

**THE PRIMACY OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY: DUGALD
STEWART AND THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT**

By

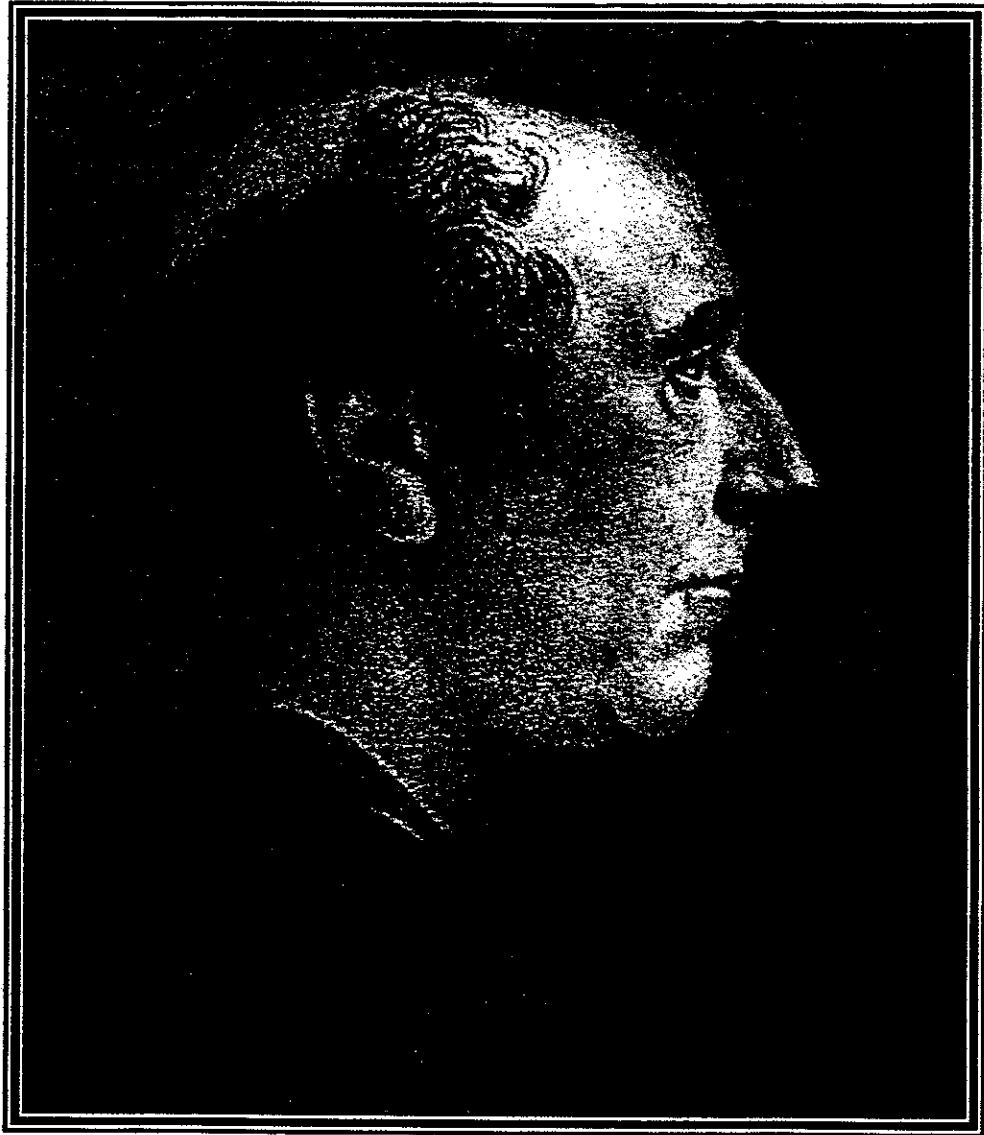
Jennifer Maree Tannoch-Bland, B.A., Hons.1A

**School of Humanities, Faculty of Arts
Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2000



Dugald Stewart (aged 57) depicted in classical style, wearing toga. By John Henning, 1811.

