Popper. The course ends with the defense of tradition put forth by Alasdair MacIntyre and Robert Nozick's defense of libertarianism.

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Lecture Thirty-Seven

Introduction

Alan Kors, Ph.D.

Scope: The generation of readers and authors from 1680 to 1715 was one of the most revolutionary in European history, because it was marked by a fundamental change of attitudes toward knowledge and nature. This change was not obvious at the time it was occurring—scholasticism remained entrenched in the universities; fideism and, indeed, mysticism, were vital forces in the culture—but the new philosophers were coming to dominate the learned world, winning the debates, interest, and affection of the reading public. If we examine the attitude of this generation toward the terms of the scholastic *disputatio* that had dominated prior education, we see clearly the profound transformation of European thought in the seventeenth century.

The generation of 1680 to 1715 increasingly rejected the presumptive authority of the past. This generation increasingly believed induction from data, not deduction from inherited premises, to be the path of truth, and it made the systematic inquiry into experience, now seen as "the book of nature," the heart of natural philosophy. Further, the rejection of the presumptive authority of the past in natural philosophy led quite naturally to a rejection of the presumptive authority of the past in general. Europe possessed a growing sense that it had acquired something unique from seventeenth-century thinkers—proper method—that would alter both knowledge and the human relationship to nature.

The new philosophers increasingly created and inhabited new centers of intellectual and cultural change, including academies, learned journals, coffeehouses, and non-university learned societies. They also popularized and began to extend the arguments of the celebrated figures of the seventeenth century. Their heroes were Bacon, Descartes, Galileo, Locke, and Newton, from whom they took what was most general, far reaching, and innovative. They were drawn to empiricism, quantification, and the naturalization of their worldview. They increasingly assailed what they took to be superstition and brought an end to the persecution of alleged witches. The new philosophers were determined to remove theology from areas not properly, in their view, in its sphere, and they wished to devise both an independent domain of natural inquiry and a theology consistent with the new knowledge. This raised extraordinary dilemmas concerning miracles, revelation, and ethics, dilemmas that would dominate much of eighteenth-century intellectual life. By the end of the seventeenth century, we stand at the birth of modern consciousness and the problems that it will raise for its

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critics: fear of materialism and naturalism and recoiling from emerging notions of "progress."

Outline

I. Although it would not have been obvious at the time, in retrospect, we know that the generation of 1685 to 1715 embodied a fundamental change of attitude toward the means of knowing truth in Christian culture.

  A. The intellectual world was still very mixed.
    1. Traditional Aristotelian scholastics still dominated the universities.
    2. Skepticism and fideism remained vital but were formally condemned in Catholic Europe and about to be swept away by the new confidence in natural philosophy.
    3. Mysticism was strong but increasingly seen as dangerous enthusiasm and superstition.

  B. The emergence of the "new philosophers" set the terms of debate and increasingly won the affections of the growing reading public. The public perceived the new philosophy as having both theoretical strength (Bacon and Locke) and concrete accomplishments (Newton and the new science).

  C. The *disputatio,* the form of argument inherited from the Middle Ages, was overturned.
    1. The presumptive authority of the past was rejected, and a growing recognition developed of the rights of natural reason even in the presence of theological authority.
    2. Syllogistic deduction, or premises drawn from authority, changed to induction, or the logic of inference from experience.
    3. "The book of nature" was linked to experiment: let experience and nature decide.

  D. Europe was free to reject the past as a model. The seventeenth-century revolution in natural philosophy and the means of new knowledge and reexamination of all claims of truth were seen as analogous.
    1. Intellectuals had a growing sense that Europe had acquired something that would alter both knowledge and the human relationship to nature: a proper method.
    2. Rightly or wrongly, Europe associated the awesome accomplishments of seventeenth-century natural philosophy with induction from nature, ordered by reason into laws as general and universal as possible, confirmed by experiment and experience, and, wherever possible, put to the use of mankind.

  E. A new locus of change and influence arose.
    1. The movement was away from the universities and clerical orders to the academies, the journals, and the coffeehouses.
    2. The growing secular reading public, with a will to know, read the new philosophy with exhilaration.
    3. Beyond abstruse philosophy was the popularization and commercialization of the discipline.

II. The self-image of the "new philosophers" can be seen in their emerging heroes. What views of our seventeenth-century authors became their legacy for the eighteenth century?

  A. The new generation passionately read Bacon on learning from nature.
    1. One must avoid the Idols of the Theater.
    2. Induction is the essential intellectual method (the metaphor of the path).
    3. Knowledge is human power.

  B. Descartes proclaimed the rights of reason.
    1. Philosophy has the right to begin in doubt.
    2. Descartes was read for his quest for order and clarity.
    3. We can have a mechanical knowledge of the natural world.

  C. Galileo was a symbol of the freedom of natural philosophy.
    1. Nature, not human books, is the real source of human knowledge.
    2. Mathematics is the language of our view of nature.

  D. Locke said that the boundaries of experience are the limits of our world.
    1. We should admit ignorance on matters beyond experience.
    2. All knowledge was constructed from units of simple experience that can be confirmed, and all claims may be examined in that light.

  E. In Newton, one sees the model of the power of natural knowledge.
    1. After three laws of motion and the law of gravity, both celestial and terrestrial physics fall into place. Newton is the very model of inductive, natural power.
    2. According to Newton, nature was lawful and designed: we see through nature to nature's God.

III. Attitudes underlying intellectual life underwent a sea change.

  A. The new philosophy was marked by several characteristics:
    1. The presumptive authority of the past was rejected.
    2. Empiricism was fundamental.
    3. Quantification was embraced through mathematics.
    4. The more universal the law, the more powerful would be its explanation.

  B. The new philosophy was a cultural and religious revolution.
    1. Belief in witchcraft and superstition was challenged.
    2. The location of God's providence was increasingly seen in natural laws. Wisdom lay in the design of the original clockmaker.
    3. The new religious aesthetic developed with the idea of general laws versus particular providence.

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4. This new idea presented the problem of miracle: if God's providence is in general laws of nature, then an intervention would be similar to a *repair*.

C. In both England and France at the end of the seventeenth and dawn of the eighteenth centuries, the debate of "the ancients versus the moderns" was posed.

1. The past may well be superior in its art; Homer and Sophocles may be incomparable.
2. Knowledge and science, however, are cumulative.
3. What's more, knowledge creates progress. The more we know about the real causes of things, the more we may change the world according to the heart's desire for human happiness.

IV. Theology was removed from areas not properly its sphere, and the new philosophy desired to devise a theology consistent with and evolving through increases in natural knowledge. These revolutionary phenomena further secularized the West.

A. The new philosophy's implications for notions of miracle and revelation in theology can hardly be overstated. Not revelation, but the book of nature prevails in the new philosophy.

B. The new philosophy's implications for ethical thinking were great: one might even conclude that the idea that the pursuit of happiness was ordained by God was self-evident.

C. This was not a revolution from without. Rather, the revolution occurred within Christian culture, which itself produced the intellectual currents that made its displacement from the center of European culture possible.

D. The eighteenth century began with intense theological commitments by a literate and learned world; in this course, we need to understand how anti-religious attitudes and secularism arose, as unintended consequences, from that initial deep theological perspective.

V. By the end of the seventeenth century, we stand at the birth of modern consciousness.

A. A movement scientific, secular, inquiring, seeking a principle of authority apart from mere tradition and repetition of the past, the new consciousness was also tempted by skepticism and leaps of faith and, for certain, was confused by the range of choices it created for itself.

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B. For better or for worse, we are the heirs of the seventeenth-century mind, living in its light and its shadows. Those "shadows" would be described by many in the eighteenth century: the fear of materialism and naturalism and the problem of "progress."

Essential Reading:

Alan Charles Kors and Paul Korshin, eds., *Anticipations of the Enlightenment in England, France, and Germany* (Philadelphia: 1987).

Supplementary Reading:

Paul Hazard, *The European Mind, 1680–1715* (New York: 1963).

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the implications of the growing critique of "superstition" and witchcraft persecutions?
2. In what ways did the generation of 1680 to 1715 distort the intentions of the authors whose works it appropriated?

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Lecture Thirty-Eight

Locke—Politics

Dennis Dalton, Ph.D.

Scope: Among all the European political theorists, John Locke most influenced early American ideas about government. The Declaration of Independence reflects his conceptions of human rights and liberties.

Locke contrasts with Hobbes in his theory of the state of nature, which he regards as benign, unlike the aggressive and violent condition perceived by Hobbes. Because of this differing viewpoint, Locke recommends a type of government that is much more limited in its power and scope than Hobbes's omnipotent *Leviathan*.

Locke envisaged a social contract among reasonable men, in the state of nature, to legitimize a moderate government ruled not by an authoritarian sovereign, but by a majority of propertied citizens. Locke insisted on the values of liberty and the right to hold private property, but these must be under laws determined by a legislature, not by a monarch. The rule of parliament was essential to Locke, who feared that the king could usurp power, which could produce tyranny. His cry that absolute, arbitrary power was illegitimate and should be resisted influenced American colonists who wanted revolution against British imperial rule.

Outline

I. John Locke was an influential political theorist.

- **A.** Locke's political philosophy greatly influenced the authors of the American Declaration of Independence and other later political thinkers. The Declaration of Independence reflects the ideas of Locke by proclaiming, "all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."
- **B.** Locke held that all people have a natural right to life, liberty, and property. Just governments, in his view, derive their power from the consent of the governed.

II. Locke posits two types of power: legitimate and illegitimate.

- **A.** Hobbes, a realist, sees man's political situation as one of desperate crisis that requires a desperate remedy: strong central government led by a powerful sovereign.

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- **B.** Reformists, led by Aristotle and including Locke, assume that man's natural state is not one of crisis, as Plato and Hobbes suggest, inviting an arbitrary and illegitimate form of power.
  1. Locke denies that humans are in a state of crisis and require powerful leadership, which, as he warns, tends inevitably toward despotism and tyranny.
  2. The solution to the imperfections of the human political condition, Locke argues, consists above all in respect for institutions and liberty under law.
- **C.** Locke and Hobbes offer differing prescriptions for man's condition.
  1. Hobbes goes to extremes; he creates an all-powerful central state to resolve the perceived crisis facing men in the state of nature.
  2. Locke speaks not of leadership but of institutions, laws, political culture, and the sacred nature of property. His key concern is to fashion a polity that will secure freedom under law.

