citizenship that liberalism brings about. Without dwelling here on the intellectual and political historical reasons of its deployment, this great hermeneutic liberal turn blurred and keeps blurring the meaning of civilizing projects aimed at building non-atomizing societies where political institutions were called to act as key instances in the creation of a materially based undominated interdependence.



In sum, the aim of the book was not to (somewhat critically) 'discuss the abundant arguments' that support the liberal approach to Smith, but rather to situate the 'texts in context' and to do the exercise of reading Smith with the lenses that prevailed in his world. Then see what happened. Of course, the fact that such an exercise was anything but 'unilateral' helped a lot. In effect, authors as distinct as Sergio Cremaschi, Antoni Domènech, Ian McLean, Ronald Meek, Murray Milgate, Philip Pettit, Quentin Skinner, Shannon C. Stimson and Donald Winch, among many others, have been insisting, from very different viewpoints, on the need to grasp all of the non-liberal elements within pre-nineteenth-century radical political thought. But how to historicize liberalism as a strong rupture from what freedom and civilization had meant before?

As is sometimes forgotten, the term 'liberal(ism)' appears as it has been understood in contemporary Europe – that is, as something to be linked to *laissez-faire*, to untrammelled economic freedom (of the few) – only in 1812, on the occasion of the writing of the Spanish Cadiz Constitution. Of course, the geographical extension of Napoleonic Civil Codes helped consolidate this meaning. Before this moment, being 'liberal' meant, in many languages, merely being 'generous' or 'magnanimous.' The crux here is that this terminological mutation came along with a substantive mutation regarding the meaning of freedom. In effect, it had always been assumed, in keeping with the republican ideal, that what turns a person into a free actor is the enjoyment of a set of (im)material resources guaranteeing her social existence. In other words, being free had always meant not being arbitrarily interfered with and enjoying a social status guaranteeing the inexistence of the mere possibility of being arbitrarily interfered with. In this respect, property – or, more generally, resources – played a crucial role as the guarantor of freedom. But the liberal anomaly consisted in completely disregarding these material conditions of freedom and thus stating that we are all free insofar as we are equal before the law. The pairing of freedom and socioeconomic independence simply vanished.

It is important to note that this was a real novelty. Before the nineteenth century, the pairing of freedom and socioeconomic independence remained central. In fact, one can find it all along the republican tradition, from Aristotle to Cicero, 'Italian' republicanisms, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century revolutionary republicanism, and socialism, which can be seen as the nineteenth-century expression of the democratic republicanism that was finally defeated in

revolutionary France and Europe. Within this long tradition, one can find oligarchic and democratic forms of republicanism. The former state that freedom (and hence property) is to be enjoyed by a portion of the population, while the latter establish that all members of a given society should access freedom (and hence property). But in both cases the connection between freedom and its material conditions is always present.

Liberal hermeneutics sometimes establishes that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century thinkers – including Locke, Kant and Smith – belong to the liberal tradition because they theorize and defend private property, individual freedom or freedom of undertaking, among other allegedly 'liberal' concepts and values. But two objections should be raised against this view. First, these concepts and values have been central to the republican tradition since the times of Pericles and Aristotle. Second, and more importantly, there is a need to note that the treatment of these concepts and values in the work of authors like Locke, Kant and Smith at no time obscures their concern about the material conditions of freedom within integrated societies; I leave aside here the question regarding the portion of the population these authors consider as full-fledged members of the community. When Locke discusses private appropriation of external resources, he states that it is legitimate insofar as it leaves 'still enough and as good' to others – otherwise, these 'others' lose their freedom. When Kant theorizes individual freedom, he picks up the Roman distinction between being a '*sui iuris*' – that is, someone who enjoys a set of resources that makes her civilly independent – and being an '*alieni iuris*' – that is, someone whose material dependence turns him subservient and incapable of living 'a life of his own', to put it in Harrington's terms. And when Smith presents his ideal of a society comprising 'free producers' he clearly draws a distinction between performing (materially) independent work and performing dependent work – the former being the only possible road to effective freedom, which should therefore be guaranteed by the polity. Interestingly, Marx receives this baton when he prompts the articulation of 'republican associations of free producers'.

In sum, Adam Smith cannot be part of a liberal project defining civilization as the simple ('isonomic') meeting of everyone's right to be free from any kind of social restraint.[1]

## Note

1 For a more detailed discussion of these hermeneutic issues, see D. Casassas (2013) 'Adam Smith's Republican Moment: Lessons for Today's Emancipatory Thought', *Economic Thought* 2(2): 1–19.

# Christel Fricke and Dagfinn Føllesdal (eds.), *Intersubjectivity and objectivity in Adam Smith and Edmund Husserl*

*Philosophische Forschung*, Volume 8; Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2012, 315pp.

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*Reviewed by Thomas Nenon*

This collection of essays centers on the work of two figures who, as the editors acknowledge, are not normally considered together. Adam Smith, best known for his work in economic theory, and Edmund Husserl, whose contributions to moral theory have only recently become known, are not thought of primarily for their work in ethics; nor have they heretofore been studied together. The essays in this volume show not only that each has a significant contribution to make to moral theory, but also that it can indeed be helpful to study them together. The editors describe how the idea for this volume arose from a conference they convened that brought together scholars who are familiar with Husserl's philosophy generally and more specifically with his ethics and his work on intersubjectivity, with other scholars who are experts on Smith and Hume, with a particular emphasis on Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The essays suggest that, for most of them, the work of one or other of these moral theorists was new for each of the participants prior to the conference (Fricke is clearly an exception here), but that there was nonetheless enough commonality in some basic themes to allow a genuine dialogue to emerge, and they show that the discussion of each of the two figures benefited from the exchange.

The common ground for the discussion is the way that both Smith and Husserl in their moral theories critically take up themes from Hume, allowing a comparison of similarities and differences in their responses to those themes. In particular, each agrees with Hume that feelings, including especially sympathy and the closely related phenomenon of empathy, play a key role in motivating moral action, so that much of the discussion turns on how each of the two understands those phenomena and what specific roles they play in their ethics. The guiding hypothesis of this volume is that

> Husserl provides a conceptual means for making Smith's methodology more explicit than Smith did himself. A phenomenological reconstruction of