Francesca di Poppa (Texas Tech University)
Shaftesbury's two reasons

In this paper, I will offer an interpretation of the nature and role of reason in Shaftesbury's philosophy. This interpretation places the notion of reason in its proper historical context, and solves the question of Shaftesbury's ambivalence towards reason, noticed first by Hume, and still present in today's discussion.

I will show that Shaftesbury distinguishes two senses of reason: narrow, demonstrative reason, and a more inclusive faculty that has a fundamental role in our moral life. While sometimes he characterizes the former as "cool reason," more often the reader needs to look at context to understand what sense of reason is at play in a certain discussion. In the first part, I will offer evidence that Shaftesbury's above mentioned 'ambivalence' regards only the narrower concept of reason. I will show that Shaftesbury's attitude is influenced by Epictetus. In both authors one can find texts that *prima facie* dismiss demonstrative reason. Neither actually intends to reject the use of demonstrative reason in philosophy: the problem is that demonstrative reason, while a useful tool, can distract philosophers from more important pursuits such as the investigation of what makes for a thriving human life. My reading is corroborated by comments offered by Leibniz in his "Remarks on the Three Volumes Entitled Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times… 1711." (In *Philosophical Papers and Letters.* Leroy M. Loemker, ed. Dordrech, Kluwer Academic Publishing, 1989. Vol. II.)

In the second part, I will investigate Shaftesbury's broader notion of reason. I will offer textual evidence to the effect that, for Shaftesbury, reason is an active faculty, a divine gift that allows us to engage in the same activity as the deity (within our limitations): to contemplate, to maintain, and, when necessary, to restore the universal harmony. Shaftesbury's discussion of the nature of beauty, and of the different orders of beauty, in *The Moralists* Part III will be particularly enlightening in this regards.

In the third part, I will examine, again, Epictetus' influence and its limits. There is abundant, and well discussed, evidence that Stoic theology, and, in particular, the notion that human reason is divine, influenced Shaftesbury. But this divine gift plays different roles in these philosophers. Epictetus' discussion focuses on the role of reason as allowing us to conform ourselves to the universal harmony established by the deity. While Epictetus does not condone apathy and not doing one's duties as a citizen, soldier, or parent, ultimately he sees reason as conforming to the world rather than acting on it. Shaftesbury, on the other hand, sees a more active role for human reason. Reason allows us to do what the deity does: to 'beautify', or to produce order and harmony (or restore them when broken), rather than simply conform to it. While Shaftesbury's notebooks show a conflict between what he saw as the ideal of Stoic wisdom and his own efforts as a politician and member of a community, ultimately his writings show that his philosophical choice is for a human who actively contributes to a thriving community and a better world.