III. Locke views the state of nature in far more benign terms than Hobbes does.

- **A.** Locke views *power* as the right to make laws for regulating and preserving property (understood both as one's possessions and as life itself). Power can be exercised legitimately only for the public good.
- **B.** According to both Hobbes and Locke, the state of nature is not a historical "golden age." It refers to the intrinsic human impulses that would manifest themselves in the absence of government.
  1. Unlike Hobbes, who sees a warlike state of nature, Locke views the state of nature as an original benign condition of perfect equality and perfect freedom from the arbitrary power of others.
  2. For Locke, liberty in the state of nature is governed by the laws of nature, which enjoin respect for the lives and welfare of others. Liberty exists but not license.
- **C.** Locke's social contract is a compact among free and equal men to exit the state of nature by forming a limited polity.
  1. Locke differs profoundly in this respect from Hobbes, who holds that desperate individuals are driven by fear to create an all-powerful sovereign.
  2. Locke holds that one must consent to become subject to another's power, a benign vision of human nature. The majority has the right to rule the minority. This "majority" consists of propertied males.
  3. Locke, not Hobbes, marks the beginnings of modern democratic political theory, which emphasizes the rights of the majority.
- **D.** Locke's theory of property begins with the labor theory of value, or property as valued according to the amount of labor invested in it.
  1. Human beings consent to unequal possession of property, based on the labor one expends in acquiring it. The invention of money advanced this inequality.

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2. Locke stresses legal equality, not equality of material possessions. Class inequality is protected.

IV. Lockean natural liberty consists not in license but in freedom from another's arbitrary power.

A. Man is free when he is subject only to political authority to which he has given his consent.

B. The purpose of law is to preserve and enlarge liberty. Liberty is impossible without law.

C. The form of government that is least injurious to liberty vests power in the legislature rather than the monarch.

1. The legislature is the least likely of the branches of government to abuse power, because it represents the middle class, which holds property and is thus unlikely to go to revolutionary or disruptive extremes.

2. Legislative power is constrained by specific boundaries that apply in all circumstances: the legislature must apply the same rules to all citizens, both rich and poor; its laws must promote the public good; it must not seize property via taxation without the people's direct and continuing consent.

D. Legitimate political power is exercised only for the common benefit, and it requires continuing consent of the governed.

1. Political power becomes illegitimate when it is exercised arbitrarily and without regard for the public good. Absolute arbitrary power can and must be resisted.

2. This was a powerful idea for the Founding Fathers: liberty under law and resistance to despotism.

Essential Reading:

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Indianapolis, IN: 1980).

Supplementary Reading:

Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: 1972), pp. 617–647.

Frederick, S.J. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: 1985), Book II, Vol. V, pp. 123–143.

John Dunn, *Locke* (New York: 1984).

Steven Dworetz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism, and the American Revolution* (Durham, NC: 1990).

Julian H. Franklin, *John Locke and the Theory of Sovereignty: Mixed Monarchy and the Right to Resistance in the Political Thought of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, England: 1981).

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Jules Steinberg, *Locke, Rousseau, and the Idea of Consent: An Inquiry into the Liberal-Democratic Theory of Obligation* (Westport, CT: 1978).

Questions to Consider:

1. According to Locke, does the existence of government enhance or diminish individual freedom?

2. According to Locke and Hobbes, what makes political power legitimate? Under what circumstances, if any, may people rightfully rebel against their government?

3. Can liberty and equality coexist under Locke's system of government?

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Lecture Thirty-Nine

Locke—The Revolution in Knowledge

Alan Kors, Ph.D.

Scope: Contemporary philosophers may not read John Locke with great attention or enthusiasm today, but his influence on the late seventeenth and the entire eighteenth century can scarcely be overestimated, because he changed the way that the culture thought about knowledge. The classic distinction between Locke's "empiricism" and Descartes's "rationalism" is overdrawn, however, because both thinkers show elements of each tendency. Locke's empiricism resides above all in his view of the origin of our ideas and in his sense of the implications of identifying that source. For Descartes, ideas are both innate and yield truth about the real qualities of the world; for Locke, ideas are acquired and our knowledge is only of our experience of the world. Ideas arise either from sensation (the senses) or reflection (the mind's awareness of its own behaviors), with simple sensations and simple reflections combining to form complex ideas. Our knowledge, thus, is limited strictly to our experience, and we must humbly admit our ignorance of the real essences of things. Locke appears to lean toward Cartesian mind-body dualism, but he believes the philosophical issue to be unprovable. The problem for Locke is not to know what the world is—we are not made for such knowledge—but to know how the world behaves.

Locke was read very diversely by his audiences, who linked him in remarkably different ways to earlier philosophers and schools of philosophy (nominalism, Francis Bacon, and Hobbes). His often equivocal and "commonsensical" approaches to perennial issues of philosophy permitted his influence to operate in a number of directions. Locke's epistemology shaped the thinking of the entire eighteenth century, occasioning and reinforcing a revolution in the culture's sense of the nature (and limits) of knowledge. In Locke's view, the mind begins as a blank slate on which experience prints ideas via the senses and reflection. Propositions about the world depend on those acquired ideas, which in turn depend on their relationship to experience. We cannot know what is not within our experience, and because experience is not logically determined, our knowledge of the world is merely probable. For early-modern readers and thinkers, Locke's model demystified the world of knowledge and ideas: even if a proposition or system is complex, if it is based on reality, it can be broken down into its component ideas, all grounded in experience, and those ideas may be tested against the behavior of the world. Although some later authors would attempt to mechanize Locke's model of mind, it is one that insists on the mind as an active agency.

The implications of Locke's thinking are dramatic: we learn our ethical ideas from experience and we are products of our environment, which, if changed, would change the kinds of human beings it produces. Our characters and senses of the world are, thus, relative to time, place, circumstance, and experience. Locke did not believe that any of the implications of his system were dangerous for religion. In fact, he undertook a work of empirical Christian apologetics, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, to demonstrate that the truth of Christianity follows empirically from the evidence of the historicity of Christ's miracles and the fulfillment of prophecies.

Outline

I. Although Locke is not highly thought of by twentieth-century philosophers, his role in intellectual history is almost incalculable in its importance.

- **A.** The triumph of John Locke is that for one hundred years, his epistemological authority was of crucial importance in Europe.
- **B.** The essential aspect of epistemology (theory of knowledge) is that it sets the foundation and framework of one's thinking about all areas of human thought.

II. Textbooks typically highlight the debate between rationalism and empiricism—Descartes versus Locke.

- **A.** The distinction between Descartes's rationalism and Locke's empiricism has been overdrawn. For example, Descartes put forth mechanistic natural science and Locke, rationalistic criterion of truth. So what are the real debates between them?
  1. The goal of fundamental natural philosophy.
  2. The source of our ideas and what follows from identifying that source.
- **B.** The goal of fundamental natural philosophy.
  1. For Descartes, the goal of philosophy is to reveal the real qualities of the world.
  2. For Locke, philosophy's goal is to order our experience of the world.
- **C.** The source of our ideas.
  1. For Descartes, our ideas are innate.
  2. For Locke, they are acquired by experience.
- **D.** Locke's criterion for certain rational truth is intuitive certainty. Our knowledge of the world, however, is known only by acquired ideas.

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III. The role of experience is central to natural philosophy.

A. For Locke, all ideas are acquired by two kinds of experience.

1. Sensations are the impressions our senses leave on the mind.
2. Reflection is the mind's experience of its own operations while dealing with sensation.

B. Simple sensations or reflections combine to form complex ideas. Locke was influenced by seventeenth-century French philosopher Pierre Gassendi's resurrection of ancient ideas on atomism.

C. For Locke, there are no innate ideas; thus, our knowledge is limited to our experience of the world.

D. What follows is that we have no knowledge of what underlies experience.

1. Thus, we have no rational knowledge of what mind and matter are; this is in contrast to Descartes.
2. For Locke, we know the nominal sense, not the real essence, of matter.

E. This admission of ontological incapacity is properly humble.

1. Although he leans to dualism, Locke maintains that we have no knowledge of dualism.
2. We need to admit ignorance. The proper response to questions beyond our experience is an admission of ignorance.
3. We need to revise the claims of philosophy.

IV. The Lockean agenda is, therefore, humble.

A. The problem is not to know what the mind is, but how, in experience, the mind behaves; not to know what matter is, but how, in experience, the world behaves.

B. Because such knowledge is based not on logic but on experience, it is always open to correction by further experience. A person from the tropics may infer from his experience that ice is impossible. If he encounters it, he must alter his views about water.

V. Locke's epistemology will become the dominant theory of knowledge in the eighteenth century, effecting a vast revolution in the culture's sense of the nature and limits of natural knowing. What were its essential qualities?

A. In Locke's model, the mind is a *tabula rasa*—a blank slate—on which nature imprints ideas via sensations and in which the mind becomes aware of its own operations on sensations, via reflection.

B. Some ideas naturally attract each other by association.

C. The mind is active and, by abstraction and combination, it forms complex ideas.

D. Therefore, propositions about the world may be only probable and depend for their probability on their relationship to experience.

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VI. Locke's influence on subsequent philosophy is vital.

A. His model leads to a demand for analysis, clarity, and confirmation. In theory, any proposition may be analyzed into its component ideas, then into its component experiences, and may be judged in relationship to our actual experience of the world.

B. The world of real knowledge becomes, by analysis and experimental confirmation, a lucid world, an accessible and demystified world, devoid of obscurity.

C. Locke's advice is to take what was complex and analyze it into its simple parts; then to confirm or disconfirm propositions about the world by comparing them to the behavior of the things described.

