THE ENLIGHTENMENT LEGACY OF DAVID HUME

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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December, 1989

Jenkins, Joan, <u>The Enlightenment Legacy of David Hume</u>. Doctor of Philosophy (History), December 1989, 342 pp., bibliography, 108 titles.

Although many historians assert the unity of the Enlightenment, their histories essentially belie this notion. Consequently, Enlightenment history is confused and meaningless, urging the reader to believe that diversity is similarity and faction is unity. Fundamental among the common denominators of these various interpretations, however, are the scientific method and empirical observation, as introduced by Newton. These, historians acclaim as the turning point when mankind escaped the ignorance of superstition and the oppression of the church, and embarked upon the modern secular age.

The Enlightenment, however, founders immediately upon its own standards of empiricism and demonstrable philosophical tenets, with the exception of David Hume. As the most consistent and fearless empiricist of the era, Hume's is by far the most "legitimate" philosophy of the Enlightenment, but it starkly contrasts the rhetoric and ideology of the <u>philosophe</u> community, and, therefore, defies attempts by historians to incorporate it into the traditional Enlightenment picture. Hume, then, exposes the Enlightenment dilemma: either the Enlightenment is not empirical, but rather the new Age of Faith Carl Becker proclaimed it, or Enlightenment philosophy is that of Hume.

This study presents the historical characterization of major Enlightenment themes, such as method, reason, religion, morality, and politics, then juxtaposes this picture with the particulars (data) that contradict or seriously qualify it. As a result, much superficial analysis, wishful thinking, even proselytizing is demonstrated in the traditional

Enlightenment characterization, especially with regard to the widely heralded liberal and progressive legacy of the era.

In contrast, Hume's conclusions, based on the method of Newton--the essence of "enlightened" philosophy, are presented, revealing the authoritarian character (and legacy) of the Enlightenment as well as the utility and relevance of its method when honestly and rigorously applied. Through David Hume, the twentieth century can truly acquire what the Enlightenment promised--an understanding of human nature and a genuinely secular society.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Revered as one of the great eras of Western history, the Enlightenment holds particular interest for the twentieth century. In the Enlightenment, historians observe the emergence of our modern world and, therefore, the roots of our present day. Most writers perceive a unified "enlightened" movement, but its precise character has yet to be established. In fact, the diversity of opinion among the proponents of unity essentially undermines their claim. The deleterious result of this situation is that textbooks, adhering to the apparent consensus regarding unity, disseminate a characterization of the era that does not reflect the qualifications, even confusion, in scholarly studies.

In the interests of devising a meaningful analysis of the eighteenth century, a new approach to the study seems appropriate, that is, evaluating the era in terms of its own claims. All historians consider the scientific method the turning point for "enlightened" philosophy. This tool provided the foundation of the new world view. It made the "enlightened" creed more valid, hence, superior to the cosmology of the Scholastics and rationalists. Historians assert the significance of the method yet, at the same time, they acknowledge the philosophes' failure to adhere to it. They accept the empirical rhetoric of the philosophes without serious analysis of the implications of their methodological failure. These are glaringly demonstrated in the case of David Hume, the premier empiricist of the age.

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Hume's conclusions, based on a consistent use of empirical method, isolate him from the traditional Enlightenment character. Consequently, the problem of David Hume in the Enlightenment is the problem of method in the Enlightenment.

Born in 1711, Hume was exposed to the new philosophy of Newton at an early age at Edinburgh University. Though his family intended him for the law, he found himself consumed by the study of philosophy. Excited by the potential of Newton's method to establish the truth of existence, he threw himself into eight years of intense study that ruined his health. At this time Hume seems to have projected the work that would become his Treatise, the "Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects'." He believed he had struck upon a procedure that would revolutionize philosophy, but he was well aware that such revolutions are effected with much difficulty. After a brief sabbatical in the world of business in Bristol, Hume had sufficiently recovered his health to return to his studies.

He went to France and at La Fleche in Anjou, attractive for its inexpensive accomodations and its Jesuit college with a library of 40,000 books, he completed the Treatise in two years. Returning to London, Hume sought a publisher and excised certain potentially offensive portions of his work (including "Of Miracles") that would appear in his later publication, Philosophical Enquiries concerning Human Understanding. In 1738 Book I, "Of the Understanding," and II, "Of the Passions," were published. Book III, "Of Morals," appeared in 1740. In response to the disparaging reviews that followed, Hume published an Abstract attempting to clarify the Treatise's theses of causation and skepticism.

Hume returned to Scotland and published essays, but his financial needs urged him to apply for the chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University, which was denied him because of his subversive views. He took a position as companion to the mad young Marquess of Annandale in 1745, during which time he composed the Letter From a Gentleman and worked on the history of England and the first Enquiry. From 1746-1748, he interrupted his studies to serve as secretary to General St. Clair.

Hume returned to Edinburgh where he spent most of the rest of his life. In 1751 he applied for the chair of Logic at Glasgow University to no avail. His appointment as Keeper of the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh produced his six volume History of England published over the years 1754 to 1762. With these, the Enquiry concering the Principles of Morals (1751) and the publication of the Political Discourses, Hume was renowned in England and on the Continent as a man of letters.

Appointed personal secretary to Lord Hertford, British ambassador to France after the Seven Years War, Hume later became Secretary to the Embassy and for a time charge d'affaires. When he returned to England in 1766, he brought with him Jean-Jacques Rousseau, paranoid and isolated from the community of letters in France, for whom he procured a pension from the king. The arrangement ended badly and Hume felt forced to defend his own integrity in a published pamphlet. A year in London as Under-Secretary of State, Northern Department under General Conway bridged Hume's return to Edinburgh in 1769, where he lived in philosophical retreat until his death in 1776. The Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, to some his greatest work, was published posthumously in 1779.

Only on literary reputation does Hume fit with the philosophe community of the Enlightenment. His strict empiricism yielded conclusions and opinions at odds with "enlightened" thought, but more valid in terms of the philosophes' own methodological claims. If the strict and regular use of the empirical method is the hallmark of "enlightened" philosophy, then that philosophy is David Hume's and historians are wrong in their characterization of "enlightened" thinking and unity. If the method is not fundamental, if Hume is an exceptional case, then historians, with the exception of Carl Becker, are wrong about the Enlightenment character and, therefore, its legacy. It was not an empirical breakthrough to truth, but rather another rationalist movement to promote a priori ideas.

The objective of this study is to use Hume as a yardstick for the critical analysis of the Enlightenment character on the basis of the historical opinion that method was the essence of the "enlightened" achievement. In Chapters III through VII, major Enlightenment themes--reason, religion, morality, and politics, are presented in the traditional "unified" historical characterization and then juxtaposed with qualifications and contradictions by the same historians of the "unity" school, such that the traditional picture is challenged, if not undermined. By contrasting the strict empirical view of Hume with this picture, the shortcomings of the philosophes' philosophy and its analysis by historians become apparent. As a corrective to Enlightenment history, especially as its determines the Enlightenment legacy, an authentic empirical Enlightenment, a "Humean" Enlightenment justified by its method, is proposed, further affirming Becker's thesis. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the validity and relevance of Hume's thought in the twentieth century is explored in the hopes of

illuminating the value of his method and our present-day understanding of
our human nature and society.

CHAPTER II

THE ENLIGHTENMENT PROBLEM

More than any other historical era, scholars have analyzed and re-analyzed
the "Enlightenment" of the eighteenth century, determining its relevance to
our modern age. Either honoring or deploring this so-called Age of Reason,
historians have looked to it for the seeds of modern greatness or for the
roots of contemporary evil.[1] Considering the significance of such studies
for revealing the basis of our twentieth century Western character, it is
interesting (and occasionally distressing) to note the wide and varied
differences of opinion reflected in historical treatments of the subject.
Unanimity of interpretation is certainly not the desired objective of
historical study, but while most historians insist that the "Enlightenment"
has a distinct character or unity, the distinctions are virtually as numerous
as the works published. Almost every writer has his favorite or
"representative" philosophe ranging from Diderot "more than any other of
the philosophes ... 'the spokesman of the century,'"[2] to Voltaire in whose
writings one "will find neatly and often wittily expressed almost all the
ideas with which the Enlightenment started,"[3] to Hume "an authentic
philosophe and the most original philosopher of the age."[4] While some
writers trace Voltaire's development from optimism to a more brooding
pessimism after the Lisbon earthquake,[5] others perceive a change from
resignation to a commitment to "polemical action" after Candide.[6] In one
interpretation the Marquis de Sade is a logical extreme of enlightened

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thinking; in another he is a "caricature," not an heir of the philosophes.[7]
Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Kant have been disassociated from the
"extreme form" of the "new world-view of the Enlightenment."[8] Elsewhere
d'Holbach, Condorcet, Bentham, Rousseau, and Kant are "withheld" from the
Enlightenment and associated with the Sturm und Drang movement.[9]
Rousseau is the focus of heated debate as to whether he is of the Age of
Reason--the Enlightenment's "consummation"--or the harbinger of the
Romantic Era. One easy solution is that he was both.[10]

The philosophes themselves believed theirs to be an age of criticism
and reason, and it is perhaps their assurances that suggest a unity of
movement to modern historians. Ernst Cassirer, to whom a number of
Enlightenment historians have expressed indebtedness, sees unity in the era
in its novel re-analysis of old ideas and its consequent formulation of "a
completely original form of philosophic thought." In his The Philosophy of
the Enlightenment, Cassirer notices the change from the "spirit of system"
to the "systematic spirit." He comments,

> Instead of confining philosophy within the limits of a systematic
> doctrinal structure, instead of tying it to definite immutable axioms
> and deductions from them, the Enlightenment wants philosophy to
> move freely and in this immanent activity to discover the
> fundamental form of reality, the form of all natural and spiritual
> being.[11]

These fundamentals were considered "immutable and unshakable" and
their revelation a tool for action, not merely reflection.[12] Cassirer's
Enlightenment is one of active conviction (although varied) and enthusiasm.

In An Age of Crisis: Man and World in Eighteenth Century French
Thought, Lester Crocker considers some of the "problems" of enlightened

philosophy--evil, the natural goodness and perfectibility of man, etc. In reviewing these themes, Crocker discusses the range of philosophe opinion from one extreme to another. He describes the "eighteenth century crisis" as "thrashing around in concentric whirls" excusable as "true of any period of revolutionary change." He perceives the philosophes as unsure of their desired direction because of their limited perspective in the midst of the struggle, hence their diverse opinions and philosophical shortcomings. Nevertheless, they were optimistic and affirmative regarding man, and under the surface

> there was meaningful movement, in clear directional lines. . . . [a] revolt against the traditional concepts . . . and a consistent search . . . for new explanations and for new aims and means consonant with a naturalisic and realistic outlook.[13]

Particularly attentive to the political legacy of the Enlightenment is Alfred Cobban's In Search of Humanity: The Role of the Enlightenment in Modern History. Observing the institutional promotion of happiness to be the process and objective of the Enlightenment, he credits the era with contributing most of the liberal ideals to intellectual history and absolves it of responsibility for the modern nation-state with its total authority over individual rights.[14] Cobban contends that philosophy and religion in the nineteenth century undermined the "rational world-outlook of the eighteenth." He asserts that in determining its legacy "the Enlightenment is all of a piece and cannot be accepted or rejected in parts."[15]

Continuing the quest for a unifying theme, other authors offer a variety of possibilities. Louis Bredvold in The Brave New World of the Enlightenment portrays the philosophes as rejecting the traditional concept

of the Law of Nature, that of ultimate right and justice pre-existent to any written law--an "ethical imperative," relying rather on a mechanistic, rational, and relative view of the universe for their program.[16] Robert Anchor, The Enlightenment Tradition, associates the progress of the era with the rise of the bourgeoisie marking the decline of the age with the triumph of that class. Other historians dispense with the term "Enlightenment" but discuss the "moment when the French rationalist movement made its juncture with the English empirical-analytic movement."[17] Observing the whole second half of the century drifting to the Romantic concept of nature, Crane Brinton describes the "offspring" era as in revolt against its parent.[18] Robert Ginsberg proposes that Enlightenment theories are correctives to previous theories[19] and not necessarily a science or a new, more valid truth. R. G. Collingwood's Enlightenment is a negative anti-religious crusade, personified by Voltaire.[20]

In a sort of "middle" position, Leonard Krieger sees an eighteenth century "evolution" rather than unity. Outlining two phases, Krieger traces the development of a "loose collection of like-minded individuals" united by their acknowledgement of "the common task of turning the philosophies of secular reason and natural science into a real cultural force."[21] This early phase accepted the method of Newton and Locke, constructed an "intellectual framework" of nature on which new theories regarding man, society , and the world could be based, and began the "application of the new combination of practicality and rationality to particular events, works, and activities."[22] By the mature Enlightenment, Krieger observes doctrines susceptible to organization into "rigorous systems," but he absolves the

philosophes from "total systems" on a par with Aquinas.[23] Ultimately, the philosophes' "flexible reasonableness" of the early days was betrayed by "intransigent rationalism."[24] Krieger faults both philosophes and later historians for "distorting the movement," assigning it a congruity and "an exclusive cultural influence which it did not ... possess."[25]

A few historians balk at any generalization and question the unity of the movement or at least history's ability to demonstrate it. In an article reviewing Cassirer's book, Herbert Dieckmann considers the method of study as a problem for Enlightenment historians.

> [They] assert the existence of an eighteenth century philosophy which can be unified in a coherent picture and then claim that some major thinkers or currents of that period refuted and overcame the eighteenth century. What eighteenth century? one is tempted to ask.[26]

"Either there is a philosophy ... and ... the different currents" must fit or there is not and "we must limit ourselves to a series of monographs." Dieckmann points out that the philosophes could contradict each other but they could not contradict eighteenth century philosophy since they constitute that philosophy. In his view the Enlightenment looks like "a prelude to Romanticism."[27] Daniel Boorstin, in his essay "History Through Bifocal Glasses," makes an appeal for discerning the variety, diversity, and chaos of the eighteenth century rather than "homogeniz[ing]" an "eighteenth century mind."[28] Responding to Peter Gay's assertion that there was an Enlightenment movement, Boorstin questions the philosophes' belief in progress and points out that each individual "route by which they arrived at these conclusions" could still separate them.[29] Despite this warning about imposing consistency where none may exist, the general tendency in

Enlightenment history has been detecting and synthesizing a unity within the era.

Although opinion varies widely regarding the specifics and emphases of Enlightenment history, an "accepted" Enlightenment character has emerged and is widely popularized through textbooks in an "Age of Reason" chapter. This Enlightenment is generally characterized by the following themes: (1) reason and method, (2) deism, (3) optimism and progress, (4) reform, and (5) the secularization of human existence. Although the "movement" is characterized as international, in actuality, it is French in its important writings and personalities.[30] This Enlightenment has bequeathed a glorious and liberal legacy.

The controversy and problems of Enlightenment history are most clearly set forth in the works of Carl L. Becker and Peter Gay. In The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers, Becker profoundly shook the traditional Enlightenment interpretation, initiating a small revisionist "movement" that provoked a passionate response among "traditional" Enlightenment historians to restore or vindicate their viewpoint.

