

# RECOGNITION AND RESPECT IN EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY

11–12 JULY 2019  
UNIVERSITY OF YORK  
/RESEARCH CENTRE  
FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
/ROOM YH/001B

## Speakers:

Anna Becker  
Hannah Dawson  
Robin Douglass  
Beatrice Guion  
Heikki Haara  
Kinch Hoekstra  
Jared Holley  
Axel Honneth  
Daniel Luban  
Christian Maurer  
Martina Reuter  
Risto Saarinen  
Kari Saastamoinen  
Tim Stuart-Buttle

## Convenors:

Tim Stuart-Buttle (University of York)  
Heikki Haara (University of Helsinki)

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 British Society for the  
History of Philosophy

# Recognition and Respect in Early Modern Philosophy

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# ABSTRACTS

**Axel Honneth** (Frankfurt): *The idea of recognition. A very short reconstruction of its European history*

In this lecture, Prof. Honneth will discuss his recent attempt to reconstruct the very different roles played by 'recognition' in the early modern period in three different philosophical contexts: Britain (focusing on Hume, Smith and Mill), France (Rousseau and Sartre), and Germany (Kant, Fichte, Hegel). Prof. Honneth delivered the Seeley Lectures at the University of Cambridge on this subject in May 2017, and he has since published *Anerkennung – Eine europäische Ideengeschichte* (Suhrkamp, 2018). A monograph in English on recognition and its European history is forthcoming.

**Anna Becker** (Basel): *'To love those to whom we have given birth': Oikeiosis, gender, and the Renaissance politics of recognising the other in oneself*

Why do we live together politically and what is it that holds the political community together and makes citizens act in concord with each other? Renaissance thinkers found an answer to these questions in the family relationship. In this paper we shall explore neo-Stoic ideas about the household as the birth place of ethics and politics, in which the care bestowed onto the partner in marriage and onto the children, and the love that one harboured for those born from one, were seen as central factors that made civic life possible. Parental love here was styled as the origins of the communal feeling that united humankind in universal kinship. Because women gave birth to their children into the family community, children were able to feel at home in the world and connected to all other human beings – recognising the other in themselves. This was, at its core, a gendered narrative of the political, in which notions of what was public and what was private are hard to disentangle, as the paper will explore.

**Martina Reuter** (Jyväskylä): *The role of the other in Poulain de la Barre's account of self-knowledge*

In his *De l'éducation des dames pour la conduit de l'esprit, dans les sciences et dans les moeurs: Entretiens* (1674), François Poulain de la Barre devotes one of five conversations entirely to the topic of self-knowledge. His perspective is explicitly Cartesian and he defends the possibility of self-knowledge against those contemporaries who (like François La Rochefoucauld) denied it. Poulain combines his discussion of self-knowledge with his Cartesian critique of prejudice and argues that "the tyranny of opinion" is the greatest obstacle to true self-knowledge. This is particularly true in the case of women, who are subjugated by culturally and politically established male prejudice.

Simultaneously with this criticism, “the other” seems to play a constructive role in the work *De l’éducation des dames*, where four people seek self-knowledge in conversation with each other. In this paper I take a closer look at the roles of other human beings in Poulain’s criticism as well as in the structure of his book. I want to explicate and analyze the potential tensions between these roles. It is interesting to take a closer look at Poulain’s thought in a (very loosely constructed) framework of recognition theory not least because this approach can shed new light on why Simone de Beauvoir chose to cite him as an epigraph for her *Le deuxième sexe* (1949).

**Kinch Hoekstra** (UC Berkeley): *Hobbes, Aristotle and natural sociability* [TBC]

**Kari Saastamoinen** (Helsinki) & **Heikki Haara** (Helsinki): *Pufendorf and the recognition of equal humanity*

In his grand exposition of natural law, *De jure naturae et gentium*, Samuel Pufendorf declared that despite considerable differences in individual human capabilities, natural law demands everyone to recognize and treat other people as their equals by nature or as much as human beings as themselves. Due to the important role the notion of dignity plays in Kantian moral philosophy and contemporary human rights discourse, this element in Pufendorf’s moral theory has received growing scholarly attention in recent years. The duty to respect equal humanity has been seen as corollary of Pufendorf’s remarks concerning the dignity of human nature, and it has been associated with the view that natural law requires us to acknowledge the simple esteem (*existimatio simplex*) of every law-abiding individual. In our paper, we argue that in Pufendorf’s theory the duty to respect everyone equally as a human being is more deeply imbedded in his doctrine of cultivating sociality as the fundamental principle of natural law than recent scholarship has suggested. We will also show that the concept of human dignity should not be confounded with the concept of esteem and question the direct link between Pufendorf’s doctrine of equal humanity and his remarks on societal esteem.