D. This advice became, in many ways, the mission of the eighteenth century.

VII. The roots and implications of Locke's model are dramatic.

A. Locke, who draws widely on the past, has a relationship to nominalism, Bacon (method), and Hobbes (language).

B. Some thinkers in the eighteenth century tried to mechanize Locke (e.g., Claude Adrienne Helvetius's formulation that "to sense is to judge"). This distorts Locke, however, as Rousseau clearly saw. Different readings of Locke led to great debates about the implications of his thinking for materialism.

C. For Locke, we learn ethical ideas by experience also, which implies that ethics are relative to experience. What we call good is what causes well-being; what we call evil is what causes pain. This model, if not joined by providence, would be subversive.

D. Consider the following implications:

1. Environmentalism: if experience decides all, then environment would seem determinative.
2. Relativism: what we believe is relative to our experience.
3. Character is not essential or fixed but developed by experience.

E. Locke bequeathed to the eighteenth century the specter of philosophical idealism.

F. A dramatic question is raised by Locke's epistemology: how do we base religious belief on empirical knowledge?

G. Locke's own empiricist apologetics, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, recognizes that we need empirical evidence for Christian truth.

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Essential Reading:

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, abridged and edited by A. D. Woozley (New York: 1974).

Supplementary Reading:

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Books I and III.

———, *The Reasonableness of Christianity with A Discourse of Miracles and part of a Third Letter Concerning Toleration*, edited and abridged by I. T. Ramsey (Stanford: 1958).

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the major differences and similarities between, on the one hand, Locke and Bacon, and, on the other, Locke and Descartes?
2. For many readers, Locke removed the danger of Hobbes from empirical philosophy and from the belief that ethics were learned by experience of pleasure and pain. Were they correct?
3. What are the most "revolutionary" implications of Locke's theory of knowledge?

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Lecture Forty

Vico and the New Science of History

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

Scope: Vico's philosophy of history had an immense influence on nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought. Vico replaced the *cogito* of Cartesian epistemology with his own principle of *verum factum*, which states that we know the truth about matters that we have cognitively constructed or "made." Vico's work has several interesting implications for the study of the human past. In addition, he uses modern scientific methods to demonstrate the potential dangers of using those same methods.

Outline

I. An obscure figure in his own lifetime (1688–1744), Vico's philosophy of history had an immense influence on nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought. Vico's New Science occupies a curious place in the normal trajectory of eighteenth-century intellectual history. He offered an evolutionary view of human history, as Marx and Darwin would do.
   A. On the one hand, Vico's analysis of history fulfills the Enlightenment's project of a "science of man," based on an empirical study of psychology, society, politics, and culture.
   B. On the other hand, Vico's New Science is intended as a warning against the central tendencies of Enlightenment thought, thus turning Enlightenment criticism against itself.

II. Vico addressed the epistemic status of history, which had been placed in jeopardy.
   A. The Cartesian epistemology of clear and distinct ideas precluded any possibility of scientific history.
   B. Vico replaced the *cogito* with his own principle of *verum factum*, which states that we know the truth about matters that we have cognitively constructed or "made." Because history is made exclusively by man, it can be known by him with scientific certainty.

III. Vico holds to a cyclical theory of history for fallen gentile man. Without direct divine instruction, the post-diluvian gentile nations undergo a common course of development through three stages that represent distinct levels of cultural activity and consciousness. The mechanism that moves any culture through these stages is class struggle. Vico uses new methods to understand the past: philology and archaeology, achieving a rudimentary kind of anthropological perspective.
   A. The first stage Vico calls the age of gods.

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1. The first breakthrough to history is the establishment of the "family state."
2. The primary form of wisdom and law is augury, and the patriarch is the king, judge, and priest with absolute power.
3. Three principles support this stage, namely religion, marriage, and the burial of the dead. The mentality of this epoch is crude and based on sense.

B. The second stage is the age of heroes.
1. Some primitive men seek refuge from their more violent fellows in the "asylums" of the patriarchs, where they are put to work on the land and ultimately become the clients or serfs of the patriarchs. They are allowed no property or even marriage rights and, thus, no patrimony.
2. The fathers, or patriarchs, unite and create heroic or aristocratic commonwealths.
3. The mentality of this stage is characterized by imagination and poetic creativity, by pride and magnanimity.

C. The final stage is called the age of man.
1. The plebes continue to fight for their rights. This process culminates in the rise of democratic republics. But these are inherently [illegible]able, leading to unrest and civil war. Eventually, benign rulers give way to powerful monarchs, such as Alexander and Julius Caesar.
2. The overall mentality of this period is characterized by reason, but eventually this becomes purely skeptical and critical.
3. Similarly, legal and social humanism give way to luxury and decadence, and democracy degenerates into disorder. The result is a new barbarism.

IV. Once a culture or nation has run its course, it continues to degenerate—a second barbarism [illegible] can recover the religious and primal spontaneity of the primitive mind.

A. The early Christian church heralded a new age of the gods among Europeans.

B. Medieval Europe was a heroic age of patriarchal warriors.

C. The contemporary Enlightenment announced the next age of man in Europe.

V. Vico's work has several interesting implications for the study of the human past.

A. Artifacts, such as Homer's *Iliad* and heraldic paraphernalia, as well as etymology, are sources for reconstructing a worldview or culture. This is the basis for cultural anthropology and history.

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B. Contra to Hobbes and Locke, political society is not the result of a social contract but a slow evolution from customs and mores, rather than agreed-upon rational principles.

C. Although rational philosophic criticism and speculation might be the fruit of high civilization, such thinking is poisonous because it dissolves the irrational customary and religious beliefs that allow cultures and society to cohere and develop. Thus, Vico deploys modern scientific method to demonstrate the potential dangers of the deployment of modern scientific methods.

Essential Reading:

Frederick, S.J. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Volume VI, pp. 154-163.

The New Science of Giambattista Vico, Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY: 1968).

Supplementary Reading:

Mark Lilla, *G.B. Vico: The Making of an Anti-Modern* (Cambridge: 1993).

Questions to Consider:

1. Does Vico's cyclical theory of history lend itself to later ideas of human progress and evolution?
2. In what ways do Vico's methodology anticipate later tenets of academic disciplines such as anthropology?

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Lecture Forty-One

Montesquieu and Political Thought

Alan Kors, Ph.D.

Scope: The intellectual revolution of the seventeenth century dramatically increased both the culture's sense of the order of nature and its sense of the relativity of human association and social arrangements. Montesquieu's extraordinary contribution to Enlightenment political thought was his effort to systematize our understanding, through natural inquiry, of both the order and the instabilities of human political and social forms. For some, this makes him, above all, a foundational thinker in the development of political science and sociology. For others, it makes him a particularly subtle and nuanced observer of the human condition.

From the 1720s to the 1740s, Montesquieu, whose own life made the study of society a vital and open-ended inquiry, published *The Persian Letters* (a mordant view of contemporary France and, in part, Persia), *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline* (an inquiry into the flowering and death of a dominant civilization), and *The Spirit of the Laws* (an attempt to explain, often systematically, the sources of social, political, and legal phenomena). These works posed the two central questions of his intellectual life in ways that would have dramatic influence on Western thought: What is relative to time and place? What is natural and universal? He links these two domains—the relative and the natural—by exploring the reality of difference and the reality of natural consequences. Human beings may live and believe in a startling variety of ways, but a reality principle of objective natural causes and consequences exists that allows us to understand the course of human phenomena and sets limits to our malleability and our ephemeral human systems. Variety prevails, but we may understand that variety and learn from it. We learn, among other things, that we ignore objective conditions of justice and survival at our peril and that despotism, so prevalent in human affairs, is both objectively against nature and inherently unstable. Like Machiavelli, Montesquieu seeks to understand in wholly natural terms the contingencies of time and place in politics, but he makes his moral agenda explicit. His understanding and his moral agenda had a deep influence on the American Revolution.

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Outline

I. Montesquieu was a relativist but always in search of order. For him, eighteenth-century relativism clearly had a "problem."

  A. Despite obviously encouraging the view of knowledge as social and communicable, the new Lockean epistemology (theory of knowledge) carried in it the seeds of relativism.

    1. If, as Locke taught, one's knowledge and moral ideas are bounded and determined by one's experience, then one's sense of the world, one's values, and one's beliefs are relative to time, place, and personal experience.
    2. Locke's doctrine of nominal and real essences establishes that we know only the appearances of things.
    3. Locke's doctrine makes one's beliefs relative to the nature of the human senses. Locke himself had asked what we would believe about the world if we had microscopic eyes or additional or fewer senses. Voltaire's popularization of Locke imagines visitors to earth from distant space: despite exponentially longer lives and more senses than humans, they lament their ignorance.

  B. Europe's encounter with foreign and "exotic" peoples, the effect of which was multiplied by the growth of printing and the reading public, produced a curiosity about, and astonishment over, differences among cultures, an awareness by which Europeans seemed as strange to others as others did to them. Such cultural divergences included:

    1. The differences in treatment of women and the elderly.
    2. The diversity of religions, moral codes, and beliefs.
    3. The difficulties of translation.
    4. The very fact of flourishing non-Christian cultures. (Voltaire began his history of the world with China.)
    5. Bestsellers, such as *The Turkish Spy* and *1001 Nights*, and accounts of American Indians brought other exotic places to light.

  C. Montesquieu's background made him sensitive to difference and particular perspectives.

    1. The milieu of the *parlement* of Bordeaux inculcated an awareness of absolutism and arbitrary power.
    2. Montesquieu's Huguenot (Protestant) wife inculcated an awareness of toleration and of the accident of birth.
    3. The savants at the Academy of Inscriptions became students of chronology and comparative ancient religions and beliefs; they were shocked by the functional resemblance and substantive difference between cultures.
    4. Montesquieu's educated Chinese friend who had converted to Christianity in China was astonished at what he found in Europe, expecting to find a Europe of gentle souls.

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II. Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721) enjoyed an extraordinary literary success.

A. The structure of the *Persian Letters*—an epistolary novel in which "Persian" travelers see France and the West through Persian eyes—allowed Montesquieu great freedom to comment on his world and to deepen his readers' sense of the relativity of belief to time and place.