In his speculative history, Becker undermines the Enlightenment's claim to modernity by asserting the great similarity between the Ages of Faith and Reason. He proposes that "the underlying preconceptions of eighteenth-century thought were still . . . essentially the same as those of the thirteenth century. . . . [T]here is more of Christian philosophy in the writings of the Philosophes than has yet been dreamt of in our histories."[31] Both ages held that beliefs could be reasonably demonstrated and both produced faithful apologists of truth. In contrast to the traditional

characterization of the philosophes as skeptics or atheists "addicted to science and the scientific method, . . . defenders of liberty, equality, [and] freedom of speech," Becker portrays men who ridiculed the creation story, while adoring a Deity who set a perfect machine universe in motion; rejected traditional authority only to submit to "natural law"; denied miracles but accepted the perfectibility of man; and denied immortality but longed for it in posterity's esteem.[32] Describing the dogmas and rites of the French Revolution, the saints and martyrs to liberty, and the mystical faith in humanity, Becker makes an excellent case for an eighteenth century religious fervor minus only the old religion.

Among the most recognized Enlightenment historians and perhaps the greatest defender of its unity and "traditional" character is Peter Gay.[33] His thesis is difficult to ascertain, however, because while he adheres to the traditional interpretation (especially with regard to a liberal legacy), he attempts to qualify what he considers a narrow (and unjust) characterization with one of greater complexity. To offset a typical portrait of the philosophes as "naive optimists, cold rationalists, abstract literary men, with a Utopian vision of the world and . . . no sense of ambiguity or tragedy whatever," Gay describes men who "were often pessimists, usually empiricists, generally responsible hard-headed political men, with sensible programs, limited expectations, and a firm grasp of history."[34] The difficulty lies in his assertion that the Enlightenment was both diverse and complex and at the same time a unified movement. He gathers all "Enlightenment" themes, ideas, and personalities into his thesis. He virtually excludes no one (except the Marquis de Sade) from the "family of intellectuals united by a single style of thinking." He denounces any

attempt to "rob the French Enlightenment of Rousseau and Diderot by calling them pre-Romantics--a larcenous and unjust . . . proceeding."[35] Distinguishing three generations of philosophes and observing a development of opinion from deism to atheism and social utility, Gay nevertheless perceives "a single army with a single banner" involving all shades of opinion in the ranks.[36] Whereas Voltaire is the representative philosophe in The Party of Humanity, Gay credits David Hume as "the most isolated and the most representative of the philosophes"[37] in his two volume study, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. In this latter publication, Gay portrays the philosophes as modern pagans, assimilating in the Enlightenment both the Christian and pagan pasts. It was a pagan movement against the Christian legacy and yet it was "emancipated from classical thought as much as from Christian dogma"[38]--the philosophical revolution that announced a new age. The new program included "secularism, humanity, cosmopolitanism, and freedom."[39]

Also under the Enlightenment umbrella, Gay observes "the philosophes' political opinions ranging from the democratic radicalism of Rousseau to the relativism of Voltaire and the absolutism of Beccaria," yet he admits only to a legacy of liberal ideals from the era, criticizing histories that trace the roots of totalitarianism or the Terror of the French Revolution to the same age.[40]

> The Enlightenment thinkers laid the foundations of present-day psychology, sociology, and other social sciences, of modern legal procedure and theories of punishment, of democratic theory and practice. They taught the values of a humane, pacific, tolerant civilization to which most of us still aspire.[41]

He insists that the Enlightenment was not "impelled to extremes"; the philosophes fought fanaticism "treat[ing] all positions as tentative--including their own."[42] Asserting the ambiguity that would preclude extremism, Gay employs paradoxes such as "aristocratic liberalism," "Epicurean Stoicism," and "passionate rationalism" in his Enlightenment characterization.[43] Such phrases certainly tend to obscure a clear picture of a unified movement, but Gay is adamant and urgent regarding "the search for a single Enlightenment."[44]

Of course, the debate over the Enlightenment's nature is, most profoundly, the debate over its legacy. If a primary objective of historical writing is to explain the circumstances of the contemporary world, then the question of the nature or the existence of an Enlightenment movement assumes a magnified importance. Those historians espousing a liberal heritage (which appear to be the majority) often castigate modern society as forgetful of the essential inheritance of the Enlightenment; we have failed the Enlightenment, not it us.[45] Their prescription for modern malaise, then, is a return to "the humane aims and the critical methods of the Enlightenment," for social morality can be stimulated only "from developments of the ethical judgment, such as took place in the Enlightenment."[46] Some historians, such as J. L. Talmon, The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy, locate the roots of modern authoritarian government in the Enlightenment, but the preponderant "liberal lobby," even those who are aware of the negative aspects of the modern nation-state, refuse to assign blame to the Age of Reason. Krieger, for example, identifies a "successor movement" as the culprit, a "new rationalism" that "re-converted [the Enlightenment's] delicate 'systematic spirit' into the rigid

'spirit of systems.'"[47] Cobban specifically refutes Talmon, criticizing his research. For Cobban modern totalitarianism cannot be attributed to the Enlightenment whose liberal ideals have survived so well in twentieth century Western Europe.[48]

One reason for the "confusion," disagreement, and misperceptions in Enlightenment history may be that historians, as a result of their own historical preconceptions and personal inclinations, have dwelt on superficialities and semantics, while neglecting a more fundamental approach to the question of Enlightenment unity, that of the discrepancy between what the _philosophes_ claimed to be doing and what they actually did. The typical Enlightenment history is preoccupied with ascertaining (which has generally meant imposing) a unity on the variety of phenomena which occurred within the designated period of time referred to as the "Enlightenment." In order to substantiate a unified interpretation of this era, historians have taken the _philosophes_ at their words especially with regard to the most critical, the most fundamental aspect of the entire "movement," that is, the re-ordering of philosophy, actually the founding of a new style of thinking, based on the scientific method. The _philosophes_ claimed to have finally released philosophy from the naive and arbitrary basis of faith or revealed truth and to have grounded it on the only foundation that made sense--empirical observation. For the enlightened _philosophes_, belief could only be based on what was observable and demonstrable. The question most historians have not addressed, especially in terms of the legacy of this era, is that of analyzing the age in terms of its _own_ claims, that is, were the _philosophes_ faithful to their own prescriptions; were they in fact empiricists? This question is critical in analyzing the

validity of "enlightened" philosophy, the philosophy modern societies of the West revere and of which they consider thenselves the guardians. If the philosophes did establish their conclusions on questionable premises, if they were not empiricists, then their entire philosophy and its legacy becomes suspect. The case of David Hume and his philosophy well illustrates this defect in historical writings for he has been a problem for historians trying to fit him into a "unified" picture. He does not fit. The reason for this is that Hume remained faithful to the method--empiricism--and consequently, produced an "enlightened" view at variance with the accepted "unified" interpretation, but certainly more legitimate in view of the age's representation of itself. The question is an important one because a change in the interpretation of Hume's relationship with the Enlightenment would drastically alter the accepted views as to its legacy. Despite Hume's example, however, a unified liberal Enlightenment pervades recent Enlightenment historiography. Therefore, the problem of placing Hume in Enlightenment interpretations suggests conclusions much more profound than his being the exception that proves the rule.

The Problem of David Hume

Placing David Hume in the accepted historical context of the Enlightenment has been an extremely difficult task for historians. In fact, most of the studies done on Hume have been conducted by philosophers rather than historians, but their writing, too, demonstrates a perplexity of sorts. V. C. Chappell believes that even today Hume's philosophy is "more studied than accepted by contemporary thinkers" and that a revival of interest in Hume's work has only arisen since 1930 with the growth of the

"Analytic Philosophy in Britain and America," a philosophy conceived not as "a set of doctrines" but rather as "an attitude of mind, a philosophical spirit or temper," exhibiting "the same modesty regarding the power of philosophy itself" as Hume maintained.[49] Roland Hall suggests the most striking aspect of Hume studies to be "the extent of disagreement," pointing out that Hume has had practically no influence on the great British thinkers of this century.[50] Hume's best and most admiring biographer, Ernest C. Mossner, refers to "the essential paradox and perpetual enigma of [Hume's] character."[51] Despite the obvious difficulties and generally unconvincing results, historians work to include Hume in their various "unity" schemes-- some on the basis of his intellect and stature (which certainly enhance the character of the Enlightenment) and others on the basis of his lifestyle (if not his philosophy).[52] Some consider him atypical of the era; others claim he is an integral part of it.[53] The disagreement or confusion regarding Hume mirrors that concerning the question of Enlightenment unity. The problem of Hume's place in the eighteenth century defines the problem of the eighteenth century.

Part of the difficulty may stem from the fact that among his "colleagues," Hume was apparently widely admired as a great thinker, but little, if at all, understood. Gay calls him "a favorite uncle in the philosophic family,"[54] a peripheral and ambiguous position. Voltaire read little of his work; Rousseau, who was suspicious of all philosophers, read none of it. Kant, indebted though he was to Hume, never read the Treatise.[55] Clamoring over his History of England and Essays, "the Age of Enlightenment . . . remained unreceptive to his philosophy."[56] His epistemology was largely ignored and occasionally condemned by the more

orthodox journals, which "ridiculed [him] as just another advocate of incredulity whose only purpose in writing was to dazzle and mislead the right-thinking reader with his miserable jargon and complicated absurdities." The Encyclopedie made several references to Hume's political and historical work but did not suggest "that Hume had even written on epistemology."[57] Historians generally conclude that there were no philosophers of the day capable of dealing with Hume's thought as presented in his Treatise on Human Nature and, therefore, Hume "failed to make his place in his times."[58] This is no reason, however, for historians to overlook Hume's intellectual contribution or challenge to an age revered for its reason and its application of this critical faculty to man and nature. In fact, Hume's contrast with his age demands serious historical scrutiny in the interest of ascertaining the true nature of the Enlightenment.

Nevertheless, Enlightenment historians tend to neglect, gloss over, dismiss, or refute Hume in their Enlightenment stories. T. E. Jessop comments that as an undergraduate, he was "required to read Hume in order to refute him." He further observes that the Hume controversy is not about the meaning of his thought, but "whether his meaning should be accepted or rejected."[59] As late as 1933,

> Hume's arguments were not taken seriously by most academic
> philosophers, particularly not at Oxford: they were dismissed as
> plausible sophistries, which the student was expected quickly to
> expose; and his conclusions the mere extravagances of scepticism,
> with implications which no one could seriously accept.[60]

Cassirer regularly notes Hume's exception to the trend, but with the acknowledgement that "Hume's skepticism . . . offers an entirely different approach. . . . [to] the rationalistic postulate of unity [which] dominate[d] the

minds of this age,"[61] he is apparently unintrigued by the implications. Bronowski and Mazlish in The Western Intellectual Tradition credit Adam Smith with establishing the empirical tradition in its modern form without even mentioning Hume.[62] Alfred Cobban calls him a "by-path to the main highway of the Enlightenment."[63] Any study that depicts Rousseau as the writer who "more than any other . . . of the mid-eighteenth century . . . transcended the thought and values of his own time,"[64] apparently leaves Hume unaccounted for.

In those studies that attempt more than a fleeting acknowledgement of Hume, he is generally handled very selectively or he is misunderstood, even misrepresented. Gay's contention that Hume was "concerned with the logic of belief and with its causes rather than with its consequences"[65] gives a misleading impression of the author of Enquiries Concerning the Principles of Morals, Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary, and a multi-volume History of England. Although Gay considers Hume the "purest specimen"[66] among the philosophes, he primarily makes reference to Hume's religious thought, not his epistemology or conclusions on morality, as it is this aspect of Hume's work that best complements Gay's characterization of the philosophes as modern pagans.

Carl Becker views Hume's empiricism as an enthusiastic aversion to enthusiasm and therefore fits Hume into his picture of the "enlightened" crusade. He further accuses Hume of "soft-peddling" his skepticism so as to avoid censure, cultivate popular admiration, and promote his desire "to set things right."[67] The concept of a crusader "soft-peddling" his enthusiasm is unclear, if not contradictory. Also, the charge is poorly substantiated, perhaps unfair. True, Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion was

published posthumously and he did excise certain "offensive" (anti-religious) portions of his Treatise before publication, he says, in order that he would not be guilty of the enthusiasm he criticized in others[68] (precisely Becker's charge). The censored material, however, appeared in later publications such that Hume's reputation as a skeptic was sufficient to threaten him with excommunication from the Church of Scotland and deny him university chairs at both Edinburgh and Glasgow.[69]

In determining Hume to be essentially a moralist, Norman Kemp Smith confesses that his "fixed preconceptions" had prevented him from reading a letter of Hume's which stated this fact in a straightforward manner.[70] The Cambridge History of English Literature criticizes Hume for showing

> no appreciation of the forces which underlay great political or religious movements. As a sceptic, he did not recognise the motives which led men to work for a common end, or the influences which guided them. Such movements were, to him mere occurrences, or the results of personal temperament, of the ambition, obstinacy, or fanaticism of individuals.[71]

The article credits William Robertson, however, with understanding "the unity of history as one long drama of human progress to which even checks in this direction or that contribute fresh forces."[72] The assured presumption of this opinion regarding progressive historical forces necessarily precludes an "appreciation" of the skeptical viewpoint. It is not that Hume failed to appreciate such forces; he denied their existence.

Among Hume admirers, the tendency is often to apologize for his skeptical inclinations,[73] emphasizing his "mitigated skepticism" presumably with the intent of making him more palatable to contemporary opinion or

less threatening to the Enlightenment tradition. In his excellent article delineating Hume's contrast to the Enlightenment, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," Robert Ginsberg, nevertheless, laboriously attempts to balance Hume's challenge with the liberal legacy, asserting the possibility and benefits of accomodating the two.

Overall, attempts to treat of Hume in Enlightenment history have ended in meaningless handling of him and, as a result, a meaningless Enlightenment. Peter Gay admits that Hume has an "elusive place" among the philosophes, being isolated by his "good humor," but insists that he belongs among them on the basis of "his intellectual pedigree, . . . his intentions, and . . . his . . . world view."[74] Although he considers Hume's legacy to be "ambiguous" and admits to achieving "nothing better than a plausible caricature" of Hume, Gay persists in claiming Hume for his particular Enlightenment.[75] For example, acknowledging that Hume was indifferent to the reforming drive of the other philosophes, Gay, nevertheless, claims him because his political thought was "explicitly designed . . . as a possible basis for future large-scale reform. If he was not a radical, he was not a conservative either; Hume was as skeptical of immobility as he was of revolution."[76] In verifying Hume's skepticism, Gay challenges his own Enlightenment interpretation which is decidedly committed and not relativist. Furthermore, if having a plan that could be used for future reform and being "deeply engaged with the world around him,"[77] qualify Hume as a philosophe, why are devout Christians, who are guiltless of the sin of skepticism, unqualified?

In the interests of accomodating Hume with the Enlightenment, Ginsberg points out an angle of study that can exhibit Hume "to be more of

a fellow-worker in [the Enlightenment] than one working against its grain." Since his objective is not to ascertain a winner in the conflict between Hume and his age, Ginsberg concludes that three possibilities are all true of Hume's role: (1) that he "toppled the Enlightenment philosophy; (2) that he salvaged it; and (3) that he failed to understand it."[78] If Ginsberg has not clarified the Enlightenment, he has made an excellent case for relative history.

