

EURAMERICA Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 2008), 211-242  
http://www.ea.sinica.edu.tw/euramerica/en\_index.php  
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## **Ethic and Aesthetic Friendship—Francis Hutcheson and Bernard Mandeville's Debate on Economic Motivation\***

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### **Abstract**

This article investigates a much understudied aspect of the Scottish Enlightenment in general and Francis Hutcheson in particular: the conceptualization of friendship or sociability with reference to economic motivation. It illustrates three major claims. First, it argues that Hutcheson introduces economic thinking into moral philosophy, in direct opposition to Bernard Mandeville's doctrine of egoism and antagonism against the Church's appreciation of charity. Accordingly, his economic thought conveys religious sentiments, a fact frequently overlooked by modern historians. Second, departing from a moral philosophy of dualism—in which human nature is simultaneously self-interested and benevolent—Hutcheson argues for the

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Received January 24, 2008; accepted March 21, 2008; last revised April 14, 2008

Proofreaders: Jeffrey Cuvilier, Ming-Chieh Chen, Chih-wei Wu, Pei-Hua Lee

\* The author thanks the anonymous referees for sensible criticisms and useful suggestions. His gratitude is extended to Samuel Gilbert for helping him in preparation for the publication of this article. The article is a result of a series of researches on friendship in the Scottish Enlightenment, funded by National Science Council in Taiwan (91-2411-H-001-101 & 93-2411-H-001-064). To the organization, the author is deeply grateful.

importance of virtue, i. e., the beauty of the increasing capacity of benevolence for others' benefits. The Hutchesonian optimistic view of an ethical community separates him from his students, Adam Smith among them. Concerned with economic development, Smith denies charity and benevolence positive places in the economic domain. Third, in keeping with his tenet of increasing virtue, Hutcheson upholds universal friendship. However, this universalism does not fit well into the political and social milieu of the French Revolution, which incubates a Whiggish conservative worldview that considers universalism unwanted.

**Key Words:** Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, Bernard Mandeville, friendship, benevolence