B. *The Persian Letters* used relativism to great effect.

1. In a satire of relativism, the pope, the king, nobles, and bishops are seen through "Persian" eyes.
2. Montesquieu raises the humor of ethnocentrism: a Frenchman asks, "How could anyone be a Persian?"
3. *The Letters* consider the deepest questions: What is relative to time and place? What is natural and absolute? Montesquieu seeks to distinguish between what is malleable and what is common to all human experience.
4. He considers the implications for politics, in particular the varieties of despotism and the natural law of liberty.
5. The implications for ethics are striking: Montesquieu examines the varieties of moral codes and the reality of natural consequences.

III. Montesquieu, in the *Persian Letters* (1721), the *Considerations on the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline* (1734), and *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), sought to reconcile the order of nature and the variety of human forms of association.

A. A view central to all three of these works is that science is a unifying truth amid the relativity of perspective.

1. The laws of natural philosophy are demonstrable across cultural boundaries. From ancient history we can derive a model of social phenomena and move on to a science of history.
2. We can discern the regularity of human nature from the variety of circumstance. The task is to recognize the common forms at work beneath the surface differences of human affairs.

B. Montesquieu classified the essential varieties of political association according to the spirit that animates them.

1. In republics (animated by virtue), people or an aristocracy rule.
2. In monarchies (honor), one man is guided by law and custom.
3. In despotism (fear), people are ruled by the caprice of an individual.
4. Thus, Montesquieu sees the problem of human history: what would seem morally the most desirable, given these alternatives, is a democratic republic, which is one of the least stable forms of human association.

C. The cycles of human history contain both instability and predictability.

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1. In the case of the Troglodytes in *The Persian Letters*, Montesquieu suggests that they cannot cohere until self-governance and virtue produce prosperity, which, in turn, leads to selfishness and greed.
2. In the case of Rome, the virtue of the Republic proved too successful, leading to militarism and monarchy and despotism.
3. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu asks the deeper question: What kind of society falls from the loss of one battle?

D. The scientific and tragic lesson is that an independent natural reality exists in which behaviors have real consequences. This idea points to universal values. Human societies can achieve any number of forms, but they cannot survive unless they solve the problem of linking the individual to the broader society—problems of security, of equity, of justice. Such success, however, given human nature, will not be permanent.

IV. Despotism presents a deeper problem.

A. All cultures, in general, and power, in particular, assume that their particular forms of association are "natural."

B. The irony of despotism is that the Persian Uzbek sees all despotism around him except his own.

C. Despotism is the subjection of one person's life to the whim and caprice of another's will. When the despot is unable to exercise terror, freedom reasserts itself against the arbitrary will of an individual man. Only terror makes despotism seem stable and permanent.

D. Can one overcome despotism?

1. The society must have rights without anarchy.
2. The society must also have a separation of powers, each acting as a check and balance on the other.

V. Montesquieu's influence on the American Revolution was considerable.

A. The American founders thought it their purpose to learn from nature, not the past.

B. They understood the necessity of mutual restraints on centers of power.

C. They knew that, absent public virtue, nothing wrought on paper would be stable.

Essential Reading:

Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters*, translated by C. J. Betts. (London: 1973).

———, *The Spirit of the Laws*, translated and edited by Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge and New York: 1989).

Supplementary Reading:

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Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, Part II.

———, *Considerations on the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why don't Montesquieu's relativistic insights lead to skepticism about a science of society?
2. Is there any way, in Montesquieu's system, to limit the depradations of power by means of written laws?

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Lecture Forty-Two

The Worldly Philosophy of Bernard Mandeville

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

Scope: Bernard Mandeville's career and thought both exemplify several central themes of the Enlightenment. Mandeville's most famous work, *The Fable of the Bees*, presented his central paradox in moral theory, namely that private vices make public benefits. Mandeville's rigorism and focus on consequences revealed the fundamental tensions between Judeo-Christian and classical virtues versus modern commercial and secular society.

Outline

I. Bernard Mandeville was the Machiavelli or Hobbes of the Anglophone Enlightenment. Both his career and thought exemplify several central themes of the Enlightenment. His most famous work, *The Fable of the Bees*, created a new "consequential" mode of moral philosophy that was both secular and Epicurean. The implications and influences of his work were far- reaching.

II. Mandeville's life and career exemplify several central features of the Enlightenment in early eighteenth-century England.

   A. Although he wrote wonderfully playful English verse and prose, Mandeville was actually Dutch.

      1. Born in Rotterdam in 1670, Mandeville was raised in a commercial city in the foremost commercial society and power of the seventeenth century. Mandeville's move to London exemplifies the urban cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment that celebrated the fashionable life of the town over the simpler rusticity of country life.

      2. Mandeville studied at the prestigious University of Leyden, where he was trained as a physician. He also read widely in philosophy, including Descartes, Spinoza, and Bayle.

   B. A client of the Earl of Macclesfield, the Lord Chancellor of England, in politics Mandeville was an outspoken Court Whig.

      1. The Court Whigs represented the new commercial and financial oligarchy that came to dominate in the early to mid-century.

      2. Like Hume after him, Mandeville came to see that a certain amount of patronage (corruption) was necessary to oil the machinery of "ministerial government," just as a certain amount of private selfishness was essential to commercial society.

   C. Mandeville's career exemplifies that of the new "gentleman of letters," the early English version of what the French would call the *philosophe*.

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1. Mandeville's works were widely read and discussed in "polite" London society.
2. Mandeville engaged in epistolary exchanges and philosophic debates with other key figures in the English Enlightenment, thus exercising his "franchise" in the newly emerging "republic of letters."
3. Mandeville was a participant in the Enlightenment's "club" culture.

III. Mandeville's most famous work, *The Fable of the Bees*, presented his central paradox in moral theory, namely that private vices make public benefits. The text itself is made up of a variety of shorter works that were compiled over time.

A. In 1705, Mandeville published *The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves Turned Honest*, a "fable" in the form of a poem.
1. The poem describes a rich, powerful, learned, and free beehive that is clearly meant to represent contemporary Great Britain.
2. The vast population of the hive lives by fulfilling the commercial and "luxurious" needs of one another.
3. Despite the vicious habits of the bees, the overall effect is publicly beneficial.
4. Hearing the constant and hypocritical complaints about corruption and vice, Jove eliminates all dishonesty from the hive. The results are disastrous.
5. The professed moral of the story is that virtue and greatness are incompatible. The key to prosperity and greatness is "restrained" vice or selfishness.

B. In 1714, Mandeville reissued the poem with a series of appendices and *An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue* under the new title *The Fable of the Bees*. Mandeville's *Enquiry* rejects social contractarian and natural law formulations of public morality. Instead, Mandeville opted for an evolutionary view based on an associational psychology similar to Spinoza's that stressed the selfishness and egocentrism of the individual.
1. Mandeville's psychology is meant to be empirical and scientific.
2. Because every animal seeks to gratify its pleasure, the key to social life is the teaching of lawgivers and wise men that "it is more beneficial for every Body to conquer than indulge his Appetites, and much better to mind the Publick than what seem'd his private interest."
3. Politicians do this by appealing to pride and flattery (egoistic power of praise and shame).
4. Pride thus induces those who aspire to high status to emulate this ideal, just as the lower orders try to emulate them, at least through hypocritically hiding their "vices." This system serves the interests of the ambitious by making the whole society tractable.
5. Mandeville concludes, "the moral virtues are the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride."

IV. Mandeville's work had profound implications and exerted great influence on the intellectual life of his time.

A. Mandeville's rigorism and focus on consequences revealed the fundamental tensions between Judeo-Christian and classical (neo-stoic and Ciceronian) virtues and modern commercial and secular society.

B. Mandeville's evolutionary conception of society and moral order created the theoretical possibility of recognizing economic progress as a feature of modern life. His consequential calculation of unintended results on a large (social) scale would form the basis of the form of reasoning that became known as classical economics.

C. Mandeville's "worldliness" and deflationary and naturalistic account of human behavior and motivation had immense influence on such continental thinkers as Voltaire, Holbach, and Helvetius.

D. Mandeville's consequentialism, combined with his stress on public benefits, resulted in a sort of social Epicureanism whereby what is judged desirable is that which results in the greatest public benefits. This notion is the core of utilitarianism.

Essential Reading:

Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, F. B. Kaye, ed., (Indianapolis: 1988), 2 vols.

Supplementary Reading:

Bernard Mandeville, *A Modest Defense of Publick Stews* (London, 1724; Reprint: Los Angeles, 1973).

Bernard Mandeville, *The Mischiefs That Ought Justly to be Apprehended From A Whig-Whig Government* (London, 1714, Reprint: Los Angeles, 1975).

Irwin Primer, ed., *Mandeville Studies: New Explorations in the Art and Thought of Dr. Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733)* (The Hague, 1975).

Questions to Consider:

1. Does the consequentialist mode of moral reasoning work for modern societies? Do private vices make public benefits in a commercial capitalist social order.?
2. In what sense is Mandeville's moral thought "bourgeois"? Is his social Epicureanism an enlightened mode of modern morality, or is it just a license for libertinism and greed?

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Lecture Forty-Three

Bishop Berkeley—Idealism and Critique of the Enlightenment

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

Scope: George Berkeley's most important philosophical work—*A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710)—established his reputation as one of the three great British empiricists (with Locke and Hume). Berkeley held in this treatise that there is no existence independent of perception. His subjectivist idealism was cogently stated in the Latin phrase *esse est percipi* ("to exist is to be perceived"). Locke had argued that human knowledge depends on the existence of material objects independent of minds. He held that secondary qualities—such as color—arise in the mind, while primary qualities of objects—such as extension—are intrinsic to objects and exist independently of our perception of them. Berkeley argued, by contrast, that both primary and secondary qualities exist only in minds: human minds contain certain ideas, and the mind of God contains all ideas. This lecture examines the extreme idealist conclusions that Berkeley drew from his empiricist premises.

Outline

I. Berkeley (1685–1753) was one of the first major critics of the growing tendencies of the Anglophone Enlightenment. He saw in its scientism and materialism an entering wedge for religious disbelief and an errant secularism in moral and spiritual matters.