The glaring error is that historians have not resolved, (in truth, they rarely acknowledge) the implications of Hume's place in the Enlightenment. If Hume was "an authentic philosophe and the most original philosopher of the age," if he was the representative philosophe, "the purest, most modern specimen of the little flock,"[79] how could he have "undermined the foundations on which the eighteenth century had built its view of the world"[80] and "restore[d] custom and instinctive belief to the dominant position which they had occupied in the Age of Faith"?[81] How could he be far too much in advance of his age to be the "best spokesman" for it?[82] How does the same historian identify Hume as "the philosopher, par excellence, of the Enlightenment," acknowledge his devastation of the "enlightened" world-view, and yet depict him as "a by-path . . . to the main highway of the Enlightenment," its "worm in the bud"?[83] If the "philosopher, par excellence" of an age overturns the basis for that age's philosophy or truth, he must not be dismissed as a "by-path." The fact that Hume is not "of the Enlightenment," as many historians acknowledge, is a misleading conclusion in a "unified" Enlightenment thesis. If he is a great philosopher of the age, his thinking cannot be irrelevant, incidental, or destructive of the "recognized" Enlightenment philosophy.

The problem with all these approaches to placing Hume in the Enlightenment is that Hume's philosophy does not fit the "accepted" characterization of the Enlightenment, and this is because "he had ... fewer illusions and needed fewer fictions than the rest of the philosophic flock."[84] Consequently, he was a consistent and competent empiricist while the others were not. His conclusions differed from those of the other philosophes because his method differed. Hume actually did what the philosophes claimed to be doing; he constructed a world view based solely on experience and as a result found himself ignored or misunderstood. He found that the dogmatism of the "empirical" philosophes

> extended into metaphysics, economics, and related social subjects. Although Newton and Locke were the great names among them, that of Descartes was by no means dead. Consequently, their variety of empiricism was tinged with a metaphysical necessitarianism which was repugnant to Hume's way of thinking.[85]

The question of the unity (if unity there be) and legacy of the Enlightenment can be clarified by assessing the validity of Enlightenment philosophy in terms of its methodological claims. Hume makes an excellent standard of judgment. Considering the Enlightenment claims of a new mode of thinking based on reason and empirical observation, Hume is irrefutably the best example of an enlightened thinker and his philosophy must be considered the most "legitimate" of the age. If Enlightenment philosophy is conclusions reached through observation and experience, then Hume's is "Enlightenment" philosophy and the prevailing historical characterizations of the era are wrong. Hume is not, therefore, "alternately friend and foe of the Enlightenment";[86] this erroneously implies

inconsistency in <u>Hume's</u> thought. It is the character of the Enlightenment and the conclusions of its incompetent empiricists that are suspect.

If on the other hand, historians are content not to question the conclusions of the <u>philosophes</u> in terms of their method and claims, then Hume is an aberration in the historical phenomena and Becker is, for the most part, correct--the Enlightenment was not an era of reasonable, critical evaluation, but rather, yet another age of faith, fanaticism, and authoritarian doctrines, for the <u>philosophes</u> had no better foundation for their truth than did the Church they brought down.

The importance of the scientific or experimental method in providing the basis or departure point for Enlightenment thought singles out Hume, with his contrary opinions (and his isolated position), <u>because</u> he made consistent use of the method whereas the others did not. Consequently, he has been described as the

> greatest moralist among British philosohers, the most subtle and the most profound: . . . he defined one consistent, and within its own terms, irrefutable, attitude to politics, to the problem of society, to religion; an attitude which is supremely confident and clear, that of the perfect secular mind, which can accept, and submit itself to, the natural order, the facts of human nature, without anxiety, and therefore, without a demand for ultimate solutions, for a guarantee that justice is somehow built into the nature of things.[87]

If Hume's conclusions are representative of "enlightened" thinking, then there is no "unity" in the Enlightenment "movement," and the "accepted" Enlightenment characterization must be discarded. If Hume is ignored, then a redefinition of Enlightenment unity is still in order as the <u>philosophes</u> cannot be credited as secular philosophers; they are Becker's believers.

In clarifying the character of the Enlightenment (or perhaps the historical creation <u>called</u> the Enlightenment), the study of Hume illuminates the era's actual legacy--vital information for a society that considers itself the progeny of that age. If Hume's philosophy, based on the method of the Enlightenment, were presented as representative of an "enlightened" mind, the contradictions of the modern world might be more apparent to us and better directed to resolution. If Becker's Enlightenment is substantiated, then we need not feel guilty for abandoning its liberal and progressive spirit. Rather, we will discover in the eighteenth century the roots of what disappoints us in the twentieth.

NOTES

[1]"No other civilizations eventually escaped the influence of the European intellectual ferment and political turmoil of these years. Most of the intellectual, political, economic, and social characteristics associated with the modern world came into being during this era." Albert Craig et al., The Heritage of World Civilizations, vol. 2, Since 1500 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1986), p. 772. As expressed by Crane Brinton, the great minds of the eighteenth century "put the last touches on our intellectual inheritance . . . [and] gave our Western cutlure its characteristic modern form or . . . formlessness." Crane Brinton, The Shaping of Modern Thought (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 108-9.

[2]Alfred Cobban, In Search of Humanity: The Role of the Enlightenment in Modern History (New York: George Braziller, 1960), p. 146.

[3]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 111. R. G. Collingwood also considers Voltaire as most characteristic of the age in The Idea of History (1956; reprint ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 78.

[4]Leonard Krieger, Kings and Philosophers 1689-1789 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 159.

[5]Franklin L. Baumer, Modern European Thought: Continuity and Change in Ideas 1600-1950 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), p. 205.

[6]Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, 2 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966, 1969), 1:200.

[7]Lester G. Crocker, An Age of Crisis: Man and World in Eighteenth Century French Thought (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1959), p. 11; Peter Gay, The Party of Humanity: Essays in the French Enlightenment (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p. 285; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 147.

[8]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 109.

[9]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, pp. 209-10.

[10]Robert Anchor, The Enlightenment Tradition (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. xvi.

[11]Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), pp. vi, vii. This book has been characterized as "a brilliant but difficult work by one of the great philosophers of the twentieth century." Craig, et al., Heritage of World Civilizations, p. 796.

[12]Ibid., p. 234, viii.

[13]Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 460, 457.

[14]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 161, 189-90. In his view, the nation-state arose out of the French Revolution.

[15]Ibid., pp. 220-21, 228.

[16]Louis I. Bredvold, The Brave New World of the Enlightenment (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1961), pp. 1-27, 15.

[17]J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, The Western Intellectual Tradition (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1962), p. 246.

[18]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 130, 112.

[19]Robert Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century 88 (1972): 619.

[20]Collingwood, Idea of History, p. 78.

[21]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, pp. 153-55.

[22]Ibid., p. 158.

[23]Ibid., pp. 184, 179.

[24]Ibid., p. 210.

[25]Ibid., p. 153.

[26]Herbert Dieckmann, "An Interpretation of the Eighteenth Century," Modern Language Quarterly 15 (December 1954): 297.

[27]Ibid., pp. 297-98.

[28]Daniel Boorstin, "History Through Bifocal Glasses," in The Present-Day Relevance of Eighteenth Century Thought, ed. Roger P. McCutcheon (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1956), p. 29.

[29]Ibid., p. 35.

[30]In a textbook list of major publication dates of the Enlightenment, five denoted English authors: Newton - 1, Locke - 1, Hume - 1 ("Of Miracles"), Gibbon - 1, and Smith - 1; ten denoted French authors: Montesquieu - 2, Voltaire - 4, Diderot - 1, Rousseau - 3; and one German: Lessing - 1. Craig, et al., Heritage of World Civilizations, p. 784.

[31]Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, Yale Paperbound, 1970), p. 31.

[32]Ibid., pp. 29-31, 154-58.

[33]Textbook authors have called Gay's two volume work on the Enlightenment "the most important and far-reaching treatment." Craig, et al., Heritage of World Civilizations, p. 796.

[34]Gay, Party of Humanity, pp. 262-63.

[35]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:x; Party of Humanity, p. 116.

[36]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:17-18, 1:7-8.

[37]Gay, Party of Humanity, p. 3; The Enlightenment, 1:418.

[38]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1: xi.

[39]Ibid., p. 3.

[40]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:452; Party of Humanity, pp. 278-81, 286. Gay criticizes Sir Harold Nicholson and J. L. Talmon for their interpretations of Rousseau and Voltaire as proponents of totalitarianism.

[41]Gay, "Light on the Enlightenment," in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 42.

[42]Gay, Party of Humanity, pp. 289, 284.

[43]Ibid., pp. 288-289. Gay's tone in The Enlightenment is less emphatic of philosophe ambiguity and more adamant regarding unity.

[44]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:x.

[45]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 245; Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 145.

[46]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:xi; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 243.

[47]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 210.

[48]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 183, 185. He states that Talmon's selection of philosophe works is too narrow.

[49]V. C. Chappell, ed., Hume (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 1-2.

[50]Roland Hall, Fifty Years of Hume Scholarship (Edinburgh: University Press, 1978), pp. 3, 7.

[51]E. C. Mossner, "The Enigma of Hume," Mind 45 (July 1936): 349.

[52]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:403; Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 601.

[53]Hume's philosophy has been compared with that of St. John of the Cross and Buddha. Frederick C. Copleston, "David Hume and St. John of the Cross," The Month 8 (August 1952): 69-81; L. Stafford Betty, "The Buddhist-Humean Parallels: Postmortem," Philosophy East and West 21 (July 1971): 237-253. Betty actually considers Hume more pietist than empiricist.

[54]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:6.

[55]Ibid., p. 13; Ernest C. Mossner, The Life of David Hume (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954), p. 507.

[56]Ibid., p. 4.

[57]Laurence L. Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher in Eighteenth Century France," French Studies 15 (July 1961): 213, 216.

[58]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 600.

[59]T. E. Jessop, "Some Misunderstandings of Hume," Revue internationale de Philosophie 6 (1952): 156.

[60]S. N. Hampshire, "Hume's Place in Philosophy," in David Hume: A Symposium, ed. D. F. Pears (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 3-4.

[61]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 22. He notes that Hume is as little of the general Enlightenment philosophy of history as of its theory of knowledge and religion. Ibid., p. 163.

[62]Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 494.

[63]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 139.

[64]Craig, et al., Heritage of World Civilizations, p. 786.

[65]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:404.

[66]Ibid., p. 418.

[67]Becker, Heavenly City, pp. 37-39.

[68]Introduction to David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. Ernest C. Mossner (1969; reprint ed., New York: Penguin Classics, 1985), p. 14.

[69]J. C. A. Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion (Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., Barnes & Noble Books, 1978), pp. 3-4; Mossner, Introduction to Treatise, by David Hume, pp.18, 23. Mossner notes that even Hume's friend Adam Smith, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University, was "timorous of speaking out for him." Ibid., p. 23; Norman Kemp Smith contends that the charge of pandering to public acclaim is "not easily reconcilable with [Hume's] independence of judgment." Philosophy of David Hume: A Critical Study of its Origins and Central Doctrines (1941; reprint ed., London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1949), pp. 528-29.

[70]Norman Kemp Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. vi. Smith and others, viewing Hume as primarily a moralist, believe that Book I of the Treatise was written after Books II and III, and, therefore, Hume's epistemology was devised as a support for his thinking on morality. T. E. Jessop, "Some Misunderstandings of Hume," p. 159. This directly contrasts with Gay's contention that Hume was primarily an epistemologist.

[71]Reverend William Hunt, "Hume and Modern Historians," in The Cambridge History of English Literature, eds., A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (New York: G. P. Putnam's and Sons, 1932), 10: 322.

[72]Ibid., p. 326.

[73]Constance Maund, "On the Nature and Significance of Hume's Scepticism," Revue internationale de Philosophie 6 (1952): 169.

[74]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:401, 403.

[75]Ibid., p. 412; 2:453.

[76]Ibid., 2:455.

[77]Ibid., p. 453.

[78]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 648, 602.

[79]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 159. Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:418. Norman Kemp Smith quotes Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background: "Hume is perhaps the writer in whom the distinctive characteristics of 'our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century' are most completely expressed, . . . he is representative. . . . " Philosophy of David Hume, p. 542.

[80]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 216.

[81]Montgomery Belgion, David Hume (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1965), p. 37.

[82]Mossner, quoted in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 45.

[83]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 133, 216, 139, 138.

[84]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:453.

[85]Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 486.

[86]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 141.

[87]Hampshire, "Hume's Place in Philosophy," in David Hume, ed. Pears, pp. 9-10.

CHAPTER III

METHOD: THE ESSENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHY

Enlightenment historians generally observe the stirrings of the Age of Reason in the scientific advances of the seventeenth century. The achievements of that era are well-known, and it is not so much the conclusions of the age (some of which turned out to be naively erroneous), but the attitude towards knowledge and its attainment that historians have determined to be profoundly influential regarding eighteenth century philosophy. This "attitude" was evidenced by the scientific method, which was the essence of the new science, for the validity of one's conclusions could only be established through the proper application of the scientific method. Alfred Cobban perceives the beginning of modern science in Galileo's 1632 publication of his empirical observations. With Galileo:

> the classical ideal of immutability was dethroned and an age in which change was no longer equated with degeneration was inaugurated. The result was not anarchy but a new kind of order and a more comprehensive one, because it formalized empirical data in terms of abstract laws of nature, which could in turn be tested by specific observation or experiment.[1]

Here is the departure point of the enlightened age from the Age of Faith-- "the combination of conceptualization and experiment, . . . of mathematical theory and empirical observation"; Bacon's insistence that observable facts should never be ignored or altered to fit the theory.[2]

Historically, the most generally acclaimed exponents or "patron saints"[3] of this new attitude have been Newton and Locke. G. R. Cragg, in <u>Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century</u>, credits them with "shaping the legacy" that the seventeenth century gave the eighteenth.[4] The work and writings of these giants dispelled the mystery from both the external universe and an internal one, and the reason their conclusions or theories precipitated such favorable response was the appeal of their reasoning process--the scientific method. Newton's distinctive contribution "was the decisive role he attributed to specific phenomena as the basis of knowledge; to observation, analysis, and experiment as the means of processing them; and to the descriptive nature of all general laws."[5] Similarly, Locke located the origin of ideas "in specific perceptions of external objects";[6] thinking itself was based on observation and experience. Newton's universe was mathematically understandable, testable, even predictable; his cosmology announced a new age.[7]

Historians have based this image of Newton as the revered leader of the Enlightenment on the enthusiasm of the <u>philosophes</u> themselves. Peter Gay notes Voltaire's reference to Newton as one of the greatest men that ever lived and quotes David Hume: "In Newton this island may boast of having produced the greatest and rarest genius that ever rose for the ornament and instruction of the species." Describing Newton as "divine" and "'immortal' became practically compulsory." Kant displayed his great esteem for Rousseau by dubbing him the "Newton of the moral world."[8] Newton's empiricism and methodical investigation delighted and "converted"[9] the eighteenth century philosopher. As Ernst Cassirer comments: "Thanks to Newton, [the Enlightenment] believed it stood finally

on firm ground which could never again be shaken by any future revolution of natural sciences,"[10]--or, he might have added, any challenge from religion, revelation, or unproven custom. These errors could now be avoided because of "the Newtonian art of measurement, the infallible bridle of the imagination."[11] Newton seemed to have explained all the natural world through empirical observation and the reasoned analysis thereof; men now turned from "the transcendental . . . to the visible and concrete."[12] If the truth set men free, science, as the only reliable road to it, became the means of liberation.