**Hannah Dawson** (KCL): *Shame, sin and sociability in eighteenth-century English philosophy*

This paper challenges the historiographical narrative that modernity saw a transition from shame to guilt. I argue not only that these two concepts overlapped, but that, if anything, a shift occurred in the opposite direction: from guilt to shame. I identify two concepts of shame: guilt-shame, focused on sinfulness and caused by mere introspection, and reputation-shame, focused on social norms and caused by the (albeit imagined) gaze of others. Looking primarily at English texts, straying often into the European republic of letters, I argue that in the seventeenth century, as Biblicist fervour gave way to natural religion and a naturalistic turn in moral philosophy, and as burgeoning public

spheres needed governing, reputation-shame experienced a new lease of life. This argument, in turn, questions the characterisation of the modern self as private, insulated and autonomous, gesturing instead at open, social minds that were nonetheless deeply, passionately, interiorised. In picking apart these interwoven strands in the history of the concept of shame, I hope to make the methodological point that one cannot be essentialist about concepts. There is no concept of shame that can be analysed abstracted from time and space, only particular uses of the concept in particular utterances.

**Beatrice Guion** (Strasbourg): 'A love of esteem and approbation': New insights into self-love in French seventeenth-century Augustinian writings

Seventeenth-century French moralists close to Port-Royal (Pascal, Nicole, La Rochefoucauld) inherit an Augustinian definition of self-love: the fallen man loves himself without limits and without measure, loves only himself, and refers all to himself. But they also give a new turn to this traditional conception, because they see in the desire of being loved and esteemed a fundamental feature of self-love. Pierre Nicole, for example, writes in his *Moral Essays* that "[n]othing is so natural to Man as the desire of being belov'd by others, because nothing is so natural to him as to love himself".

The French Augustinians not only make a psychological analysis of this desire of being loved and esteemed, but they also enhance its political and social consequences: self-love as desire for esteem leads the fallen man to give up violence and to prefer cunning in order to satisfy himself. It is therefore at the basis of civility. It is the psychology of this desire for esteem, and its consequences in political and social fields, that this paper aims to analyze.

**Robin Douglass** (KCL): The morality of pride: Mandeville between French Jansenism and the Scottish Enlightenment

For many French Jansenists, following Augustine, the human desire for recognition is ultimately based on pride (or *amour-propre*), the passion that characterises our post-lapsarian nature. Mandeville's moral psychology was indebted to the neo-Augustinian tradition and pride is at the heart of his explanation of human sociability. Yet, in his attempt to offer a speculative historical account of the origins of sociability, Mandeville also looks forward to Scottish Enlightenment philosophers like David Hume and Adam Smith, who were adamant that there is nothing necessarily vicious about pride, vanity, and, more generally, our desire for recognition. In this paper, I argue that Mandeville offers a neo-Augustinian challenge to the Scottish Enlightenment view by advancing a naturalistic explanation of why we should think of the role of pride in recognition-seeking as being deeply unsettling, even from a moral-sentimentalist perspective. While some scholars have argued that the morally neutral passion of 'self-liking' does much of the explanatory work in Mandeville's

later works, I maintain that his analysis of how modern society functions still relies predominantly on a pride-centred – and thus morally compromised – theory of sociability.

**Christian Maurer** (Lausanne): *Archibald Campbell's 'true self-love' and the divine economy of esteem*

The nowadays rarely studied philosopher and theologian Archibald Campbell (1691-1756) was an immediate contemporary of Francis Hutcheson - both studied in Glasgow with the controversial theologian John Simson. For Campbell, a special variety of self-love, namely the desire of esteem from others, constitutes our self-interested motive for morally virtuous actions. This view is in stark contrast to Hutcheson's claim that moral motivation is rooted in disinterested benevolence. Like Hutcheson, however, Campbell defends a strikingly optimistic view of postlapsarian mankind's moral status, and he argues that his moral psychology based on self-love allows us to better understand the design of the caring divine creator. In my contribution, I will discuss and contextualise this general philosophico-theological framework in view of the major theme of the conference. I will not only rely on printed sources, but also mention John Simson's letters to Campbell, which discuss Campbell's claims in connection with Hutcheson's.

**Jared Holley** (Chicago): *Rousseau and the taste for recognition: aesthetic dimensions of esteem in Rousseau's political thought*

Recent discussions of Rousseau and recognition have been remarkably fruitful. Critical theorists have rediscovered Rousseau as a forgotten ally and source of arguments with which to support their normative vision; Rousseau scholars have clarified their understanding of some of his central concepts, most famously amour-propre; and historians of political thought have revised their account of Rousseau in ways that seem to intersect with these developments. My general aim in this paper will be to bring these interrelated sets of literature into closer alignment. First, I will employ the revisionist historiography to reconsider the rediscovery of Rousseau as a theorist of recognition. My focus here will be on (i) first, Rousseau's understanding of the relationship between history and normativity; and (ii) second, Rousseau's approach to the economic limits of modern politics. Second, I will supplement the revisionist historiography by emphasizing Rousseau's account of how sensual pleasure and aesthetic judgment are related to freedom. Here I will discuss Rousseau's accounts of (i) first, individual taste as 'the microscope of judgment'; and (ii) second, what he called the 'general taste'. Together, these concepts clarify the sensual, imaginative, or aesthetic dimensions of self- and public-esteem in Rousseau. And this may suggest a historical parallel with the recent normative emphasis on the necessity of 'aesthetic freedom' to any account of the modern politics of recognition.