II. Berkeley used the philosophical premises of the Enlightenment to undermine its metaphysical tenets. He adopted Locke's view of the mind as a *tabula rasa* to criticize his belief in abstract ideas.

- **A.** Locke rejected the realist view of universals, such as Plato had proposed, in favor of a conceptualist view that treated universals, or "nominal essences," as abstract ideas, rather than as real subsistent entities.
- **B.** Berkeley criticized such abstract ideas as a half-hearted compromise with realism. He insisted on a thoroughgoing nominalism.
  1. It is impossible to have an abstract idea, because all our sense data are particular.
  2. It is impossible for the mind to imagine an idea or mental picture abstracted from all particular features.

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III. Berkeley argued that a consistent empiricism entailed the conclusion that the only phenomena of which we are aware are ideas and that materialism is a dogmatic superstition.

- **A.** All of our ideas, including those of sensible objects, are derived from sense experience.
- **B.** We never actually experience matter; thus, we can have no idea of it.
  1. Matter is a posit held to unify the various simple ideas of sensible particulars, or objects.
  2. Because matter is never experienced and is only posited as an "occult substratum," Berkeley applies Occam's razor and eliminates it as an unnecessary premise.
- **C.** If all sensible objects are actually ideas, then ideas must have a substratum in which they can reside.
  1. This substratum is mind or spirit.
  2. Thus, all of the objects of our experience are ideas in minds.

IV. Berkeley proves that God exists and that God, not Newtonian mechanics, is the cause of the lawlike regularity of ideas.

- **A.** All the objects of the world are ideas in minds, and only minds are capable of producing or causing ideas.
- **B.** Although we produce the ideas of imagination and reflection, we are incapable of producing the ideas of sense.
- **C.** Another mind must exist that is capable of producing all the ideas we sense, God.
- **D.** If a tree falls in the forest and no person is there to hear it, it still makes a sound, because God is everywhere and perceives everything. If God were not present, there would be no sound, tree, or forest. God is a kind of universal switchboard of ideas.
- **E.** Samuel Johnson's famous refutation of Berkeley was to kick a stone and say that he'd had a sense experience.

V. Berkeley's idealist position allows him to account for what is indubitable in the Enlightenment while rejecting what he finds objectionable.

- **A.** Berkeley argues that Newtonian physics shows us the lawlike regularity in the order of sense impressions we receive from God. Berkeley sought to link Newtonian physics to traditional religious belief.
- **B.** The belief in matter is the cause of skepticism, because we are separated from the real "material" world by a veil of ideas that can never be rent. Descartes raised the issue of whether the ideas we have of objects accurately relate to the objects themselves.
- **C.** Berkeley believed he was arguing for common sense, as well as religious truth.

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D. Materialism promotes atheism by positing an unknowable and occult substratum to cause the experiences and regularities that actually issue from the mind of God. For Berkeley, materialism commits us to disputes we can never resolve; idealism restores us to the world as we experience it.

Essential Reading:

George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (Indianapolis: 1982).

Supplementary Reading:

Frederick, S.J. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: 1985), Book II, Vol. V, pp. 213–257.

Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: 1945), pp. 647–658.

Harry Bracken, *The Early Reception of Berkeley, 1710–1733* (Kluwer, 1965).

A. A. Luce, *The Life of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne* (Greenwood, reprint of 1949 edition).

Gabriel Moked, *Particles and Ideas: Bishop Berkeley's Corpuscularian Philosophy* (Oxford: 1988).

Andrew Seth, *Scottish Philosophy* (Garland, 1983).

Questions to Consider:

1. Why does Berkeley claim that materialism breeds skepticism? Does his own idealism refute such skepticism?
2. Is Berkeley's empiricism consistent with his idealism?

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Lecture Forty-Four

Hume's Epistemology

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

Scope: This lecture examines the empiricist philosophy of David Hume, who, along with Locke and Berkeley, held that all our mental representations arise from sense experience. Hume identified relations of cause and effect as the source of all our knowledge of "matters of fact," but he denied that causation had any objective or logical necessity. Instead, he explained causation as a customary or habitual inference that we draw from the "constant conjunction" of sensed phenomena. We will examine these aspects of Hume's epistemology and his efforts to reconcile necessity with liberty.

Outline

I. David Hume brought the empiricism of Locke and Berkeley to its logical conclusion. In his hands, empiricism became a tool for the skeptical critique of traditional metaphysics and a vindication of common sense.

II. The premises of Hume's empiricism were conventional, but the thrust of his conclusions was decidedly skeptical concerning our claims to knowledge of the external world.

A. Like all empiricists, Hume argues that our ideas are copies of our sense impressions, because the ideas generally succeed the impressions.

1. These representations are distinguished by their relative phenomenal vivacity.
2. Hume claimed there were only three principles of association between ideas: resemblance, spatio-temporal contiguity, and cause and effect.

B. Hume divides all knowledge into relations between ideas and matters of fact.

1. Knowledge of the relations between ideas is either intuitively certain or demonstrable. In either case, it is tautological and lacks existential implication.
2. Knowledge of matters of fact (aside from immediate and present sense experience) is based on cause and effect.
3. Cause and effect derives from our experience of constant conjunctions.

C. Given that all our knowledge of matters of fact is based on cause and effect and that cause and effect is, in turn, based on experience, what warrants our belief in experience?

1. Reason cannot warrant our belief in experience, for it is logically possible that the future will not resemble the present.

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2. Causation cannot warrant this belief in experience, for it depends on experience. Such an argument would be circular.
3. The answer to the riddle is psychological disposition and instinct—"custom," or habit. Experience is warranted by a kind of natural instinct, what is a very skeptical philosophical position.

III. Hume used his skeptical empirical reasoning to undermine several critical metaphysical disputes or dogmas.

A. Hume attacked the metaphysical doctrines of "power, force, and necessary connection."

1. There is no logical doctrine of necessary connections in the world, because logical proofs have no existential implications.
2. "Power, force, and necessary connection" cannot be matters of fact, because they do not arise from sense impressions.
3. Necessary connection is, thus, merely a powerful psychological condition, arising from the constancy of certain conjunctions.

B. Hume also tried to silence the metaphysical controversy over freedom and determinacy, claiming that disputes on the subject were purely verbal. Are human beings agents of free will or victims of determinacy?

1. Necessity and causation, the essence of determinism, are simply the experience of constant conjunctions and the expectation that the future will resemble the past.
2. Liberty is merely the absence of external restraint. It is perfectly consistent with a causally determined universe.
3. If our choices were truly uncaused, they would be unpredictable and, therefore, impossible to morally evaluate.
4. Everyday life is based on the assumption that we can predict and, therefore, depend on the actions and choices of others.

C. Hume also took aim at the epistemic status of the miracles revealed in the Scriptures.

1. Miracles are, by definition, violations of the laws of nature established through the sum of human experience.
2. Because these laws are the basis of all our reasoning about experience, there can be no rational grounds for belief in them.
3. Hume endeavors to express his irreligious views in an esoteric fashion for fear of their moral consequences. This principle is both Calvinist and derisive of established religion.

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IV. Although Hume shows that skepticism is philosophically unimpeachable, he argues that it can be refuted by practical life. The point of Hume's skepticism is to vindicate our commonsense knowledge on pragmatic grounds and teach us to eschew the dogmatism and intolerance of "scholastic" and Christian orthodoxy.

Essential Reading:

David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, A Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend in Edinburgh* (Indianapolis: 1972), pp. 1–114.

Supplementary Reading:

Frederick, S.J. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: 1985), Book II, Vol. V, pp. 258–317.

Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: 1972), pp. 659–674.

Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume* (Greenwood, 1983).

Ernest C. Mossner, *The Forgotten Hume, Le Bon David* (AMS Press, 1967).

Andrew Seth, *Scottish Philosophy* (Garland, 1983).

Barry Stroud, *Hume* (Routledge, 1981).

Ezra Talmor, *Descartes and Hume* (Pergamon, 1980).

A. E. Taylor, *David Hume and the Miraculous* (Folcroft, 1927).

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the function of skepticism in Hume's philosophy?
2. In Hume's view, what is the ultimate basis of our knowledge of matters of fact about the world?

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Lecture Forty-Five

Hume's Theory of Morality

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

Scope: We turn now to Hume's theory of ethics and morality. Just as Hume located the origins of causation in the constant conjunction of sensed phenomena, he located the origin of our moral judgments in their constant conjunction with a sentiment of approbation or disapprobation. That is, morality is rooted not in rational judgment but in instinct or sentiment. Hume assesses the morality of behavior in terms of its consequences, especially in terms of its advancement of social utility.

Outline

I. Hume's moral theory in *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* represents a transition between the moral sense doctrines of the Scottish school of common sense philosophy and the consequentialism of the great utilitarian thinkers of the nineteenth century.

II. Hume offers a scientific theory about morality, not a prescriptive code of ethical conduct.

- **A.** Hume treats morality as an already existent realm of human judgment and action and asks how we ever came to make such judgments.
- **B.** Hume is primarily interested in describing the cause of moral evaluation among the human species and in showing what such judgments consist of. He does not prescribe a foundational moral theory.
- **C.** Hume argues that our moral judgments find their origins in a sentiment of approbation.
  1. Hume notes that all our moral judgments are constantly conjoined by a sentiment of approbation that precedes such judgments.
  2. Moral judgment cannot be based on rational deliberation, because simpletons and children are capable of moral judgment and virtuous action.
  3. We have no evidence that the most rational and intellectually advanced people are more disposed toward moral insight or virtuous behavior, an opinion Thomas Jefferson would later espouse.

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III. Hume attempts scientifically to answer the question of what makes us approve of some actions and disapprove of others. He makes this attempt by examining the various virtues that are universally accorded to moral rectitude and by searching for a common element that might prompt our instinctual or sentimental approbation. He discovers that the common element is utility.