The development of the new era, however, faced major obstacles in the way of tradition, superstition, and ignorance. Convinced "that mankind had been corrupted and betrayed by false doctrines,"[13] the philosophes envisioned their mission to be one of refuting superstition and illuminating ignorance. This meant discrediting the customs and institutions that perpetuated these evils. Foremost among these was religion, especially that institutionalized in the Catholic church, and historians, particularly Peter Gay, widely recognize the campaign against l'infame and unreasoned belief as "an essential element in the Enlightenment."[14] All the essential attributes of Christianity--dogma, enthusiasm, blind, naive faith, and revelation--were declared anathema and the prophets of enlightenment delighted in the task of dismantling this bastion of oppression. Their attack was often devastating and if the philosophes perceived (or accomplished) greater advances against the enemy than previous assailants, it was due to their new weapon--the scientific method. "Science . . . was steadfastly undermining the Christian view of the world," and the biblical and

theological authority from which Christian apologists argued was, as a result, unacceptable.[15]

Christian "truth" and "tradition" were effectively discredited, (certainly in Voltaire's case) ridiculed and called to justification through the reasoned logic of the empirical method. Voltaire, wishing to refute the Christian view of history, compared Chinese to Jewish history declaring the former superior, since it did not depend on absurd fables or make outrageous claims. In order to undermine biblical assertions, he attacked their validity through historical criticism.[16] Hume attacked scholasticism as "false philosophy" and "spurious erudition," its chief failing being the contemplation of questions beyond man's understanding and its refusal to apply intellectual faculties to useful endeavors.[17] In other words, Christian philosophy (and history) was not creditable because it dealt with concepts beyond human experience--ideas or events that could not be observed and reasonably analyzed through man's natural faculties. Scholasticism transcended man's nature and was, therefore, useless to him. Consistent and proper use of the method--empiricism and analysis--could expose the falsehood of Christian belief and prevent such misdirection of philosophy in the future.

Overall, the accepted historical view of this question is that the philosophes worked "to unmask Christianity, . . . contrast the virtues of common sense with the vices of enthusiasm and superstition, and construct a naturalistic philosophy based on recognition of the eternal laws of nature."[18] The method, then, was not merely the means to dispel the illusions of Christian superstition and oppression, but also, and more importantly, the means to reveal the truth which Christianity had

perverted. Newton's science suggested exhilarating possibilities to the philosophes, for such informed minds were "not long in seeing the resemblance between a physical universe of interacting particles and a social universe of interacting human beings."[19] Although Newton and Locke were more reserved in their prognostications than their followers, their work suggested the method's potential in fields other than science. In Optiks, Newton himself speculated "that the methods used in natural philosophy, if wisely applied, might greatly extend the bounds of moral philosophy."[20] Science could be applied to man himself; all aspects of human nature and society could be scrutinized and ordered into "law" as had Newton's universe.

It is important to emphasize the point that, even in their attacks against religion, the philosophes were not challenging or denying the existence of truth; they were denying, rather, religion's claim to it, the church's rationale for its truth. Undermining the authority of revelation and religion required a new basis for truth, a new foundation that would point up the greater validity of the philosophes' philosophy. Religious belief could not be "proven" in terms of man's reason and must, therefore, be suspect as the repository of truth, whereas enlightened philosophy, based on empirical observation, could be validated by every individual's common human faculties, and for this reason was more legitimate. If one was not talking empirical facts, one was talking faith and the philosophes rejected faith as a proper foundation for belief. Method, then,--the collection and analysis of empirical data--was the basis of the eighteenth century's destructive and constructive objectives; it constituted the foundation of the enlightened truth.

The question of method, then, is crucial to any study of the Enlightenment's character and historians generally have recognized its importance regarding enlightened thought. Ernst Cassirer, again, seems to have established the accepted historical attitude on the method with his contention that enlightened philosophy broke through the barriers of "systems" by advocating and utilizing a new procedure for revealing the natural law, that would "not project our own ideas and subjective imaginings into nature; [but] rather follow nature's own course and determine it by observation and experiment, by measurement and calculation." He further signifies the importance of the method by relating its function in realizing the goals of the Enlightenment.

> In the progress of natural science and the various phases it has gone through, the philosophy of the Enlightenment believes it can, as it were, tangibly grasp its ideal. For here it can follow step by step the triumphal march of the modern analytical spirit. It had been this spirit that in the course of barely a century and a half had conquered all reality, and that now seemed finally to have accomplished its great task of reducing the multiplicity of natural phenomena to a single universal rule. And this cosmological formula, as contained in Newton's general law of attraction was not found by accident, nor as the result of sporadic experimentation; its discovery shows the rigorous application of the scientific method.[21]

Cobban recognizes "historical and scientific empiricism" to be the "keynote" of the Enlightenment.[22] A textbook synopsis asserts that "this emphasis on concrete experience became a keystone for Enlightenment thought."[23] Observing the opinion of Ernst Troeltsch, Franklin Baumer comments that the Enlightenment

was the hinge on which the European nations turned from the Middle Ages to "modern" times, marking the passage from a supernaturalistic-mythical-authoritative to a naturalistic-scientific-individualistic type of thinking.[24]

In Robert Ginsberg's analysis, "empirical science was the Enlightenment path, and it could be trod in every direction to all terrains of knowledge."[25]

Frank Manuel discusses not only the effectiveness of the method as a weapon against the church because of its consistency in the face of biblical contradictions, but also emphasizes its positive appeal for the philosophes. "The new science gave men a sense of security and finitude because it seemed to produce incontrovertible propositions which would stand impregnable for all time." So secure were the philosophes in the validity of the method, they discounted anything "which could not be examined for truth or falsehood by experience. For them the only kind of reality was objective and scientific, the only phenomena allowable those which could be apprehended by the senses."[26]

Peter Gay's analysis of the importance of the method in enlightened philosophy is especially revealing. He writes that "the philosophes were confident that their scientific empiricism alone could lead to a realistic appraisal of man's place and possibilities."[27] He notes the reliability of the method in acquiring knowledge in diverse "contexts."[28] Referring to Voltaire's empiricism as more chracteristic of the eighteenth century than Aquinas's rationalism was of the thirteenth,[29] Gay offers examples of the philosophes' scientific approach to philosophy, such as "general psychology" being "the empirical base of the Enlightenment's . . . theory of man."[30] The method is particularly important to Gay's characterization of the philosophe as crusading reformer, for he comments that with everything that needed

changing during this era "the method of the sciences--patient inquiry and experimentation--was the only method that made sense."[31]

Emphasizing the philosophes' reaction against religion, G. R. Cragg points out the change in attitude at the end of the seventeenth century from deducing arguments to observing facts, designating experimentation to be the "key which unlocks the mysteries of nature." Commenting on the assault on belief, he describes the philosophe basis for truth, and therefore faith, to be vindication "at the bar of reason" pointing out, consequently, that "if it cannot be demonstrated, it cannot be true."[32]

Other authors discuss the importance of the method in terms of the philosophes' social objectives. Lester Crocker notes that the empirical method applied to ethics held out the promise of morality without illusion. He observes the philosophes' conviction that "rational law" had to be ascertained through observation and experiment and that any resultant discoveries, such as the law of cause and effect, could be significant in the realm of human affairs.[33] Similarly, Louis Bredvold analyzes the social and ethical impact of the method on enlightened philosophy. He emphasizes a more extreme influence than other historians, i.e. man as mechanism, "that the phenomena of man's consciousness must be explained in terms of cause and effect as rigidly as the phenomena of the physical world." Nevertheless, most historians would concur with his depiction of the philosophes as pursuing human progress through the application of "the same mode of scientific reasoning both to the physical nature of man and to his moral and intellectual nature," and as defending their procedure as "the most demonstrable and certain, and therefore also the most desirable and useful."[34]

This perception of the method's importance to the enlightened "movement" apparently generalizes for the era what historians observe in the important personalities of the age. These "philosophers" consistently proclaimed the novelty of their age and the correctness of their opinion on the basis of the scientific method, and Enlightenment historians have taken them at their word.

Although some scholars look back as far as Hobbes to find the first suggestion that the method of mathematics and physics be applied to social and moral problems,[35] it is Voltaire who is generally credited with popularizing, defending, even crusading for the method of the revered Newton.[36] Peter Gay acknowledges Voltaire as the first to perceive the potential of Newton's theory and as its foremost proponent in France. He notes Voltaire's attraction to "Newton's disciplined empiricism--that famous 'philosophical modesty'" that provided such an effective weapon against Christian metaphysics[37] and quotes his comment to a young man that Newton "had taught men to 'examine, weigh, calculate, and measure, and never to conjecture.'" "He [Newton] did not put his fantasies in place of truth." For Gay, Candide was "propaganda in behalf of empiricism, a dramatization of Newton's methods."[38]

Margaret Libby in The Attitude of Voltaire to Magic and the Sciences, similarly depicts Voltaire as "an ardent follower of Newton. ... He preached Newtonism, he practised it," and describes his jubilation over the new truths revealed by Newton's work as well as his admonition to his readers "to discredit everything that was not proved by his [Newton's] methods."[39] She quotes his recommendations "to look, touch, measure, weigh," and points out his further advice "to trust to observation and

experiments, and to reason only by analysis," emphasizing the lesson he learned regarding scientific study to be "doubt of everything not proved by experiment."[40] Other writers credit Voltaire's work with proving that Descartes's method was far more important than his conclusions and with linking Descartes's method with Newton's and Locke's ideas. "For Voltaire . . . the fact came before the principle," and his hopes for the method attracted him to ideas such as "empirical psychology" through which even the anatomy of man's own soul could be revealed.[41] Cassirer recognizes Voltaire's Treatise on Metaphysics as demonstrative of the "fundamental agreement" between "the true method of metaphysics" and Newton's method in natural science.[42] Cobban depicts Voltaire as "a whole-hearted convert to Lockian psychology, Baconian empiricism and Newtonian mathematics and physics."[43]

Diderot's "primary purpose" as described by Baumer was to assert "the superiority of what he [Diderot] called experimental over rational philosophy," maintaining that "the true richness of philosophy" was grounded in observation and experience.[44] Manuel quotes his pronouncement: "We think . . . that the greatest service to be done to men is to teach them to use their reason, only to hold for truth what they have verified and proved."[45] Gay notes Diderot's interest in the importance of observation and the method relative to metaphysics and ethics, and recounts Diderot's dream where the child Experiment grows into a colossus destroying the building of Hypothesis that housed "feeble, aged, and deformed men"--the makers of systems.[46] Cassirer relates Diderot's belief that mathematics could only decline as a science since it is limited and "has no immediate access to empirical concrete reality. This reality becomes

accessible to us only through experiment, through faithful exact observations."[47]

Baumer depicts Condorcet as awaiting the day when "the scientific spirit and scientific truth" would come to the masses making them "more civilized, tolerant, politically more responsible, and peace-loving."[48] Condillac's Traite des systemes (1749) has been called "a classic document of the Enlightenment" on the grounds of its criticism of the systems of other philosophers and its praise of Newton and Locke for their reliance "on accumulating and testing the data of experiment" as the basis of their conclusions.[49] "Rousseau defended his procedure in Discours sur l'inegalite by likening [it] to the acceptable type of hypothesis current in modern physics";[50] and his dictum in Emile for Emile's education was that "there must be no instruction, Emile must learn everything by observation and experience."[51] Lichtenberg announced his conviction that the method was more important than the discovery.[52] Bredvold describes Leibniz's conviction that he could discover "a general science" that would include a "logique civile or logique de la vie" through which an assessment of probabilities could provide direction in all practical affairs, especially legal ones. Bredvold further notes Frances Hutchinson's intent to "introduce a mathematical calculation in subjects of morality" and Locke's conviction that morality could be demonstrated as exactly as mathematics.[53] Even the founding fathers of the United States have been observed to have "appealed to experience on almost every page" of their "great apologetic documents."[54]

The essential role of method in establishing "true" philosophy is further demonstrated in the philosophes' use of it to criticize or refute, not

only superstition, but any "misguided" philosophy, including that of other philosophes. Gay reviews Condillac's criticism of Descartes's deductive method by contrasting him unfavorably with Newton who was "content with observing the world" and Voltaire's similar comparison in which Newton again prevailed because he "respected the facts, heroically faced obscure phenomena, and refused to make systems."[55] Although he contends that criticism of Montesquieu was primarily a reaction to his conservatism, Gay points out Voltaire's dissatisfaction with Montesquieu's research--his method.[56] Baumer notes Condorcet's disparagement of the Greek philosophers because of their determination to make systems and submit to their imaginations rather than observe the facts.[57] G. R. Cragg comments that the classical scholar Porson accepted Gibbon's attack on Christianity, "but deplored his method."[58]

In general, then, Enlightenment historians recognize the vital role of the empirical method in performing two functions: (1) that of undermining the authority of the church and religion asserting that God's existence and his goodness could only "be inferred from the observable behavior of the world,"[59] and (2) that of providing the means for understanding the true nature of the world and man, and consequently, a means of influencing either or both. Leonard Krieger comments that the ability of the philosophes to deal with all realms of knowledge rested on their consistent and objective application of the method,[60] while Franklin Baumer in emphasizing the improvements of experimental over rational philosophy, points out that "science held out the prospect of greater prediction and control in society, as well as in nature, of an improved political machinery for the protection of man's freedom and happiness."[61]

Method, then, was critical for the philosophes not only in their struggle with the church and religion, but also in their quest for true philosophy. The validity of one's philosophical contentions absolutely depended on their demonstration of observable fact and experience. Basing their view on the proclamations of the philosophes, Enlightenment historians have upheld the crucial role of the method, characterizing the enlightened philosophers as empiricists and objective analysts, who deplored unscientific systems or dogma.

Having drawn this characterization, however, historians of the Enlightenment almost immediately qualify it, revealing that the philosophes were not dedicated empiricists, that they proclaimed the method's validity and then ineptly or inconsistently applied it. Leo Gershoy suggests that the philosophes used "only cooperative facts" in handling "awkward questions"[62] and Gay points out that in the battle against Christianity, the philosophes "sought out what would discredit, and slighted what would exalt" the religion even to the point of being "credulous on principle" regarding "Oriental philosophers or Tahitian savages."[63] Gay further observes that the philosophes were too much absorbed in letters and art "to follow out their methodological prescriptions to their rather dreary conclusions," and that while revering Locke and quoting his works, these philosophers generally passed over his Reasonableness of Christianity.[64] Elsewhere Gay admits that he cannot say "that the philosophes were always consistent or thorough-going empiricists."[65] Commenting on Condorcet's hopes for perfecting man, Karl Lowith observes that they

> were not the result of scientific inference and evidence but a
> conjecture, the root of which was hope and faith. Even such a

sympathetic study of Condorcet as that of John Morley cannot but admit that there is nothing scientific, precise, and quantified in Condorcet's speculations about man's future progress.[66]

Other historians note Voltaire's inclination towards the same a priori philosophy that he so vehemently criticized in Descartes,[67] and find Rousseau "indifferent about the scientific method."[68] Cobban views the Encyclopedie as "deliberately conceived as a work of propaganda," and quotes Rousseau, in a mystical experience, realizing (not observing) the goodness of man's nature and the evil of social institutions.[69] Crocker calls Diderot "a supposed empiricist . . . suffused with preromantic sentiment" and shows Rousseau contructing his philosophical argument after and in support of his beliefs. "In order to prove man fundamentally unsocial, and in order to paint the state of nature as he wished it, Rousseau had to deprive him of almost all the qualities that make him the being we know as 'man.'"[70] Baumer notes that while Diderot promoted "experimental over rational philosophy" in order to combat systems-making, he was nevertheless "hard at work thinking up a system of his own. . . . [He] favored bold hypotheses, suggested perhaps by some facts, but running ahead of the facts, and fired by the imagination. . . . Obviously, Diderot did not wholly follow his own advice about an exclusively 'experimental philosophy.'"[71]

One of the most telling indictments of the philosophes' infidelity to their empirical claims is Margaret Libby's analysis of Voltaire's attitude towards science. Her point is especially well made as she demonstrates how Voltaire could not be true to the method even applied to natural science, let alone the less exact science of human behavior. Allegedly a devotee of Newtonian method, "Voltaire conspicuously failed to maintain the

tentative attitude of his master who put so much of his important work in the form of questions." She further comments that in his own attempts at experiment, Voltaire "show[ed] definite attempts to control conditions, although the findings were vitiated by avoidance of the implications of the experiments and by metaphysical additions to the conclusions." Attacking all systems, "Voltaire had a system of his own, a metaphysical one as far removed from the scientific method as those he combatted."[72] The empiricist Voltaire was unable to accept the evidence of marine fossils found in the Alps as suggestive that the ocean had once covered the earth completely. Libby explains this inability in her description of Voltaire's geology as "a combination of Newtonism and deism." His deist theory is far less conducive to scientific inquiry than those of the Christians, for with him the whole subject is closed." Voltaire's prejudice against the flood was as blind as the theologians' acceptance of it.[73] Libby's critique of Voltaire's scientific approach to knowledge is devastating as she examines his decidedly unscientific basis for rejecting certain ideas or evidence.