Abstract

Dugald Stewart was an influential teacher and philosopher during the final years of the Scottish Enlightenment. Until recently he has been seen as merely a significant expositor of Thomas Reid's common sense philosophy. This thesis does not attempt to assess the novelty of Stewart's writings in relation to his Scottish predecessors such as Reid: rather, it offers a detailed historical study of aspects of his work, placing them in the political and cultural context of the period following the French Revolution.

Two questions stimulated this thesis. First, what prompted Stewart, a moral philosopher who was not an experimental philosopher, to write a major work on methodology? Second, why was there a gap of twenty-two years between the first volume of his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1792) and the second (1814), which contained his methodological treatise? I aim to answer these questions by offering a contextual intellectual history of some important aspects of Stewart's work.

The thesis argues that Stewart faced a new problem: he had to deal with attacks on moral philosophy – the core subject of the Edinburgh University curriculum – some of which were produced by institutional and political factors affecting the Scottish universities, others by the rising authority of the experimental physical sciences. I consider a selection of Stewart's writings in the light of this problem.

In 1804 Stewart's own student, Francis Jeffrey, gave public voice to the charge that the science of mind (which constituted the central part of Scottish common sense philosophy) was outdated, unscientific and useless. Thereafter, Stewart was engaged in what he saw as an urgent task – the defence of the very status of philosophy and the role of the philosopher. The thesis considers some of his major works (and other writings) from this perspective: *Philosophical Essays* (1810) contained his first direct retort to Jeffrey; Stewart's treatment of methodology in *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Volume 2* (1814) and his section on intellectual character in *Volume 3* (1827) are viewed as two significant components of his attempt to reassert the primacy of moral philosophy and the role of the moral philosopher.

CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	i
Statement of originality	ii
Abbreviations	iii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Stewart and the Scottish Enlightenment	30
Chapter 3 Authority of moral philosophy	63
Chapter 4 Politicisation of philosophy	88
Chapter 5 The Stewart-Jeffrey debate	117
Chapter 6 Experimental responses	136
Chapter 7 The methodologist	152
Chapter 8 Re-fashioning the moral philosopher	190
Chapter 9 Conclusion	219
Appendix	223
Stewart's Works	225
Primary and Nineteenth-Century Bibliography	228
Secondary Bibliography	238

Acknowledgements

My first thanks must go to my supervisor Associate Professor Richard Yeo for his intellectual generosity and calm guidance. Dr Dieter Freundlieb was painstaking in a final reading and in early engagement with my work on Stewart's methodology, for which I thank him. I also benefited from my association with members of Griffith University's School of Humanities.

Thanks also are due to the Australian Government for the generous Australian Postgraduate Award With Stipend which sustained me throughout the course of my studies, to Griffith University for a HECS Scholarship for the duration, and to the Faculty of Arts for a research allowance which assisted me to undertake research in Edinburgh, Canberra and Sydney, and to present a conference paper in Auckland. I am grateful also to the Australasian Association for History, Philosophy and Social Studies of Science for a student bursary, which assisted with conference expenses. As well, Griffith's School of Humanities provided me with teaching work, invaluable for both the remuneration and the academic experience.

In Edinburgh my research was greatly assisted by knowledgeable staff at Special Collections, Edinburgh University Library, and at the National Library of Scotland. Closer to home, I wish to thank Griffith University Library Staff for their consistently cheerful and competent assistance, and Staff at University of Queensland Library who ensured that Stewart's volumes were kept current and on the shelves for me.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the special roles played by Dr Patricia Dobrez of the Australian Catholic University and Dr Livio Dobrez of the Australian National University who, in the early days of Bond University, played a major role in stimulating my interest in intellectual life.

Final thanks go to my family for their unreserved support of my decision to study for a doctorate, especially my generous son Colby who was materially affected by the decision, to the many friends who continue to enrich my life, and especially to Catherine Gordon for her fierce support and sense of humour.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed :

Jennifer Tannoch-Bland

Abbreviations

AUP	Aberdeen University Press
BAAS	British Association for the Advancement of Science
CUP	Cambridge University Press
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>ER</i>	<i>Edinburgh Review</i>
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
EUP	Edinburgh University Press
NLS	National Library of Scotland
OUP	Oxford University Press
PUP	Princeton University Press
UCP	University of Chicago Press
I-XI	Vols I – XI of Stewart’s <i>Collected Works</i> (1854-60)