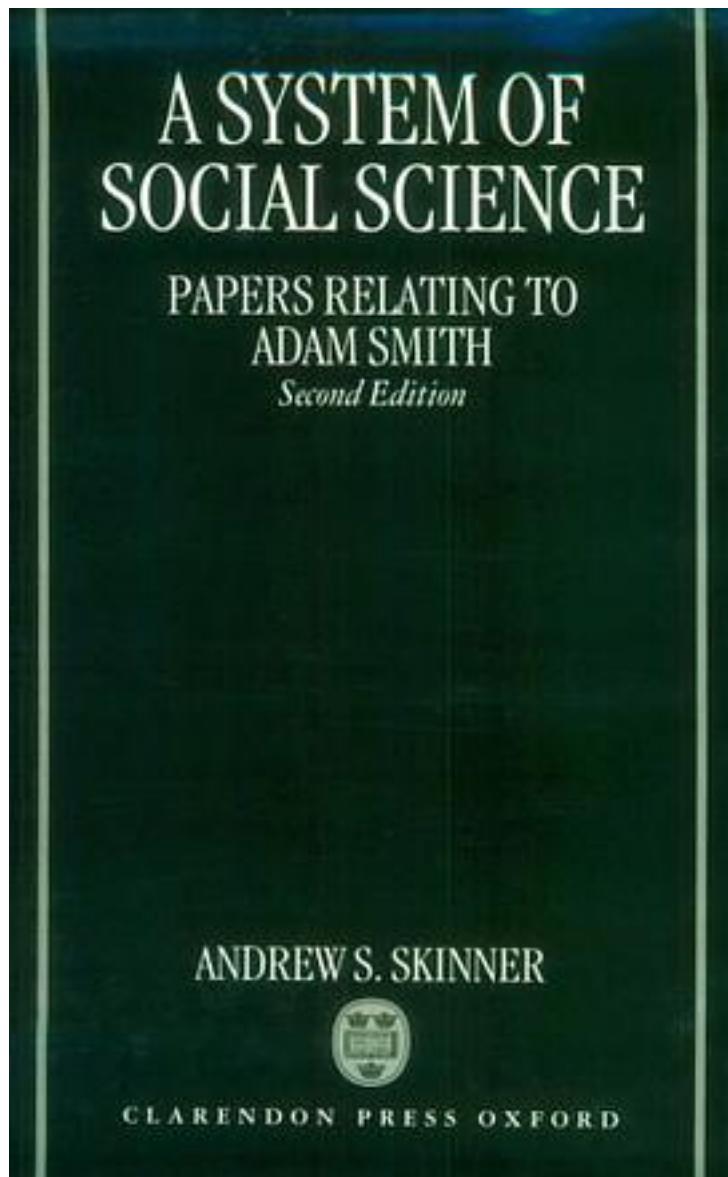


A System of Social Science



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The second edition of this guide to Adam Smith's system of thought has been fully updated to reflect recent developments in Smith scholarship and Professor Skinner's experience of teaching Smith to a student audience. The material from the first edition has been extensively rewritten, and four new chapters have been added, covering Smith's essays on the exercise of human understanding, and his relationship to Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Sir James Steuart. Professor Skinner places Smith's system of social, and moral, science firmly within the context of contemporary British and Continental intellectual history, dealing in particular detail with the founders of the Scottish Enlightenment and with the French Physiocrats. A close reading of a broad range of texts, supported by a deep knowledge of contemporary institutional history, suggests the patterns of their influence through the various recensions of Smith's extant works. The essays similarly explore Smith's own reception among his peers and successors. The essays in this volume have been developed from Professor Skinner's lecture course on 'The Age and Ideas of Adam Smith', taught to senior undergraduate and graduate students in political economy. Their relevance extends out to students of economic history, philosophy, and the history of ideas in the eighteenth century, as well as to all those involved in the study of Adam Smith. Each essay can be read as a self-contained unit, supported by a full bibliography and notes; the book as a whole expounds a single coherent argument which demonstrates how Smith's works are inter-related.

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