> Voltaire's attack on the geology of his time and of the seventeenth century has only its wit to recommend it. It contains no adequate exposition of the current theories and no methodical refutation of them.[74]

> Voltaire made no attempt to synthesize the facts at his disposal or to substantiate his own opinions about the origin of species or reproductions. Moreover he ignored those important studies of animal and plant structure which were the real contribution of his period to these sciences.[75]

His method of debate is further revealed to be not only narrow-minded or unphilosophical, but actually insidious in nature. Referring to Voltaire's witty dismissal of the fossil evidence, Libby comments:

> All this is clothed in scientific phrases indicating that Voltaire and Voltaire alone is avoiding the esprit de systeme, the chimeras peculiar to the learned. He alone is following the modern scientific method of consulting nature, admitting only what is proved, avoiding the marvelous and the metaphysical.[76]

Overall, she characterizes Voltaire's scientific writings as "remarkable neither for depth of analysis, accuracy, nor originality, but rather for cleverness of expression and ability to say quotable things at the right moment." He "push[ed] the mathematical method like the experimental into the vague hinterland of generalities."[77]

In concurrence with Libby's analysis, Baumer notes Voltaire's ridicule of scientific "discoveries" that challenged his static universe, denying even the hypothetical possibility that "motion was inherent in matter." "For a skeptic . . . Voltaire had formed a remarkably clear picture of what nature was, if not why it was. That picture may even be called a system, though Voltaire would object." According to Baumer, "many natural philosophers did, in fact, construct systems of nature, and some actually called them that, in an age that was not supposed to believe in systems."[78]

Amidst these evaluations of methodological ineptitude, even deceit, there is in David Hume an outstanding example of the consistent, even-handed use of the method that allegedly turned history away from dark ages into the light of modern existence. Hume's hope for the method, similar to that of his contemporaries, was announced in the subtitle of his Treatise as "an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning

into Moral Subjects." As "the only solid foundation for the other sciences,"
the science of man had to be solidly founded "on experience and
observation" beyond which human understanding could not go.
Consequently,

> We must . . . glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious
> observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the
> common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in
> affairs, and in their pleasures.[79]

As discussed in the previous chapter, Enlightenment historians do
observe a distinction between Hume and the philosophes not only on the
basis of his conclusions, but also, and most importantly, on the basis of his
use of the method. G. R. Cragg credits Hume with greater consistency in
the use of the method than Locke achieved.[80] Krieger maintains that his
"one-sided empiricism . . . [was not] typical of the Enlightenment" and
places Hume at an extreme end of an Enlightenment spectrum, representing
"skeptical empiricism."[81] Recognizing the eighteenth century's aversion to
system, Baumer notes that "few went so far as Hume, who limited the
power of the human mind to appearances, and raised doubts about the
logicality and permanence of the laws of nature."[82] Mossner distinguishes
Hume from earlier philosophers (Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson) on the
basis that "Hume is utterly fearless as a thinker and applies the method
systematically and relentlessly, let the consequences be what they may."[83]
Emphasizing the formative influence of "the Newtonian revolution . . . upon
Hume's thinking," Norman Kemp Smith notes that "at all critical points in
his argument Hume multiplies what he calls his experiments."[84] In The
Moral and Political Philosophy of David Hume, John Stewart asserts the

"high degree of consistency in the whole corpus of Hume's writings." His later writings are "best understood as applications and extrapolations of the principles set forth in the Treatise."[85] While other writers were more ardently criticizing each other's principles than establishing their own, L. A. Selby-Bigge observes the "great detachment from particular controversies" that distinguished Hume's work.[86] It is this attitude of the spectator to which Frederick Copleston attributes Hume's doubt.[87] T. E. Jessop writes that Hume's empiricism involved not simply observing the characteristics of human nature, but accepting them; "it . . . express[ed] . . . his deep sense of the precariousness of all theorizing."[88]

Hume believed that man could not transcend experience and only observation could provide philosophers the materials with which to work. Where others professed a similar conviction and then proceeded to suggest or describe ultimate truths, Hume remained faithful to his basis of speculation and formulated observations or conclusions that often escaped or even offended the philosophes. For example, in his sincere admiration of Newton, Hume observed an aspect of Newton's work that most of the enlightened thinkers ignored or failed to fully appreciate in terms of its important implications for their philosophy. Hume cautioned,

> While Newton seemed to draw off the veil from some of the mysteries of nature, he showed at the same time the imperfections of the mechanical philosophy; and thereby restored her ultimate secrets to that obscurity in which they ever did and ever will remain.[89]

Hume, however, did not consider such limitation an insurmountable obstacle for the science of man in that the inaccessibility of ultimate truth was a "defect" of all sciences, for "none of them can go beyond experience,

or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority." With the judicious collection and comparison of experiments, Hume asserted the possiblity of a science "not . . . inferior in certainty, and . . . much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension."[90] In Hume's mind experience was sufficient and ignorance of ultimate truth did not prevent the analysis or direction of daily living. It did, however, preclude rigid hypothesizing and fanciful expectations. Aware of the complexity of phenomena, especially regarding moral philosophy, Hume cautions against easy, sweeping conclusions and advocates "enlarging . . . the sphere of . . . experiments" as safeguard against such risky generalization.[91] For Hume, the "new Philosophy calls all in doubt."[92]

In the attempt to integrate the methodological claims of the philosophes, the failure of those claims, and the example of David Hume into an empirical characterization of the "enlightened" movement, historians have achieved a misleading, or at best, a meaningless Enlightenment. Worse, they have furthered the cause of shallow thinking by their unasked questions, their uncritical critique.

Robert Anchor credits Hume with "asserting the sovereignty of the empirical world," but notes that the result "reduced knowledge to a strictly subjective status. Kant denied the sovereignty of the empirical world in order to save the possibility of objective knowledge of it."[93] In this conclusion are two very interesting and discrediting assumptions regarding the empirical age: (1) Kant's system is contrived in order to avoid the disturbing implications of empirical "reality," and (2) if empiricism precipitated "subjective knowledge," then the philosophes' failure of their method is blatantly apparent, for scholars do note that while the philosophes

rejected faith as a basis for belief, they just as ardently rejected relativism. Laurence Bongie points out Voltaire's appreciation of Helvetius's comment on Locke,

> D'un bras il abaissa l'orgueil de platonisme;
> De l'autre, il retrecit le champ du pyrrhonisme . . . .

and his request to use these lines in his new edition of the Elements de Newton.[94] Crocker claims the philosophes actually gave up the "empirical code of obedience to law and custom" because people would not recognize the predominance of one set of rules over another and consequently would refuse to submit to authority.[95] Gay admits that when these philosophers did observe and rationalize they could not feel comfortable with the conclusions and in of The Enlightenment, he frankly states, "Relativism was swamped by polemical passion."[96] It has been suggested also that the method actually posed a problem for enlightened thinkers, that of reconciling science (of Newton's universe and Locke's psychology) "with their enthusiasm over the natural goodness of man."[97] Krieger observes that the philosophes were not of the speculative sort, not even in the interests of "logical consistency," but rather devoted to applied theory in the social and political arenas.[98] Apparently, the philosophes were not enquirers; they were men with programs not questions. What they really wanted was the "Newton of social science, the man who would sum up our enlightened knowledge into a system of social science men had only to follow to ensure the real Golden Age, the real Eden."[99] Peter Gay makes a very dubious assertion in the philosophes' sharp separation of "fancy from reality" because of "their scientific way of thinking."[100]

Nevertheless, while acknowledging the philosophes' particular use, or misuse, of the method, Enlightenment historians report their conclusions without questioning the basis of their validity. Ernst Cassirer writes that "this new methodological order characterizes all eighteenth century thought." The philosophes valued system but resisted "love of system for its own sake."

> One should not seek order, law, and "reason" as a rule that may be grasped and expressed prior to the phenomena, as their a priori; one should rather discover such regularity in the phenomena themselves, as the form of their immanent connection.[101]

These comments demonstrate two important points regarding the application and significance of the method for Enlightenment history: (1) that the "discovery" of unadulterated truth absolutely depended on the method for proof of its validity, and (2) that the method was generally applied to prove, rather than reveal, an assumed truth, i.e., the unity/regularity in the natural order. Enlightenment historians continue to perpetuate Cassirer's misapprehension, basing their characterization of the Enlightenment's legacy on what the philosophes claimed to be doing rather than what they actually did--all this in spite of David Hume's demonstration of the proper use of the method and his more legitimate conclusions suggesting a markedly different Enlightenment legacy than that generally described.

The debate over Voltaire raises similar questions of critical assessment. Whereas Margaret Libby makes the case for Voltaire's conspicuous failure in his application of the method and Crocker finds him guilty of Cartesian a priori inclinations, Cassirer and Cobban, nevertheless,

apparently on the basis of his rhetoric, designate him "a sceptic and empiricist who did not believe it was possible to know the nature of things," a hater of systems.[102] Cobban actually suggests that Voltaire "was the only great French thinker in the eighteenth century to emancipate himself completely from Cartesian ways of thought." Realizing Cartesianism's threat to his views, Voltaire "stubbornly clung to the Newtonian compromise, uniting a mechanistic physics with deism." Other _philosophes_ under the Cartesian influence fell into the error of "sweeping generalizations. Voltaire was the only _philosophe_ with any serious pretensions in the field of experimental science. The others were popularizers and literary men, given to speculation, not to observation and experiment."[103] In light of Libby's critique and his neglect of Hume, Cobban's portrayal of Voltaire seems unlikely. Since Peter Gay designates Voltaire's empiricism as characteristic of the age, the question is particularly intriguing.[104] If Voltaire's method was essentially rhetorical rather than empirical, the "scientific/secular" nature of "enlightened" philosophy becomes questionable and a new attitude must be formulated concerning the era, if not altogether a new name. At the very least, the debate among scholars regarding the nature of eighteenth century empiricism, with Voltaire as the test case, must preclude any "textbook" concensus on this fundamental aspect of Enlightenment "unity."

It is Carl Becker who sees this contradiction most clearly and it forms the basis of his thesis. He offers numerous examples of this _philosophe_ failing such as Montesquieu's comment that the "'facts' meant nothing to him until he discovered the principles which they were to illustrate," and that of Diderot's, that a knowledge of morality should _precede_ that of

history.[105] Nevertheless, most Enlightenment historians reject his thesis and accept the characterization of the philosophes as empirical even though this generally means qualifying their comments to the point of obscuring them or ignoring altogether blatant indications to the contrary.

Indicative of this shallow or presumptuous treatment of the question of method is Peter Gay's evaluation of the philosophes' methodological inconsistency as "disturbing" but not "crippling to the philosophes' enterprise of founding the science of society."[106] In truth, it can be nothing but crippling to a philosophy that claims its validity and superiority to other systems of thought on the basis of this scientific method, and historians have failed in their responsibility to meaningfully analyze the age in terms of its own claims. This failure is especially glaring in light of the fact that there was an example of consistent and objective use of the method in David Hume, but historians have failed to deal with him on these terms, except to acknowledge his divergence from the norm. It is interesting to note that the Renaissance philosopher Montaigne can be identified as a philosophe idol of sorts, for his writings "embodied the manner of a man whose doctrine it was to have no doctrine, but to take the best from all the thought of the past and present and to test ideas in and by life,"[107] and yet the philosophes themselves and Enlightenment historians fail to understand or appreciate the man among them who most resembled the respected Montaigne in his aversion to doctrine and his complete adherence to empirical method. Enlightenment historians should be concerned with such historical incongruities; they should address the question of why the philosophes could not (or would not) observe the "virtues" of Montaigne in David Hume, especially if the answer suggests that the philosophes have

described their philosophy as something it is not--reasonable, tolerant, secular, ultimately true. Historians should be attentive to Hume's technique of constantly questioning his own assertions, of raising all possible objections to his conclusions so as to test their validity and consistency. This is the hallmark of a true seeker. Since he has nothing to prove or defend, he has no fear of challenges. He bluntly states that

> Such bold attempts [such as his philosophy] are always advantageous in the republic of letters, because they shake off the yoke of authority, accustom men to think for themselves, give new hints, which men of genius may carry further, and by the very opposition, illustrate points, wherein no one before suspected any difficutly.[108]

Hume's essential approach is enquiry, a stimulus to more and continued discussion. It is not conclusive, definitive, or ultimate. David Hume was by far the best empirical philosopher of this "empirical" age. If "enlightened" truth is only that which can be observed and experienced, then Hume's is the Enlightenment philosophy, not the philosophy described in the "accepted" Enlightenment characterization.

NOTES

[1]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 34.

[2]Ibid., pp. 39, 35.

[3]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 139.

[4]G. R. Cragg, Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1964), p. 5.

[5]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 140.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 107.

[8]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:129-31.

[9]Gay quotes Voltaire in reference to Newton, "We are all disciples now." The Enlightenment, 2:129.

[10]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 44.

[11]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:132.

[12]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 19.

[13]Becker, Heavenly City, p. 122.

[14]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 123.

[15]Frank E. Manuel, The Age of Reason (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1951), pp. 34, 25, 28.

[16]Karl Lowith, Meaning in History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1949), pp. 104, 106-7.

[17]Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:227-8.

[18]Ibid., 1:399-400.

[19]Robert L. Heilbroner, The Future as History (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1968), p. 31.

[20]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 217.

[21]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, pp. 45, 9. Walter Dorn interprets Cassirer's view: "It is first with the full acceptance of this approach [the empirical method] that the Enlightnement . . . hits its stride." Dorn, "Historical Writing on the Enlightenment," in Carl Becker's Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Raymond O. Rockwood (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1958), p. 65.

[22]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 237-8.

[23]Craig, et al., Heritage of World, p. 777.

[24]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 141

[25]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 643.

[26]Manuel, Age of Reason, pp. 28-29, 24.

[27]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:184.

[28]Ibid., 2:164.

[29]Peter Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 32.

[30]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:168.

[31]Gay, "Light on the Enlightenment," in Present-Day Relevance, ed., McCutcheon, p. 41.

[32]Cragg, Reason and Authority, pp. 1, 78, 70.

[33]Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 450, xvii, 457.

[34]Bredvold, Brave New World, pp. 105-106, 47.

[35]Ibid., p. 33.