- **A.** Benevolence is universally acknowledged to be a virtue, and its most distinctive characteristic is that it tends to promote the public good.
- **B.** The only basis of our sentimental approval of the virtue of justice is its obvious utility for society.
  1. Justice is not needed in societies of superabundance or super-scarcity or in societies of selfless people or thieves. In such places, justice is abjured as useless. For us, justice is a middle point between all these extremes.
  2. If we could imagine interaction with creatures that were every bit as rational as we are but entirely weak and unable to resist our force, we would probably suspend our operation of justice toward them, because it has no utility for us. Such was the case, Hume argues, with the treatment of American Indians and women.
  3. Hume argues that moral progress consists in including more and more people in our sense of community and, thus, extending our moral sentiments over a larger domain.
- **C.** All government or political society has its basis in utility.
  1. If all people were naturally just, we would have no need for government.
  2. Laws of nations arise only after trade has established their utility. Only then do both parties find it useful to be just.
  3. When countries are at war, the laws of nations are not useful and are, therefore, suspended.

IV. Hume argues that the reason utility excites our sentiments of approval is an inherent psychological or instinctual disposition.

- **A.** Utility, and thus virtuous action, have a "natural beauty" that moves us like a calm passion. Virtue is its own reward.
- **B.** Utilitarianism is a kind of social Epicureanism. Virtue is not the result of either narrow self-interest or spartan self-sacrifice, but rather is the consequence of a well-rounded and pleasant life.
- **C.** In a sense, then, philosophy began with Plato's attempt to rescue morality from the poets. Hume brings that tradition to a close and inverts it—moral education is not to be found in philosophy books but in fiction and poetry.

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Essential Reading:

David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Hackett, 1987).

Supplementary Reading:

Frederick, S.J. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (Image Books, 1985), Book II, Vol. V, pp. 318–353.

Nicholas Capaldi, *David Hume: The Newtonian Philosopher* (Macmillan, 1975).

Donald W. Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life* (Chicago: 1985).

David F. Norton, *David Hume: Common Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician* (Princeton, 1982).

Andrew Seth, *Scottish Philosophy* (Garland, 1983).

Questions to Consider:

1. Contrast the approaches of Plato and Hume to moral philosophy.
2. Discuss the relationship between Hume's moral and epistemological views.

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Lecture Forty-Six

Hume's Natural Religion

Alan Kors, Ph.D.

Scope: The first half of the eighteenth century was the high-water mark of confident and optimistic natural philosophy and natural religion. This confidence was built on the belief that the natural faculties linked our minds to manifest natural truth; this optimism was built on the belief that the truth included knowledge of the beneficent and providential designs God has for us. One of the most dramatic and thorough criticisms of this optimism came from the Scottish philosopher and philosophical skeptic David Hume, in his posthumously published *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.*

Although the dialogic form in theory commits Hume to no particular position, he gives extraordinary voice to the skeptical Philo, who challenges the fundamental premise of natural religion—that we must logically infer from the data of nature a wise, intelligent, good, omnipotent, and providential God. Philo challenges the very assumption that we can infer the necessary cause of the universe, the analogy between nature and the works of human intelligence, and the inconsistencies between the qualities attributed to God and what we would infer from the operations of nature about the cause of the world. In particular, he argues that the evidence of evil, pain, and suffering does not support such an inference. From Philo's arguments, one might choose to believe in God, but that belief would not be the product of natural inference in a manner consistent with the new sciences. This skepticism about natural religious truth is wholly consistent with Hume's earlier arguments and philosophy.

With Hume, we see a growing skepticism about the relationship of natural philosophy and religious belief, a skepticism that explains in part the increasing tendency of intellectuals to turn away from problems of theology to problems of secular society.

Outline

I. The foundation of eighteenth-century optimistic natural philosophy and natural theology derived from two confident conclusions inherited from the intellectual revolution of the seventeenth century.
   A. The first conclusion is the belief that the natural faculties, through the medium of nature, linked human beings to natural truth and to knowledge of God. We saw through nature to nature's author and his designs.

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B. The second conclusion is the belief that nature and man interact to the benefit of man, through the providential designs of God.

II. Hume's most revealing and pointed work on natural optimism, unpublished until his death, was his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. In its pages, the voice of skeptical philosophy, Philo, was able to challenge the fundamental premise of natural religion.

A. Philo points out that empirical natural theology, basing religion on inference from experience, had four fatal general flaws.

1. First, it left religion merely probable at best, because knowledge from experience was not logically necessary but determined by ongoing experience.
2. This theology proceeds on the basis of an extremely weak analogy, because the dissimilarities between the universe and the works of men were far more striking than any similarities.
3. The analogy was vitiated by the fact that the universe was the only one of its kind that we knew. If we had experience of the causes of a large number of universes, we might infer something about the causes of another universe—by weak analogy.
4. In all scientific questions, in all matters of inference from natural phenomena, negative evidence counts even more than positive evidence in testing a hypothesis. To cite order is not enough, because we also have evidence of disorder, and both require explanation by the cause one assigns.

B. Even if one granted the terms of the analogy and followed its principle (that like effects prove like causes), we would not logically infer from the universe, by such analogy, the God of natural religion.

1. Infinity cannot exist, because the universe has only finite effects. By analogy, the cause of the universe should be finite.
2. Perfection cannot exist, because the world has so many flaws. Our world might be a botched and rejected work by some child deity that couldn't do it right, and we find ourselves living in the midst of his failure.
3. Unity cannot exist, because of the diversity of effects in the world. From the size and diversity of the universe we would infer that many workers created the world.
4. Incorporeality (God as spirit) cannot exist—in all our experience, we know work to be made by material agencies, by hands, by bodies. By analogy, the cause of the universe must have body.
5. We would not infer the intelligence of the world, because the world is not a "machine" requiring an intelligent designer. If we held to the analogy, in fact, we should proceed from the assumption that the world resembles a vegetable, with growth and decay, more than it does a watch or knitting loom. Perhaps, Philo argues ironically, the world comes from a supreme seed. Indeed, it resembles a living being, an animal, more than a machine. Perhaps it comes from a supreme egg.
6. Finally, we would never infer supreme wisdom because human beings improve on the design of nature all the time, not the least in medicine, in our care of the young and elderly, in agriculture, in countless improvements and rearrangements of things.

C. If nature proves the infinite goodness of its cause, then why does all our literature talk about the miseries, pains, and uncertainties of life? To know that the world is not what we would expect or predict of a perfect, infinite, omnipotent, loving deity, writes Hume, walk into any children's ward in a hospital.

1. Finite, imperfect human beings could improve on nature if consulted: eliminate pain; proceed by particular, not general, law (e.g., let the good live longer); and expand the powers and faculties of human life.
2. We have only four logical possibilities to be weighed in light of the evidence: the world could only be as we observe if the cause of things was, as the natural religionists claim, infinitely good; or if it was infinitely evil; or if it was composed of warring opposites of good and evil; or if it was neither good nor evil. This leaves only the last explanation, that the cause of the universe was indifferent to good or evil.

D. These arguments are consistent with Hume's earlier philosophical writings. Taken with those earlier writings, the conclusions and implications of the *Dialogues* leave little room for either natural religion or Christianity.

1. Hume wrote on miracles and the implications for a "proof" of Christianity.
2. He argued the immortality of the soul.
3. He argued the irrelevance of religion to civic duty.
4. He wrote on the necessary elitism of disbelief.

E. Hume's dialogues are a powerful challenge to the optimism of natural religion.

Essential Reading:

David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sections X and XI, from *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and the Posthumous Essays.* Edited by Richard H. Popkin. (Indianapolis:1980).

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Supplementary Reading:

David Hume, *A Natural History of Religion* in *Writings on Religion.* Edited by Antony Flew. (Chicago: 1992).

Questions to Consider:

1. We know that David Hume claims atheism to be an absurdly dogmatic position. What distinguishes Hume's rejection of natural religion from atheism?
2. Is the marriage of philosophy and religion more dangerous to the former or to the latter?

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Lecture Forty-Seven

Adam Smith and the Origins of Political Economy

Jeremy Shearmur, Ph.D.

Scope: This lecture explains the key ideas and the significance of Adam Smith's views, in his *Wealth of Nations*, about the division of labor. It looks at the division of labor in a workshop and the wider question of the social division of labor. We will also examine the significance of this view for Smith's social philosophy, which suggests that a market-based society allows social cooperation to take place as an unintended consequence of individuals' pursuit of their economic self-interests. People are led—by following price signals—to coordinate their behavior with that of others and to meet the needs of others, about whom they may know nothing. This leads, further, to Smith's more general ideas about the "invisible hand."

For this cooperation to occur, however, requires more than just the operation of self-interest, which would pose problems if, for example, people were to steal from, rather than to trade with, one another. This problem leads us, in turn, to Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in which he sets out a distinctive account of the genesis of our moral ideas and of our conscience, an account that also underlies his ideas about law and why people obey it.

Smith's ideas about the gains in wealth that result from the division of labor, and the way in which social cooperation can result from the social pursuit of self-interest without the need for a social planner, have recently been celebrated by conservatives and libertarians. But Smith also discussed the disadvantages of the division of labor, in terms graphic enough to be quoted by Karl Marx in his *Capital.* We will look at this aspect of Smith's work—and at the mixed messages that, in consequence, he offers for us today.

Outline

I. Smith's Background.
   A. Smith lived from 1723 to 1790, was a Scot, and worked variously as a lecturer, tutor, customs official, and writer.
   B. His key works include *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759 and onward), *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), and the posthumously published *Lectures on Jurisprudence* and *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (drawn from student notes).
   C. Importance of Smith's ideas.
      1. He offers a distinctive and powerful vision of commercial society.

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2. He has had a continuing ideological impact—note the Adam Smith ties of the Thatcher/Reagan period.
3. Smith also discussed the disadvantages of commercial society in terms graphic enough to be quoted by Karl Marx, a leading critic of capitalism.