**Daniel Luban** (Oxford): *Adam Smith and the Augustinians*

Adam Smith framed his Theory of Moral Sentiments against the “licentious systems” of La Rochefoucauld and Mandeville, who were themselves offering a thinly-secularized version of the Augustinian moral theory of the Jansenists. Smith’s work was one step in the transition from an older Augustinian account of “vanity,” in which the dependence of human beings on the sentiments of others was taken as a sign of their essential fallenness, toward a modern account of “recognition,” in which this dependence appears as an inevitable and perhaps even laudable aspect of human subjectivity. But where exactly does Smith diverge from his predecessors? I argue that on a descriptive level, Smith’s view of human psychology is much closer to the Augustinians than he is prepared to admit. The real differences are normative rather than descriptive: Smith suggests that the cynical judgments offered by the “licentious” thinkers rest on a tacit Christian moral background, and no longer make sense within a secular moral theory.

**Risto Saarinen** (Helsinki): *Recognition and religion: the case of Schleiermacher*

The concept of recognition is normally considered to be a product of the secular modernity of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this paper, I will first introduce how my research project Reason and Religious Recognition and, in particular my recent book Recognition and Religion: A Historical and Systematic Study (OUP, 2016), have challenged this assumption and claimed that important intellectual roots of the concept and conceptions of recognition are found in much earlier religious sources. Moreover, as a case study, I will explore Friedrich Schleiermacher’s use of the German term *Anerkennen* (as verb and noun). In his early *On Religion* (1799), the term appears at least three times, most prominently in the famous discussion of the religious virtuoso. The modern counterpart of the virtuoso, a specialist with *Bildung*, can recognize achievements beyond his own expertise (*Anerkennen des Fremden*). The term appears sporadically through Schleiermacher’s entire career. In his late *Glaubenslehre* (1821/30), *Anerkennen* is employed more consistently and in systematic fashion. While the passages of *Glaubenslehre* manifest the status change of the object through the act of recognition, they also reveal Schleiermacher’s debt to his early mentor J. J. Spalding.

# PROGRAMME

## THURSDAY 11 JULY

**09.00 – 09.15 Registration, coffee & pastries**

**09.15 – 09.45** Tim Stuart-Buttle (York): *Introductory remarks*

**09.45 – 11.00 OPENING LECTURE**

Axel Honneth (Frankfurt): *The idea of recognition. A very short introduction of its European history*

**11.00 – 13.00 PANEL 1**

Anna Becker (Basel): *'To love those to whom we have given birth': Oikeiōsis, gender, and the Renaissance politics of recognising the other in oneself*

Martina Reuter (Jyväskylä): *The role of the other in Poulain de la Barre's account of self-knowledge*

**13.00 – 14.00 Lunch**

**14.00 – 16.00 PANEL 2**

Kinch Hoekstra (UC Berkeley): *Hobbes, Aristotle and natural sociability* [TBC]

Kari Saastamoinen (Helsinki) & Heikki Haara (Helsinki): *Pufendorf and the recognition of equal humanity*

**16.00 – 16.30 Refreshments**

**16.30 – 17.30** Hannah Dawson (KCL): *Shame in early modern thought: from sin to sociability*

**17.30 Wine reception**

**19.00 Conference dinner** (venue TBC)

## FRIDAY 12 JULY

**09.30 – 10.00 Coffee & pastries**

**10.00 – 13.00 PANEL 3**

Beatrice Guion (Strasbourg): *New insights into self-love in French seventeenth-century Augustinian writings*

Robin Douglass (KCL): *The morality of pride: Mandeville between French Jansenism and the Scottish Enlightenment*

Christian Maurer (Lausanne): *Archibald Campbell's 'true self-love' and the divine economy of esteem*

**13.00 – 14.00 Lunch**

**14.00 – 16.00 PANEL 4**

Jared Holley (Chicago): *Rousseau and the taste for recognition*

Daniel Luban (Oxford): *Adam Smith and the Augustinians*

**16.00 – 16.30 Refreshments**

**16.30 – 17.45 CLOSING LECTURE**

Risto Saarinen (Helsinki): *Recognition and religion: the case of Schleiermacher*

**19.00 Conference dinner** (venue TBC)