[36]Margaret Libby states that his notion of Newtonism was a source of great pride for him and that he "flaunted it all his life." The Attitude of Voltaire to Magic and the Sciences (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), p. 10; Bronowski and Mazlish refer to him as "a magnificent propagandist . . . for the Newton system of science and thought." Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 248; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 120, notes Voltaire's efforts to introduce Newton and his method to France.

[37]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:137-9.

[38]Ibid., 1:135, 199.

[39]Libby, Attitude of Voltaire to Magic, pp. 10, 270.

[40]Ibid., pp. 75, 92.

[41]Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, pp. 246, 249.

[42]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 12.

[43]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 119.

[44]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 207.

[45]Quoted in Manuel, Age of Reason, p. 28.

[46]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:15; 1:136.

[47]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 74.

[48]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 248.

[49]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:139.

[50]Ibid., 2:165.

[51]Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 88.

[52]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:165.

[53]Bredvold, Brave New World, pp. 36-38, 41.

[54]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:178.

[55]Ibid., 2:149, 139.

[56]Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 49.

[57]Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 249-50.

[58]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 150.

[59]Becker, Heavenly City, p. 67.

[60]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 179.

[61]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 219.

[62]Leo Gershoy, "The Heavenly City of Carl Becker," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 192.

[63]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:210; 2:320.

[64]Ibid., 1:181, 321.

[65]Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 34.

[66]Lowith, Meaning in History, p. 96.

[67]Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 184.

[68]Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 81.

[69]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 146, 149.

[70]Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 449, 94.

[71]Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 207-9.

[72]Libby, Attitude of Voltaire to Magic, pp. 165-6, 168.

[73]Ibid., pp. 180, 184-5.

[74]Ibid., pp. 183-4.

[75]Ibid., p. 204.

[76]Ibid., p. 179.

[77]Ibid., p. 273, 77.

[78]Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 212, 201-2.

[79]Hume, Treatise, pp. 43-44, 46.

[80]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 126.

[81]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, pp. 178, 183.

[82]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 208.

[83]Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 74.

[84]Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. 58. Smith also perceives Hume's attention "to the particular and varying circumstances in which the phenomena under investigation can be made to appear." Ibid., p. 61.

[85]John B. Stewart, <u>The Moral and Political Philosophy of David Hume</u> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. vi, 17. Stewart writes of his "discovery" of this consistency in Hume, which he "concluded should be displayed at all costs." Apparently, this perception was novel in the academic community.

[86]L. A. Selby-Bigge, ed., Introduction to <u>Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals,</u> by David Hume, 2d ed. (1962; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. viii.

[87]Copleston, "David Hume and St. John," p. 80.

[88]T. E. Jessop, "Some Misunderstandings of Hume," pp. 160-1.

[89]Quoted in Gay, <u>The Enlightenment,</u> 2:130.

[90]Hume, <u>Treatise,</u> pp. 45-46.

[91]Ibid., p. 225.

[92]Quoted in Mossner, <u>Life of David Hume,</u> p. 75.

[93]Anchor, <u>Enlightenment Tradition,</u> p. 109.

[94]Quoted in Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 219.

[95]Crocker, <u>Age of Crisis,</u> p. 3.

[96]Gay, <u>The Enlightenment,</u> 1:64.

[97]Bredvold, <u>Brave New World,</u> p. 73.

[98]Krieger, <u>Kings and Philosophers,</u> p. 153.

[99]Brinton, <u>Shaping of Modern Thought,</u> p. 118.

[100]Gay, <u>The Enlightenment,</u> 1:239.

[101]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, pp. 8-9.

[102]Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 184; Cassirer insists that Voltaire denied man's ability to know the ultimate mystery of things and that he refused to formulate hypotheses or invent principles; his emphasis was analysis not systems-making. Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 12; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 121.

[103]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 120, 140. In his evaluation of Diderot, Cobban claims that he was the "most practically minded and scientifically curious" of all the philosophes, " then later acknowledges that "the bias of his own mind was clearly towards speculation rather than experiment." Ibid., pp. 139, 140, 142. These two observations seem inconsistent and require clarification.

[104]Gay accuses Hume of "misread[ing] Voltaire's elegant wit as spritely irresponsibility." The Enlightenment, 1:5. Apparently, what Gay reads as wit, Hume (and others) have read as ridicule. A "philosopher" who responds to arguments only with ridicule or wit and virtually no philosophical counterpoints is irresponsible or not a philosopher.

[105]Becker, Heavenly City, p. 104. Becker, however, errs in including Hume in his interpretation of the philosophe attitude.

[106]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:320.

[107]Ibid., 1:288.

[108]Quoted in Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 125. Bronowski and Mazlish credit Bayle, Montesquieu, and Adam Smith with "reviv[ing] the empirical tradition, and . . . then establish[ing] . . . its modern form." Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 494. Hume's neglect is incomprehensible.

CHAPTER IV

HUME AND "ENLIGHTENED" REASON

In the words of Crane Brinton, "Reason, to the ordinary man of the Enlightenment, . . . was the great key word to his new universe. It was reason that would lead men to understand nature . . . and by understanding nature to mold his conduct in accordance with nature." This human faculty was accessible to all men, but the eighteenth century had finally released it from the suppression of Church and Christianity, permitting it to "show men how to control their environment and themselves."[1] Brinton's assessment reflects the opinion among historians that constitutes the traditional historical characterization of the role of reason in the Enlightenment.

Cassirer refers to "the age which venerated reason and science as man's highest faculty," an era "imbued with a belief in the unity and immutability of reason." He asserts,

> If there is any one formula by which the period of the
> Enlightenment can be characterized and which can be attributed
> to the period with absolute certainty, it would seem to be that it
> is an era of pure intellectualism, that it unconditionally upholds
> the primacy of thought and pure theory.[2]

Collingwood contends that the Enlightenment was based on the belief that the previously blind existence of man could be altered "into something rational." Crocker recognizes reason and nature as "the guideposts of eighteenth century thought." Manuel perceives "a period when reason virtually replaced religion as the guiding principle in art, thought, and the

governance of men." Gay observes the rein of reason on the passions, which the philosophes considered "dangerous gifts." The philosophes' hope for reason is summarized by Robert Anchor.

> All the enlighteners . . . looked to reason as the means to discover the just and ideal order of society as prescribed by nature. All of them regarded nature as the embodiment of "all truths which are capable of a purely immanent justification, and which require no transcendent revelation but are certain in themselves."[3]

Reason, "the great integrating force in human life,"[4] applied to all aspects of human existence and the natural world, would dispel ignorance and superstition, revealing the basic goodness of nature and the laws by which it was governed. Applied to human behavior, it could achieve the perfection of man; applied to government, it could "create a society of law and order, a smooth-running mechanism whose consistency and harmony would mirror the workings of the natural universe."[5] "Guided solely by the light of reason and experience," man could achieve the good life on earth.[6]

Typically, Voltaire is depicted as the Enlightenment's foremost advocate of reason. According to G. P. Gooch, Voltaire "attributed progress exclusively to reason"; for him reason survived despite all attempts to discredit it.[7] Gay writes that Voltaire maintained that everything beyond reason was "chimerical"; it constituted the realm of the "nonsensical," not the "sacred." Where reason could not illuminate a question, "man must console himself with that philosophical modesty so characteristic of Voltaire's heroes, Newton and Locke."[8] Describing Voltaire as "the greatest publicist and foremost fighter on behalf of reason that the world has ever seen," Robert Anchor claims that he "more than any other single philosophe," was the ideologue of the Enlightenment. He constructed the Enlightenment creed of

natural law accessible to all mankind through reason.[9] Baumer observes changes in Voltaire's opinion throughout his long life but states that Voltaire "still lived partly in a static world of eternal laws, of perfect models . . . of timeless reason."[10]

Although Diderot "praised the passions more freely and more frequently than his fellow <u>philosophes</u>,"[11] he regarded the eighteenth century as "'a philosophical age' in which thinking men, employing the laws of reason, found their rules, even in aesthetics, not in authoritative books of the past but in 'nature.'" Rousseau allotted a major role to reason in guiding the conscience which reined in the passions. "Conscience . . . provided the right instincts. Reason . . . provided rules for moral conduct."[12]

It was the conviction among "intellectuals" that "laws governing man's actions in society" did exist and were discoverable through reason "in precisely the same manner that natural scientists had reached their conclusions,"[13] that laid the basis for "enlightened" optimism. Although Natural Law was an old concept (as Bredvold points out), the scientific discovery of the seeming "uniformity of natural laws, such as cause and effect,"[14] presented a novel, presumably secure, procedure for the ordering of "natural" human relations. Reason would "clear up the mess that superstition, revelation, faith . . . have piled up here on earth."[15] Diderot perceived a universal truth ranging from physics to biology to morality. "Nature, he insisted . . . is one vast interconnected organic whole in which the steps from matter to life, from science to ethics, from observation to admiration are not merely possible but proper and indeed essential."[16]

Similarly, the Physiocrats "postulated natural laws of economics prior to, and not to be suspended by, governments," laws that "conform[ed] to the

supreme reason which govern[ed] the universe." Prosperity was directly related to a society's conformity to the laws of nature.[17]

Optimism and the empowerment of reason produced the belief in progress. Condorcet is generally considered the most fervent Enlightenment exponent of this attitude. He wrote in <u>Progres de l'esprit humain</u>:

> There is no limit set to the perfecting of the powers of man. . . .
> The progress of this perfectibility, henceforth independent of
> any power that might wish to stop it, has no other limit than the
> duration of the globe upon which nature had placed us.[18]

Robert Heilbroner contends that "progress was . . . no longer a matter of hopefulness. It was a matter of predictable evolution." For instance, the concept of Adam Smith's "invisible hand" directs first through individuals "the entirety of society toward its economic destiny" with everything progressing on an "upward gradient."[19] Peter Gay sees in the eighteenth century the first time in history when "confidence was the companion of realism."[20] Progress was possible because the spread of reason would slowly make men more civilized.[21] Although occasionally shaken by misgiving, optimism "remained overwhelmingly the spirit of the age."[22]

Certain attacks were mounted against reason and natural law (the most devastating by Hume), but historians maintain that "reason, though shaken, continued to be one of the controlling concepts of eighteenth century thought." Crocker quotes Basil Willey who states that regardless of any difference of opinion, "it was not the ambiguity of 'Nature' which people felt most strongly . . . [but its] authority and . . . universal acceptability." Gay observes that despite disagreements over reason's precise function or exact impact, "nearly all [the philosophes] saw the world moving in measured pace toward good sense." In Baumer's assessment, "natural law showed

remarkable durability, more than it is given credit for in recent historiography."[23]

Disagreement among historians arises, however, over the depth of faith the philosophes placed in reason and nature. Some portray it as absolute; others present a wide range of qualifications affixing various limitations on reason or emphasizing the philosophes' interest in the passions of man. For instance, Peter Gay rejects a naive belief in the power of reason among the philosophes; his Age of Reason is really "a Revolt against Rationalism."[24] The most obvious cause of the inconsistent, even confused, character of "enlightened" reason is the philosophes' misuse, often outright neglect, of their fundamentals--experience and observation and Enlightenment historians are obliged to report the propensity of the philosophes to cling to universal truth even though empirical investigation could not substantiate their eschatology.

Lester Crocker points up the dilemma of most philosophes in portraying Voltaire as "a man divided between opposing intellectual commitments." He recognized the importance of empirical data but could not accept the diversity and pessimism such data suggested, opting instead for universal principles exalting man. He believed that the God-given "principle of universal reason . . . [was] so constant that it subsists despite all the passions that fight it." Crocker astutely observes that this opinion is "in logical harmony with the Cartesian psychology, which Voltaire strongly rejected." Tormented over "our non-use of our reason, Voltaire despaired in the realization that the canaille--the vulgar--would never become reasonable.[25]

While acknowledging Voltaire's tendency toward ultimate truth--
natural law, Peter Gay insists on recognizing him as an empiricist. Although
he affirmed natural law, Voltaire was "uneasy with it."

> As an empiricist . . . he [Voltaire] is driven to doubt the existence
> of a law in which he would like to believe. He solves the
> dilemma (unsatisfactorily) by arguing that there is empirical
> proof for the existence of a universal, uniform law of nature.[26]

Voltaire had to have "final causes" and he refused to relinquish them. Gay
says there was a "confusion in Voltaire's mind, of a yearning for a palpable
connection between science and purpose," but he insists that this yearning
did not shape Voltaire's philosophy and therefore did not ruin it.[27] Robert
Anchor concurs that Voltaire confirmed Pascal's view "that reason alone . . .
must end in skepticism," but could not abandon deism "for fear that the
world would seem altogether arbitrary and meaningless."[28]

Similarly, Diderot could not accept the "verdict of Newtonian science;
he refused to believe in a nature largely empty, populated by cold, colorless
corpuscles and wholly indifferent to moral questions." He could not accept
"the teaching implied by Newton . . . that science discloses what is and says
nothing about what should be."[29] In Diderot's scheme, everything changed,
only the whole is eternal; nothing had absolute justification except the
whole.[30] An empiricist could not maintain this position. Without describing,
measuring, explaining, without demonstrating "the whole," Diderot
proclaimed its infinity.

Rousseau is an elusive character throughout Enlightenment histories.
Regarding reason, many historians emphasize his inclination to "depreciate
reason in favor of sentiment and instinct."[31] Crane Brinton notes that
Rousseau was no friend of reason; he observed "the spontaneous, out-going,

loving-kindness of the heart as displayed by simple and uncorrupted persons" to be "natural."[32] In his <u>Profession de foi</u> Rousseau stated that there is "an immutable Natural Law" revealed to man through his conscience. He believed that man had "a unitary self and a self-subsistent mind, both of which we know intuitively," for they are beyond reason's comprehension.[33] Emile was advised that "feeling precedes knowledge." Rousseau asserts that "to exist is to feel; . . . we had feelings before we had ideas."[34]

Rousseau then disdained reason's ability to reveal the truth, but he did not doubt truth's existence or his correct understanding of it. He observed that "one 'must know what ought to be in order to judge what is.'"[35] Rousseau merely designated tools other than reason for truth's revelation. He was no empiricist; his belief was total and undemonstrable.

Cobban presents Locke's conviction that "moral truths possess the same certainty as mathematical and are similarly capable of demonstration," and notes that Locke failed to demonstrate any. Crocker finds D'Alembert unable to doubt that all bodies of the universe "make a unified system" dependent on each other. Baumer faults Condorcet's empiricism in his contention that natural rights are discoverable though reason. Condorcet commented that the only use for the study of comparative law was "to give to reason the support of observation and experience." Like Smith, he also observed a "general law" whereby the pursuit of self-interest automatically, even unknowingly, served the general interest. Baumer also ranks Montesquieu among the believers "in the natural law tradition." As for reason in mankind, Montesquieu commented, "Il vaut bien mieux enlever

l'esprit hors de ses reflexions, et traiter l'homme sensible, au lieu de le traiter comme raisonable."[36]

Krieger notes Kant's acknowledgement of a lesson he learned from Rousseau--"how to use thought for the purpose of 'establishing the rights of humanity,'" for as Peter Gay points out, "if one had thoughts about the social order, they may as well be reasonable thoughts."[37] For his part, Gay recounts Kant's conviction that while the "invisible hand ... crushes the individual," it "benefits the species. ... Progress simply must take place; it is too important, too deeply enmeshed in man's very existence to be denied." As Gay observes, Kant "surrendered his philosophical detachment to his will to believe."[38]

Overall, despite the evidence of "empirical historicism ... that ... human behavior testified to few, if any, absolute uniformities," Enlightenment philosophy generally maintained a single, universal nature of man. Crocker concludes then that the philosophes' "procedures often took them too far away from experience, into sheer speculation." Becker suggests the philosophes were "reconciling the facts of human experience with truths already, in some fashion, revealed to them." Ralph Bowen concurs, recognizing natural law as "the most fundamental of the 'underlying preconceptions' on which eighteenth century thought rested." Determining the basic role of reason in the eighteenth century to be unification and defense against doubt, Cassirer points out that the philosophes rarely took the step to "subjective idealism" even though relativism was a prevalent theme in science and literature. Gay concedes that "the philosophes were not themselves wholly free from the belief in final causes." The degeneration of objective and cool analysis into unreasonable conviction is reflected

in Krieger's description of the "logic of [the philosophes'] anti-Christianity [as] things that are opposed to joined things must be joined themselves,"[39] i.e., the enemies of our enemies are our friends.