II. In *The Wealth of Nations*, the key theme is the division of labor.

- **A.** Smith illustrates this division by discussing a pin-making workshop and the gains in productivity that result from specialization.
- **B.** The social division of labor includes:
  1. Coordination in the workshop, which takes place by means of the decisions of its manager.
  2. Coordination in society, which takes place by way of self-interest and individuals' actions being guided by prices.
  3. Cooperation as an unintended consequence of such self-interested behavior. How many people are involved, for example, in the production of a pencil? From timber to mined metal, probably thousands of strangers are involved in the process.
- **C.** This example illustrates broader themes in Smith's work.
  1. We get what we need from others because of their self-interest, not their benevolence or charity.
  2. Smith also puts forth the idea of the "invisible hand"—his way of saying that the operation of individual self-interest may also foster other unintended social consequences that are generally desirable.
- **D.** But *how* does it all work, and are the unintended consequences of human action always good? To answer this, we need to look at his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and—on the latter question—at the final edition of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and his *Lectures on Jurisprudence*.

III. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

- **A.** Does Smith think that people are simply self-interested? No, he has a fine feeling for the often complex moral motivations that people have. Smith also offers distinctive ideas about how we should understand morality.
- **B.** Ideas derived from this work also play a key role in explaining the legal and behavioral framework of *The Wealth of Nations* and why Smith thought that people comply with the framework. Self-interest will only deliver the goods if people trade with, not rob, one another. Ideas from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* offer an explanation of human morality and of why we obey the law.
- **C.** Key ideas of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.
  1. We want the approval of others.
  2. Their reactions serve as a mirror in which we discover aspects of ourselves and our characters that are not otherwise visible to us (cf. David Hume on how we discover we have bad breath).
  3. The result of this desire is that we internalize (and correct) the specific judgments of others and seek to behave such that an impartial spectator would approve of our conduct.
  4. In Smith's view, our conscience is, thus, a social product.
- **D.** Smith also has ideas about social order and why we obey the law.
  1. In part, we obey the law from a perception of its usefulness (compare, here, the perspective of the rich landowner).
  2. In part, we—especially ordinary people—obey the law because of the mechanisms of what Smith calls the "theory of ranks." He suggests that ordinary people project our fantasies about an ideal life onto the situation of the fortunate and are then influenced by these people's views. Does this seem farfetched? Consider contemporary sports stars' product endorsements!
- **E.** Smith also offered us interesting ideas for the analysis and explanation of moral and legal codes. He argued that the mechanisms of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (and self-interest) produce different products in different social settings, depending on the "mode of subsistence"; these ideas are set out most fully in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence*.
- **F.** He also offered an account of the basis of our ideas about justice. He argues that negative judgments (about injustice) are the basis for the development of a system of justice and for ideas about rights.
- **G.** Finally, does Smith have an uncritical view of the desirable consequences of self-interest and the moral sentiments? One might say this about the first edition of *Moral Sentiments*, but in later work, Smith is less optimistic.

IV. The disadvantages of commercial society were many.

- **A.** Smith argues in the *Lectures on Jurisprudence* and *The Wealth of Nations* that the disadvantages of commercial society are numerous.
  1. He discusses the disadvantages of the division of both physical and mental labor.
  2. He also expresses worries about the moral consequences of the shift of an ordinary person from a village, where that person has a reputation to lose, to the anonymity of a big city, where degeneracy and vice may result.
- **B.** In the final revision of *Moral Sentiments* (1790), Smith worries about the bad influence of the rich on the poor, such as the adherence to fashions that the poor cannot afford to emulate.

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V. Smith offers many wider lessons.

A. Smith offers a vision of commercial society as self-coordinating: this is why libertarians and market-oriented conservatives wear Adam Smith ties. He also argues that this society operates in the interests of everyone, including the poor.

B. We can still learn from the richness of his account and his awareness of problems and complexities. Smith is not a dogmatic defender of laissez-faire.

C. Above all, Smith has a fine sense of tradeoffs. Note, in particular, how the very mechanism that generates wealth—the division of labor—which in Smith's view assists the poorest members of society, also poses grave problems for the attractive ideal of the well-rounded citizen.

D. All these ideas give us much to think about concerning our own society.

1. Do the benefits of the division of labor outweigh its disadvantages?
2. Does commercial society benefit the poor?
3. Are the unintended consequences of self-interested action by and large to the advantage of other people?

Essential Reading:

Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations* (Oxford: 1998).

------------ *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (New York: 1971).

Supplementary Reading:

Michael Ignatieff, "The Market and the Republic," in his *The Needs of Strangers* (London: 1994).

Knud Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, "Needs and Justice in *The Wealth of Nations*," in Hont and Ignatieff, eds., *Wealth and Virtue* (Cambridge, England: 1982).

Jerry Z. Muller, *Adam Smith in His Time and Ours* (Princeton: 1995).

D. Raphael, *Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1985).

I. S. Ross, *The Life of Adam Smith* (Oxford: 1996).

Donald Winch, *Adam Smith's Politics* (Cambridge: 1978).

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Questions to Consider:

1. Should supporters of Mrs. Thatcher and Ronald Reagan have worn Adam Smith ties (i.e., does Smith's approach really amount to an endorsement of their perspective on things)?
2. Are the tensions between the desirable and undesirable features of "commercial society" just the same as they were at the time when Smith wrote, or have they been resolved by—or made worse by—changes that have taken place since then?

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Lecture Forty-Eight

Rousseau's Dissent

Alan Kors, Ph.D.

Scope: Rousseau shared much in common with Enlightenment thought—above all, his Lockeanism, his deism, and his commitment to religious tolerance. However, his critique of so-called "progress" in the arts and sciences and his celebration of the primitive in original nature constituted a major dissent from prevailing Enlightenment beliefs and a major legacy to the future of Western thought. For Rousseau, cultural "progress" invariably has led to moral decadence, creating artificial needs and artificial inequalities. Society has made us selfish, vicious, weak, arrogant, and unnatural. We blame God for the ills by which we are surrounded, but we are the authors of those evils, misusing the freedom of the will with which God honored us. Humans formed society by some tragic miscalculation of necessity, and it is a permanent state. The problem, then, is to recognize the depradations of artificial social life and to seek to redeem those to the greatest extent possible. This redemption can take place by returning to the religion of nature (deism), by educating the young by the most natural means available (so that they learn directly from nature itself), and by locating legitimate political sovereignty only in the general will that seeks the good of all over the particular good. The legacy of all of these Rousseauist themes is influential and profound, extending to counterculture movements of a "return to nature," Kant's categorical imperative in moral theory, and various benign and not-so-benign efforts to ground political sovereignty in virtue rather than in numerical majorities.

Outline

I. So much is different about Jean-Jacques Rousseau: his artistic background, his self-education, his Genevan Protestant origins, his sense of himself as a solitary man in an age of sociability.

- **A.** A fervent deist, even there Rousseau struck a dissonant chord: his aversion to the atheists; his proofs of God; his own arguments, he claimed, required good faith and feeling, as well as a distrust of the motives of the philosophers.
- **B.** What the *philosophes* call "progress," he argued, can be the enemy of truth and virtue.

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II. Rousseau exploded onto the European intellectual scene with his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1749). He argued both from history and reason that progress in the arts and sciences has led us away from virtue, lessening rather than increasing it.

- **A.** Rousseau used historical reasoning. Evidence teaches us that moral decadence always accompanies cultural progress.
  1. Since the Renaissance, our polite and cultivated society has lost its ancient virtues.
  2. Our social frenzy covers a profound depravity such as overtook Egypt, Greece, and Rome after their transitions from simpler societies to more cultivated and cultured ones.
  3. The simple Swiss and the American Indians compare favorably to the most cultured Europeans in both virtue and happiness.
  4. Everyone understands, he wrote, the moral superiority of Sparta to cultured Athens.
- **B.** Rousseau's rational analysis shows the linkage between cultural progress and moral decadence.
  1. The arts and sciences create, then satisfy, artificial vices and human pride, serving luxury and vanity, not our natural needs.
  2. The arts and sciences lead to laziness and boredom.

III. Given the Enlightenment and the debates about human nature and culture ever since, Rousseau raised questions that have had a permanent place in Western thought.

- **A.** He celebrates the primitive over the cultivated.
- **B.** Culture is perceived as decadence.
- **C.** The "natural" is opposed to the "artificial."

IV. To understand the development of these themes (which will lead to some of the most significant literature of the French Enlightenment), we first must understand Rousseau's deism and defense of providence. Let us encounter the Rousseau whom the philosophers met at mid-century.

- **A.** He offers a proof of God from motion within a system of inert matter, from the spontaneous motion of living things, and from the ordered and lawful motions of the world. We must infer, by means of "inner light," a will that is intelligent, wise, powerful, and good. Order cannot be the product of chance.
- **B.** Why do we suffer if God is infinitely good? This is an essential question for Rousseau's deism. He answers that we are the authors of our own ills. Humanity is the king of nature, because we are free, but we abuse the freedom that makes us supreme in the creation and do evil. Humans, not God, are the source of evil.

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C. We do ill, but we know good, because God has engraved conscience in our hearts. Conscience is universal (as shown by the codes of all the religions and nations) and it points us to the general will (seeking the happiness of all) rather than to the particular will (seeking our own happiness at the expense of others).

V. Rousseau's *Second Discourse, On the Origins of Inequality* (1755) is a further justification of God's created nature against the human deformation of our world. Rousseau addresses the question of whether inequality is natural, answering in the negative.

A. Rousseau's lyrical picture of primitive, pre-social humanity informs us of what we have lost as a result of civilization.

1. In the state of nature, we were vigorous, naturally healthy, morally sound, governed by an ideal mechanism of self-love and compassion, and living only according to natural instinct, without the torment of the passions or fear of death.
2. We were neither bad nor good, because we were isolated and asocial.
3. There was no ownership, including no ownership of women.
4. Natural inequalities were all physical and without serious consequences.
5. We think we need our modern society, but it is civilization that produces our ailments. There were many early deaths in nature, but those who lived were wonderfully fit, just as American Indians are healthier than the Europeans.

B. Rousseau senses the great tragedy in human history: out of some perceived ephemeral need, we created permanent society.

1. Society is a dominant, coercively triumphant form of human life that sweeps away the morally superior primitive.
2. Society introduces unnatural forms that create unnatural relationships, including property; division of labor; social inequality; the imposition first of the strong, then of the rich.
3. Arbitrary power creates and maintains social injustice that thinks it is natural, but that is wholly a creation of culture. Both master and dependent are the victims of its unnatural needs and social insecurities.
4. The attempt to satisfy artificial needs stifles conscience and natural compassion and breeds selfishness. We are separated from our real (God-given) natures as a species.