Rather than basing their conclusions on an observation of nature, the philosophes actually manipulated reason to support concepts in which they already believed. The philosophes were not empiricists and this failure is reflected not only in their methodology but in their adherence to the concepts of reason and natural law for which they could offer no demonstrable proof. They had no better grounds for their philosophy than did the Church, yet they clung to their ideals as righteously as Protestant reformers.

Hume on Reason

As might be expected of the best empiricist of the day, David Hume cautioned his readers that man "cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis, that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical." Only experience gives "stability and certainty to the maxims derived from study and reflection." He denied a distinction between reason and experience, maintaining that all arguments supposedly founded solely on reason can all be found "to terminate . . . in some general principle or conclusion, for which we can assign no reason but observation and experience."[40] Consequently, Hume's "science of man" was essentially untainted by presupposition and divested of ultimate explanations.

Hume began with the "science of man" because in his view all science was defined, limited, or formulated within the boundaries of man's reasoning

capabilities. In order to truly understand what we learn, we must
understand how we learn it. He claimed it an important function of science

> to know the different operations of the mind, to separate them
> from each other, to class them under their proper heads, and to
> correct all that seeming disorder, in which they lie involved,
> when made the object of reflexion and enquiry.[41]

In truth, improvement in the natural sciences depended on the study of
"human nature--man, the knower."[42] This acute perception seems to have
escaped most of the other philosophes (apparently, content with Locke) since
it was Hume who conceived the most comprehensive, if not the best
received epistemology of his day.

In Hume's analysis there are no innate ideas; ideas must come from
experience. The avenue through which man gains information is his
perception. Sensations of perception Hume labeled "impressions," and
"ideas" are images, copies of impressions in thinking and reason. There can
be no impressions without a corresponding idea and no ideas that are not
derived from simple impressions. Impressions cause ideas and not vice
versa, for as Hume pointed out, one cannot imagine the taste of a pineapple
without actually having tasted one at some time. Simple ideas become
complex ones through any of three "associating qualities"--"Resemblance,
Contiguity in time or place, and Cause and Effect"--this last quality
establishing the strongest connection between ideas.[43]

Having established the foundation of understanding, Hume
characterized "all the objects of human reason or enquiry" as two kinds:
"Relations of Ideas and Matters of Fact." The sciences of geometry, algebra,
and arithmetic comprise the first category because they are
"demonstratively certain;" because of a precise standard, they "preserve a

perfect exactness and certainty."[44] Matters of fact, however, do not. Hume wrote, "there is an evident absurdity in pretending to demonstrate a matter of fact, or to prove it by any arguments a priori. Nothing is demonstrable, unless the contrary implies a contradiction."[45] If matters of fact were provable, then a negation could not be clearly conceived, but since negations can be conceived, such as the sun not rising, matters of fact are unprovable. Hume maintained that all "matter of fact" reasoning was "founded on the relation of Cause and Effect" and the knowledge of this relation is based entirely on experience. Noting that "the effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it,"[46] Hume stated that man's understanding of the necessity of a cause and effect relation comes solely from experience. Without this experience "anything may produce anything." It is only because we are accustomed to observing a cause produce an effect that we acknowledge a necessity in this relationship. In denying a necessary relation between cause and effect, Hume hoped to pry men "loose from all common systems."[47]

Therefore, the principle pushing men to inferences of cause and effect is not reason but custom, habit. "Custom . . . is the great guide of human life." We assume the future will resemble the past because of our experience, not through our reason. The repeated experience of events that we observe to be "conjoined" increases the probability in our minds that the expected effect will occur.[48] It is at this point that we believe in effects whose necessary connection with a cause is not discoverable through reason.

Hume observed that although there is no intellectual justification for a "necessary connection" between cause and effect, men did believe in it in their daily assumptions regarding human nature and daily life. In keeping

with his strict empiricism, Hume did not attempt to develop a method for arriving at belief; he endeavored merely to account for how beliefs do arise. His objective was not justifying beliefs but describing and analyzing them. Hume defined belief as "a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression." It consists not in the peculiar nature or order of ideas, but in the manner of their conception, and their feeling to the mind."[49] It is the feeling, the intensity, attached to beliefs (generally produced by habit) that differentiate them from ideas of the imagination. Consequently, "belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures."[50]

For Hume "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them." Reason performs two functions in this capacity: (1) it discovers connections between events so as to give rise to a passion, and (2) it "excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something which is a proper object of it." Reason discovers truth or falsehood which

> consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact. Whatever, therefore, is not susceptible of this agreement or disagreement, is incapable of being true or false, and can never be an object of our reason.[51]

Since "passions, volitions, and actions" constitute "original facts and realities," they are not susceptible of reason and cannot be determined true or false.[52] Reason then cannot justify our beliefs and, therefore, plays no role in motivating human actions.

Hume's epistemology demonstrated the limitations of reason, not its capacity to reveal the secrets of nature. For Hume the secrets--the "laws"-- of nature were unknowable.

> The only method of freeing learning, at once, from these abstruse questions, is to enquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects.[53]

Man's reasoning ability was to be precisely described and limited to areas of enquiry that were the proper object of it, that is, observable and demonstrable (therefore, knowable) phenomena.

Following his philosophical speculations to their logical conclusions, Hume wound up where few philosophers then or now have cared to follow.[54] Having acknowledged empiricism as the only valid foundation of our knowledge, Hume announced that in the end even this method cannot offer us infallible insights into truth, for he could put "no faith at all in my senses." Our faculties are "fallible and uncertain" and as a result "all knowledge degenerates into probability." Only in the "pure realm of idea (the sciences of logic and mathematics)" is certainty demonstrable; all other sciences based on cause and effect arguments "are reduced to probability."[55] The choice then is between "false reason and none at all." If the method of discovery is not entirely trustworthy then neither are the conclusions it indicates.

> The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. . . . In all the incidents of life we ought still to preserve our scepticism.[56]

Although Hume carefully, explicitly, and repeatedly explained the nature of his skepticism, his contemporaries (and apparently many Enlightenment historians) failed to grasp its precise character. His skeptical proposition was presented in his first publication, then clarified and recapitulated throughout his literary career in an apparently futile attempt to evoke a philosophic response from unreceptive minds. He was quite clear in distinguishing his point of view from Pyrrhonism.

> Shou'd it here be ask'd me ... whether I be really one of those sceptics, who hold that all is uncertain, and that our judgment is not in any thing possest of any measures of truth and falshood; I shou'd reply, that this question is entirely superfluous, and that neither I, nor any other person was ever sincerely and constantly of that opinion. Nature, by an absolute and uncontroulable necessity has determin'd us to judge as well as to breathe and feel. ... Whoever has taken pains to refute the cavils of this total scepticism, has really disputed without an antagonist, and endeavour'd by arguments to establish a faculty, which nature has antecedently implanted in the mind, and render'd unavoidable.[57]

On the next page of the Treatise, Hume repeats that even someone convinced of his skeptical argument

> still continues to believe, and think, and reason as usual, he may safely conclude, that his reasoning and belief is some sensation or peculiar manner of conception , which 'tis impossible for mere ideas and reflections to destroy.[58]

Within a few pages of this comment, he again asserted that "nature breaks the force of all sceptical arguments in time, and keeps them from having any considerable influence on the understanding." We have no choice but to believe. Mossner notes that in the Abstract, published anonymously by Hume to respond to unfavorable, or uninformed, reactions to the Treatise, he

explained that the "Treatise is sceptical in tendency but not to the exclusion of all knowledge: nature is too strong for the stupor attendant on the total suspension of belief." In the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Philo, the sceptic, assures Cleanthes (and readers) that sceptics are not "dangerous, either to the state, to philosophy, or to religion." He says it is

> impossible for [a man of doubt] to persevere in this total
> scepticism, or make it appear in his conduct for a few hours.
> External objects press in upon him: Passions solicit him: His
> philosophical melancholy dissipates. . . . The bent of his mind
> relaxes . . . and the philosopher sinks by degrees into the
> plebeian.[59]

This is Hume's dictum--not Pyrrhonism, but modesty and communicable philosophy. He noted that philosophers often created illusion, for example, "an occult quality" in matter, that ultimately led them to the opinion attained by the people through their stupidity and "true philosophers by their moderate scepticism." The appeal to an occult quality masked their puzzlement and ended "all dispute and enquiry upon the matter." In exposing the "strange infirmities of human understanding," Hume hoped the illiterate could see that the learned were "still diffident in their determinations" and that the learned, especially "dogmatical reasoners" would become more modest and reserved "and diminish their fond opinion of themselves and their prejudice against antagonists."[60]

Hume's epistemology is also a psychology of belief and behavior in which reason is merely an aspect of the human psyche or "soul," a term employed by Hume repeatedly. Attributing human motivations to the passions, he asserted that the ultimate cause of impressions arising from our senses was "perfectly inexplicable by human reason." Hume observed that

no two people think alike and the same person does not think exactly alike at two different times."[61] Consequently, there is no universal nature of reason and its particular application or general tendency is the object of perpetual study, not definitive characterization.

A vital and constant theme in Hume's thought, one almost universally neglected by Enlightenment historians and Hume scholars, is language and rhetoric. Sincerely desirous of eliminating misunderstanding and encouraging meaningful, and therefore, useful, communication among men, Hume was acutely aware of the power and problem of language. In Hume's Sentiments, Peter Jones assembles a sort of ground-breaking presentation of Hume on language. He quotes from one of Hume's letters:

> Of all the vices of language, the least excusable is the want of perspicuity; for, as words were instituted by men, merely for conveying their ideas to each other, the employing of words without meaning is a palpable abuse, which departs from the very original purpose and intention of language. It is also to be observed, that any ambiguity in expression is next to the having no meaning at all; and is indeed a species of it; for while the hearer or reader is perplexed between different meanings, he can assign no determinate idea to the speaker or writer. . . .[62]

Claiming that Vaugelas, the great French grammarian, reversed the "order of nature" by propounding that words "explain the sense" (i.e., the sensation), Hume insisted that the "essential rule" was that sense gives meaning to words. Believing that "whenever any Expression or Action becomes customary it can deceive no body," Hume determined to "follow the common Use of Language" because intelligibility was a prerequisite of truth.[63] Hume perceived "the social nature of language, and . . . the social nature of knowledge"; what we know, how we know it, and how we act is determined by our social environment. Therefore, Hume considered verbal disputes as

"socially and morally reprehensible . . . ; men are failing to be responsible communicators."[64]

> In philosophy Hume observed that long term disputes result from
>
> some ambiguity in the expression, and that the disputants affix
> different ideas to the terms employed in the controversy. For as
> the faculties of the mind are supposed to be naturally alike in
> every individual; otherwise nothing could be more fruitless than
> to reason or dispute together; it were impossible, if men affix the
> same ideas to their terms, that they could so long form different
> opinions of the same subject. . . . [65]

Hume wrote that it was "usual for men to use words for ideas, and to talk instead of thinking in their reasonings." Jones asserts Hume's distinction of talk from thinking and our "struggle to identify the thought" behind talk that confuses us.[66] Although disputes over "the degrees of any quality or circumstance" were perpetually ambiguous "from the very nature of language and of human ideas," Hume believed that clear definition and "strict and uniform use of those terms which are employed" would vastly improve human communication.[67]

Hume observed that the mind always called up a specific image. He subscribed to Berkeley's contention that "general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recal upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them."[68] By adhering to a generality that "makes use of undefined terms and employs comparisons, instead of instances," "false hypotheses" could assume the appearance of truth. Hume was hopeful that philosophy could be made clearer by relating ideas to "impression or original sentiments," that is, pinning down philosophical concepts and semantics to their experiential foundations which all men (all

healthy and whole men) could more clearly, and perhaps uniformly,
understand. By distinguishing ideas and impressions, Hume aspired to
eradicate "all that jargon" that had disgraced "metaphysical reasonings" for
so long.[69] As John Stewart observes, Hume

> strove to escape the despotism of words, to ascend from the level
> of words to that of meanings, to make words the vehicles, not the
> goals, of thought. This is why the profundity of his writings is
> now deemed beyond dispute, even by those who would never
> agree for a single moment with his conclusions.[70]

In view of this assessment, Enlightenment historians have erred in
their characterization of the era beginning with the misinterpretation of
Hume himself. Although the writings of the French philosophes have been
thoroughly and repeatedly perused, it seems that only philosophers or
"Humean" scholars have read Hume in toto. In a superficial evaluation, the
term "skeptic" is affixed to Hume as a phase in the Enlightenment
intellectual progression to materialist, positivist, atheist. Peter Jones asserts,
however, that "nowhere does Hume reveal any leanings towards the
reductionist and materialist views that were starting to appear in the first
half of the eighteenth century." Even in his experiential analysis of
language, which Jones notes "no one ha[d] yet attempted to gather together"
and give "serious attention," he contends that "there is no cause for ascribing
to him [Hume] a crude positivist view of meaning." Where Hume as been
criticized for egotism and a drive for literary fame unbecoming in a
philosopher (Becker and Selby-Bigge among others), Jones contends that
Hume's

> views on rhetoric, and the rhetoric of presentation in his various
> works. . . are not merely questions of literary appreciation.
> Hume's conceptions of philosophy, and the ways in which it may

best be practised and promoted, differed widely from those of
modern philosophers who write almost exclusively for fellow
specialists, and who make little effort to be interesting or
intelligible to anyone outside that group.[71]

Hume's particular brand of skepticism and its implications regarding an

authentic empirical philosophy have escaped the historical construct of the

eighteenth century.

In fact, Enlightenment histories succumb to the very danger that

Hume so pointedly warned against regarding intellectual intercourse, that is,

the meaning of language, the definition of terms. Gay calls the

Enlightenment a "psychological age . . . when philosophy had turned from

metaphysics to epistemology."[72] Hume certainly constructed the most

comprehensive and "characteristic" epistemology of the era, seriously

treating of both the reasoning and passionate faculties of man, and asserting

the foundation of knowledge to be habitual sense perception. In the

passionate (perhaps romantic) exclamations and avowals of the philosophes,

it is not at all clear that they have abandoned metaphysics. Philosophe

"psychology" universalizes a presumed ideal of human nature that must be

"set free" to be not studied in order to be defined. The philosophes were

never so much interested in how we think as what we should think.

Furthermore, if Hume is atypical of Enlightenment philosophers, Gay cannot

use him as the basis for the Enlightenment's preference for epistemology. If

there is an Enlightenment psychology, it is certainly not Hume's.