VI. For Rousseau, we have two means of partial reparation: education and a new moral foundation for politics.

A. Rousseau's *Emile*, his treatise on education, seeks to create the greatest amount of natural learning and inoculation against social depravity.

1. The goal is direct education by nature, not by men or things.

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2. Education begins in infancy. Let the child learn natural freedom (his argument against swaddling clothes) and natural affections (his argument for breast feeding and raising one's own children).
3. Let the child learn by experience, not by rote or books.
4. Form strong bodies and senses and develop confidence in these.
5. Develop the intellect by observation and by promoting reasoning in the service of real needs.
6. Let the student learn morals from natural consequences and mutually beneficial interactions that depend on ethical principles and relationships.
7. Avoid religious education until adolescence. Understanding should always relate to real needs of life.
8. Teach the student a useful, honest trade, not a "career."
9. In short, inoculate the student against social depravity and send the most natural person possible into the world of men.

B. Rousseau argues that a proper understanding of the nature and basis of government can make moral, rather than depraved, citizens.

1. Rousseau's social contract, in contrast to Locke's or Cesare Beccaria's, insists that all individual freedom is given to the state; unlike Hobbes's, it insists that one's happiness is one's share of the happiness of the society.
2. When one's self-interest can only be furthered by pursuing the well being of all others, society becomes a means to overcome selfishness and to permit moral beings to exist in civilized society.
3. To achieve that, only the "general will" (that which seeks the interest of all) has political authority.
4. This idea has profound democratic tendencies: the general will arises from all and applies to all.
5. An immoral and depraved majority has no legitimacy; only the general will does. In Rousseau's formulation, only the general will is sovereign, not the majority per se.
6. Being subject to our moral selves (the general will) forces us to be free and unenslaved to our own or others' artificial power, even while in society.
7. To preserve the general will and the social contract, there must be no factions, no gulf between rich and poor, and no society too large for democratic self-governance.

VII. The Rousseauist legacy is always present and active.

A. It includes the view that nature is opposed to civilization. We have made ourselves unhappy.

B. Society must seek to restore nature.

C. Freedom is being governed by the general, not the particular, and by virtue, not self-interest.

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D. Thus, the Jacobins and communal counterculture can lay claims to Rousseau; Kant's pacific categorical imperative and the totalitarian submergence of the individual into the corporate body both lay claims to him as well. He is with us still.

Essential Reading:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, from *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Lester G. Crocker, ed. (New York: 1967).

Supplementary Reading:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* and *Emile*, Books I and II, in Crocker.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways does it make sense to think of Rousseau as a defender or as an opponent of the project of the Enlightenment?
2. What aspects of Rousseau's thought have been most appropriated by later thinkers?

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Glossary

Commercial society: A society that has an extensive division of labor and the rule of law and in which people's activities are coordinated largely by contracts and market mechanisms.

Consequentialism: The idea, central to utilitarianism, that an action should be valued according to its consequences rather than from any supposed intrinsic worth or character.

Division of labor: Tasks, such as pin making, in Adam Smith's example, are split up into component parts in which particular individuals specialize.

Empiricism: The philosophical doctrine that all knowledge arises from experience and that what cannot be confirmed by experience is not known (or naturally known).

Enlightenment: A period of European intellectual history roughly congruent with the eighteenth century; the era saw a spirited rejection of the presumptive authority of the past for a reliance on experience and reason.

Idealism: The philosophical doctrine that reality is fundamentally mental.

Invisible hand: The idea that socially desirable unintended consequences may derive from self-interested individual action.

Labor theory of value: The idea, per Locke, that property is worth only so much as the labor invested in it.

Laissez-faire: The doctrine that government should not intervene in the economy, beyond action to secure people's persons and property rights.

Materialism: The philosophical view, opposed to dualism, that the world is composed entirely of matter.

Nominalism: The belief that the world is composed of particulars, not universals, asserted by Boethius.

Rationalism: The philosophical doctrine that all true knowledge is found by reason alone, independent of the senses.

Tabula rasa: A blank slate (the Lockean view of the human mind at birth).

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Biographical Notes

Berkeley, George (1685–1753). Berkeley was born near Kilkenny, Ireland, of English lineage. At age fifteen, he enrolled in Trinity College, Dublin, where he studied divinity. In 1707, three years after graduating, he became a fellow of the college and in 1709, he published his *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision.* At age twenty-six, he published his most important book, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710), which established his reputation as one of the three great British empiricists (with Locke and Hume). During the 1720s, Berkeley planned (but ultimately failed to establish) a new college in Bermuda to educate Native Americans and the sons of English planters. After his return to Ireland, he was appointed the Anglican bishop of the poor and isolated diocese of Cloyne (in 1734). He died in Oxford, England, in 1753.

Hume, David (1711–1776). Hume was born into a well-to-do family in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was admitted to Edinburgh University at age eleven but left the university without graduating and spent the following years studying at home. In 1734, Hume moved to France, where he wrote his brilliant *Treatise of Human Nature.* He was greatly disappointed by the widespread neglect and ridicule of the *Treatise* following its publication. To improve the work's accessibility to readers, Hume published anonymously *An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature* (1740) and reworked sections of the *Treatise* as *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). In 1752, Hume published his *Political Discourses* and, in 1755, his *Natural History of Religion.* During these years, he sought but was denied two professorships, one at Edinburgh and the other at Glasgow, largely because of his unacceptable religious views. In 1752, Hume was appointed librarian to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, a position that allowed him to continue work on his six-volume *History of England* (1754–1761). In 1767, Hume became Undersecretary of the Northern Department of the Secretary of State in London, a post that he held for two years. He spent his final years in Scotland.

Locke, John (1632–1704). Locke was born into a middle-class English family and educated at the best British schools (first Westminster in London, then Oxford) in both philosophy and medicine. A royal scholar and a diplomat, he was elected in 1668 to Britain's prestigious scientific academy, the Royal Society. He published his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Letter on Toleration and Two Treatises of Government* in 1689. Locke may be characterized as an "insider" in the reformist tradition of Aristotle, particularly in relation to their views on property. Like Hobbes, Locke sought to resolve the political crisis and sense of intellectual disorder around him by producing a coherent and compelling system of political theory. Yet the differences between Hobbes and Locke outweigh their similarities. Although both were Englishmen of the seventeenth century and set forth theories of a social contract (or compact), Locke did not follow Hobbes's prescriptions of absolute government.

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Instead, Locke wrote a powerful statement for liberty, albeit for the propertied classes.

Mandeville, Bernard (1670–1733). Born in Holland, Mandeville went to England to study the language and stayed on permanently. In his most famous work, *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), he argued that the self-interest of the individual was the basis for society and that social codes fashioned by the church or state are imposed merely to check this impulse. Mandeville, criticized in his own day by Bishop Berkeley, had an important effect on the later utilitarians.

Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de (1689–1755). Son and heir of an aristocratic family of the *parlement* de Bordeaux (the supreme provincial law court), and educated first by the Oratorians, then in the law, Montesquieu became one of the most widely read political theorists of the eighteenth century and wielded international influence. Participating early in the academies of Bordeaux, then in the Academie Française, Montesquieu came to prominence with his satiric and probing *Lettres Persanes* in 1721. He also published a work on the greatness and decline of Rome in 1734 and is known for his groundbreaking work *L'Esprit des loix* (*The Spirit of the Laws*), published in 1748. This book earned him the widest range of criticism and admiration, and many believe that it lays the foundation of sociological thinking.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712–1778). A self-educated refugee in France from Geneva (from which he fled an unhappy apprenticeship to an engraver), Rousseau became one of the most beloved and one of the most hated thinkers of the eighteenth century, a thinker of immediate and ongoing importance. In Paris from the 1740s until 1756, he moved in Enlightenment circles, but he offered foundational criticism of the *philosophes'* belief in progress and what he saw as their over-reliance on reason. From 1756 to 1761, he lived outside of Paris, writing in a variety of genres with great success. In 1762, the year that his influential works *Emile* and *The Social Contract* were published, Rousseau was banished from Paris for his criticisms of Christianity in *Emile.* He fled to Switzerland, where he was the subject of Protestant persecution. He spent an unhappy stretch in England, returning to France in 1767 and composing major works of self-examination, including his celebrated *Confessions.*

Smith, Adam (1723–1790). Smith was born at Kirkcaldy, Scotland, and educated at the University of Glasgow and Oxford University. Though known today as the founder of modern political economy, his initial successes were in moral philosophy. His first major work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), was culled from the lectures he gave as professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow. Smith was a friend of David Hume, who entrusted him with the publication, after Hume's death, of the *Discourse on Natural Religion.* After a brief stint as a lecturer at Edinburgh University and a decade as a professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow, Smith accepted a position as tutor to the Duke of Buccleuch, with whom he traveled on the Continent between 1764 and 1766. While in Paris, Smith met a number of French physiocrats and began

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work on *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. He spent the following decade at home in Kirkcaldy working on the text, which he published in 1776. In 1778, Smith was appointed Commissioner of Customs for Scotland. His *Philosophical Subjects* was published posthumously in 1795.

Vico, Giambattista (1668–1744). Vico was born in Naples, where as a youth he could often be found studying in the seclusion of his father's bookshop. He attended a Jesuit college and subsequently tutored, for some years, the nephews of the bishop of Ischia. In 1699, Vico was named professor of rhetoric at the University of Naples, a post that he held until shortly before his death. Vico is regarded by many as the first modern historian, a great philosopher of history, and a brilliant social theorist. His major work, *Scienza Nuova* (*The New Science*), portrays history as offering descriptions of the creation and development of human cultures and institutions. Vico's work seems to have been largely unacknowledged during the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, however, his work influenced the French historian Jules Michelet and was esteemed in England by the poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Arnold. In the twentieth century, his work has been admired and written about by such intellectuals as Benedetto Croce and R. G. Collingwood.

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Notes

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