The misnomer of the Age of "Reason" results from the imprecise

definition of the general term. Although Enlightenment historians assume a

general understanding of the word, their historical data fails to characterize

a clear definition. Hume took great care to distinguish the passions from

reason, such that the reader could follow his argument without mistaking his meaning. Other philosophes, however, seem to use the term interchangeably with, or in the sense of, sentiment and feeling. Although Diderot espoused the cause of reason, he was predominantly entranced by the aesthetics of nature and uninspired by the logic of Newtonian science. If both reason and conscience can write "the eternal laws of nature and order . . . in the depths of [the wise man's] heart,"[73] then their independent and particular functions are imprecise, perhaps nonexistent. The implications, however, of this literary conjoining of reason and conscience, i.e. the common truth revealed by two separate and different aspects of human consciousness, makes the prescribed conclusions irresistible. Reason enhances conscience with connotations of universality and certainty; conscience bolsters reason with righteousness. The literary effect is uplifting and compelling, but it is not lucid in demonstrating psychology, epistemology, or the existence of natural law.

The important question is that of establishing a "reasonable" Enlightenment as opposed to a "rational" one. Both Hume and the philosophes claimed empirical origins for their conclusions, yet Hume posited a philosophy diametrically opposed to that of the philosophe "family" and the "accepted" historical interpretation. It is highly questionable that the central concern of the philosophes was "to find and establish the limits of reason," as Peter Gay contends. It is highly likely, however, that the philosophes were as guilty of making "conjectures drawn from fancy" and consulting "their imaginations instead of interrogating nature," as the seventeenth century systems-makers they criticized. Baumer supports this probability in urging a clarification of what the philosophes meant by the

word "system." He writes, "Hostility to systems in general is supposed to be a hallmark of eighteenth century philosophy, and in a sense it was." But apparently, systems were not per se bad; rather there were good and bad systems. Baumer admits that Voltaire had one (though he uses Voltaire and Condillac as examples of aversion to system) and identifies Hume as the exception in the extreme in avoiding them. Cassirer depicts an era of "thought and pure theory," and Bronowski and Mazlish assert the philosophe claim "that the world of men and their ways could be subjected to Cartesian reason and be made to produce 'laws' as clear as those of geometry. . . . 'natural laws,' evident to all men of common sense." Alerted by Hume, Gay writes of the "incurably doctrinaire" ideas of the Physiocrats.[74]

The confusion arises in analyses whereby rationalistic, rather than empirical, thinking is observed in the philosophes but excused in various different ways. For example, Baumer notes that Voltaire, the English deists, the Physiocrats, even Montesquieu were aware "of the relativity of human customs" through their observations, yet adhered to a belief in "changeless verities." A rationalist characterization, however, would be misleading because "Voltaire . . . preferred Locke to Descartes" and other more radical philosophers (like Hume) "discovered principles of regularity in the phenomena they observed," which were often the same as the "changeless verities."[75] First of all, Voltaire's "preference" did not prevent him from making a system (which Baumer himself suggests), and a preference for Locke does not eschew rationalism. Secondly, Baumer has missed an important semantical point. "Principles of regularity" connotes a more flexible, less authoritative condition than "changeless verities." Hume was most conscious of the problem of semantics, and it seems likely that his

avoidance of the term "verities" suggests his acknowledgement that "principles" could, with time, be proved wrong.

Similarly, Peter Gay writes that while the philosophes "were destroying the logic of natural law with their epistemology, their sociology, and their history, they continued to use its language as a support for their social criticism and guide for their social program." Their talk of "natural law" was chiefly "rhetoric" in the implementation of social reform."[76] One is immediately curious to know who besides Hume was assaulting natural law with epistemology. Furthermore, if the philosophes were scientists invoking a justification for their program that they knew did not exist, they were frauds at worst and rationalists, even authoritarians, at best, knowing what was in the best interests of society (and one must wonder how they knew) and constructing a feasible rationale for this knowledge. If the "language" of natural law was merely "marketing" rhetoric, how were the systems of the philosophes different from those of religion, which were, in addition, free of empirical hypocrisy?

In A History of Science and its Relations with Philosophy and Religion, Sir William Dampier observes that

> . . . Scholasticism accept[ed] a philosophic system on authority
> and then argue[d] from the system what facts ought to be.
> Contrary to an opinion sometimes held, mediaeval philosophy
> and theology made full use of reason, their results being deduced
> by logical methods from what were accepted as authoritative
> and certain premises, the scriptures as interpreted by the
> church, and the works of Plato and Aristotle. Science, on the
> other hand, depends on experience, and uses methods somewhat
> like those employed in fitting together the pieces or words of a
> puzzle. Reason is used to solve the definite problems of the
> puzzle, and to form the limited syntheses and theories which

alone are possible; but observation or experiment is the starting-point of the investigation and the final arbiter.[77]

Although the philosophes castigated theology (usually for being irrational) and rationalist systems, it is very likely they were guilty of abusing or misusing reason in the same way. They constructed intellectual frameworks for their presumed (and often philosophically untenable) truths. Consequently, when Baumer comments that Enlightenment reason was restricted to "the world of appearances . . . [but] reason could read that world, the world of empirical nature, very well, deduce general laws therefrom, and thus hope to control better the course of human action,"[78] he is almost correct with respect to one philosopher, David Hume, not the "philosophe family." If, as Hans Morgenthau observes, the "assumptions of the rationalist-empirical philosophy . . . persist in our own age,"[79] historians have not helped define the meaning of this seemingly paradoxical concept, despite the clear definitions and example of Hume. As a result our Enlightenment legacy remains obscure and with it information about ourselves and how we really think.

The flaws of Enlightenment history result from shallow, limited analysis, itself a result of the predisposition of many historians toward their study. Crocker notes Voltaire's despair that the canaille would ever become reasonable and that much of Voltaire's work "reveals his distrust of the human reason."[80] One wonders just what Voltaire's conclusion or vision was. His despair that a faulty and limited faculty would prevail among the vulgar is hardly noteworthy. Actually, his writings and deathbed pronouncement establish his deep faith in reason since he had never demonstrated it satisfactorily to himself. It was not reason that Voltaire doubted; it was man's willingness to use it, his desire to be reasonable. In

such circumstances where reason is inaccessible to much of humanity or willfully resisted by it, the options are to "tend one's garden" or impose a reasoned existence on society from the top down, i.e. through "enlightened" despots. Either option carries important implications for change in the Enlightenment picture.

Baumer writes that although Rousseau seems at times to "banish natural laws and natural rights from his state of nature," he did not intend "to rule out inalienable rights," but simply to demonstrate that man was unaware of "moral notions" until he formed society. This moral realization did not preclude pre-existent rights.[81] The meaning of such rationalization is elusive, perhaps non-existent, and historians perpetuate a meaningless Enlightenment by neglecting the critical analysis of such pronouncements. Science indicated that man never existed in a "non-social" state and, more importantly, if "moral notions" are unknown outside of society, why (on what .demonstrable basis) prescribe any rationale for them beyond the social environment? If the Enlightenment is to be characterized accurately, the philosophes must be accurately understood and meaningfully described.

When Peter Gay asserts that "increased confidence in reason led to increasing humanity,"[82] more is revealed regarding his logic and hopes for reason than those of the Enlightenment. Commenting that those philosophes who knew science best did not fear it (among whom he includes Hume), Gay acknowledges Voltaire's need (in a "scientific/empirical" age) for "final causes" and his refusal to relinquish them. He writes of the "confusion in Voltaire's mind," evident in his (Gay's) contrast of Voltaire's pessimism in Candide with his predictions of the "inevitable triumph of philosophy" regardless of setbacks because "men learn to think."[83] In truth, it is

Voltaire's legacy that is ambiguous, not Hume's, and it is Gay's history that obscures this conclusion. Gay contends that Voltaire's confusion did not shape his philosophy and therefore did not "ruin" it, but the implications of this situation are critical. If Voltaire could not be honest with himself in light of the empirical evidence that made him uncomfortable, then his philosophy is dishonest and Gay has described "enlightened" faith an eighteenth century rationalism, not an empirically secular Age of Reason.

This error is blatantly obvious in the example of Hume, whose lack of influence in his era Gay considers "a missed opportunity."[84] The implications of this inadequate, essentially meaningless, dismissal of Hume's thought are devastating, especially for Gay's Enlightenment. One wonders, "opportunity" for what?--consistent empiricism, genuine skepticism, a practical and contented philosophy for living? If the Enlightenment reflects none of these or was seriously lacking in them, Gay's characterization of it is incorrect. Furthermore, even if Hume's contemporaries "missed" him, historians are not absolved from meaningful analysis of his thought in relation to the age. Apparently, Enlightenment history has "missed" Hume, too.

The resistance among historians to Hume's challenge is evidenced in comments like those of Alfred Cobban, who observes that it was good for "enlightened self-confidence that the Treatise of Human Nature was not read. Even if it had been one doubts if its implications would have been understood." Peter Gay assesses the implications of Hume's epistemology for the Enlightenment to be "extremely disturbing."[85] If this is the case, if Hume is threatening to an Enlightenment spirit, it is because Hume's argument is irresistibly valid, even representative of the empirical claims of

the era and it serves as a gauge by which to measure the Enlightenment fulfillment of it own assertions. Therefore, for those engaged in the effort of establishing that measure, Hume's own admonition regarding disturbing "difficulties" is pertinent.

> ... nothing can be more absurd than this custom of calling a difficulty what pretends to be a demonstration, and endeavouring by that means to elude its force and evidence. ... A demonstration, if just, admits of no opposite difficulty; and if not just, 'tis a mere sophism, and consequently can never be a difficulty. 'Tis either irresistible, or has no manner of force. To talk therefore of objections and replies, and ballancing of arguments in such a question as this [i.e. a question which falls within the domain of knowledge, as distinguished from belief], is to confess, either that human reason is nothing but a play of words, or that the person himself, who talks so, has not a capacity equal to such subjects. Demonstrations may be difficult to be comprehended, because of the abstractedness of the subject; but can never have any such difficulties as will weaken their authority, when once they are comprehended.[86]

The potential of Hume's philsophy to destroy their most cherished beliefs urged the philosophes to keep their distance from him. Crocker acknowledges that "the French did not accept his consequence, that reason and the passions can never be in opposition, except insofar as the passions 'are accompanied with some judgment or opinion.'" Gay observes that in Paris they "neither shared nor fully understood his skepticism," and that Voltaire seemed ignorant of Hume's epistemology and Kant probably never read his Treatise. Leonard Krieger aptly summarizes the historical perspective on Hume's relationship with his fellow philosophers.

> [His] Treaties went too far for his colleagues, ... since his extension of skepticism from metaphysical to all rational coherence among things struck at the assumptions they tacitly

held. But they chose rather to ignore than to refute it, and he remained a philosophe in good standing. . . . [87]

Alfred Cobban has commented that David Hume "put a time bomb under Western philosophy, and it has never been the same again."[88] It would seem, however, that the bomb is still ticking as the implications of Hume's philosophy continue to be largely overlooked by historians, if not actually refuted. If historians insist that "reason was the Enlightenment's sun and it could shine within the minds of every man," then David Hume cannot be considered an "Enlightenment" philosopher, even though "he brought into light with great clarity what any theory of knowledge ought to, namely the very nature of human understanding." If historians insist that "the Enlightenment built its theory of knowledge on the blueprints of empiricism,"[89] then David Hume may well be the only authentic enlightened philosopher and historians must accept his case imposing severe limitations on man's reason. Generally, however, historians continue to characterize the philosophes as scientific and empirical, and end up acknowledging philosophe "systems" that have no demonstrable, and therefore, believable, foundation. The result has been history that confounds rather than clarifies and an inability to accurately assess the legacy we have inherited.

Hume's pre-eminence as an empiricist, however, necessitates the acknowledgement, actually the analysis, of his views by historians who consider the scientific method the foundation of Enlightenment philosophy. According to these acknowledgements, reason in the "Humean" Enlightenment posed "an uncompromising challenge to the cherished tenets of the eighteenth century," and Hume

> more than any other man ... undermined the foundation on
> which [the] convictions [of the Age of Reason] rested. ... Hume
> showed that the nature of reason had been seriously
> misconstrued: in spite of its confidence, it could lead only to the
> bleakest scepticism.[90]

Robert Anchor's treatment of Hume depicts the rational order of nature as only a premise making science similar to religion since "neither is capable of strictly rational and objective truths." Knowledge then is "mere opinion." Mossner agrees that Hume showed knowledge to be "at best, probable" and that it is achieved by custom and habit not through reason. S. N. Hampshire asserts that Hume tried to show that "there can be no knowledge that can be called distinctively philosophical knowledge, no hope of rational insight into the structure of reality." Description of habit and custom is possible but the belief "that there must be some ultimate justification of our habits of thought, which is external to [them]" is an illusion. According to Collingwood, Hume showed that no form of knowledge was anything "more than a system of reasonable beliefs." And Peter Gay notes that Hume never intended to explain the original qualities of human nature, for it was imperative that a "true philosopher" refrain from "searching into causes." Agreeing that Hume's conception of philosophy's function never involved justification of ultimate beliefs, Norman Kemp Smith describes Hume's intent "to trace [ultimate beliefs] to their sources in the constitution of our human nature."[91]

In the Humean Enlightenment reason is not only incapable of metaphysical conclusions, but its influence on human behavior is also severely limited, i.e. it is subservient to human passions. Lester Crocker suggests that for Hume human nature was everywhere the same but the common denominator was man's passions. John B. Stewart clarifies Hume's

distinction between reason and passion through his observation that men commonly mistake calm passions for reason, that "strength of mind" is actually "calm passions above the violent."[92]

Furthermore, an Enlightenment according to David Hume would not include John Locke. Hume claimed that "ambiguity and circumlocution seem to run through [Locke's] reasonings." Claiming that common sense philosophy always recalls error "to the right path," while the philosopher of "subtile reasonings" pushes on from one mistake to another regardless of "its unusual appearance, or its contradiction to popular opinon," Hume believed that Addison would be read "when Locke shall be entirely forgotten."[93] From this point of view, Locke's reputation is more the creation of "subtile reasoners" among historians than the product of the depth of his thinking. A general re-evaluation of Locke and his place in the Enlightenment is in order along the lines of Laurence Bongie's view. He writes that Hume had refuted

> once and for all certain Lockean 'acts of faith'--acts of faith repeated ad nauseam by a group of thinkers who prided themselves on never having recourse to anything but reason. With Locke the philosophes had all the necessary philosophical doctrines, all the suitable collective rationalizations to support the positive programs of action and reform they wished to achieve.[94]

Kant, too, in his turn away from human nature and experience to the perusal of pure reason, would require a new Enlightenment definition, in that Hume would consider Kant's effort useless since pure reason is a concept based on experience.[95]

The Humean Enlightenment would not make the mistake of Diderot with regard to reality. While Diderot predicted the demise of mathematics as a science because it was removed from concrete experience,[96] Hume

understood that experience was not concrete and therefore, no suitable basis for exact, demonstrable science. It was precisely the artificial nature of mathematics in which the terms are precisely agreed upon that made it demonstrable; mathematics is a universal language. Regarding the study of reality, William Dampier observes that

> the experimental method of studying nature ... led to a separation [of philosophy and science]; ... the followers of Kant and Hegel led idealist philosophy away from contemporary science. ... But evolutionary biology and modern mathematics and physics ... have deepened scientific thought, and ... again forced philosophers to take account of science.[97]

Bronowski and Mazlish point out that Hume's argument regarding cause and effect is "relevant to the pattern of events in quantum physics."[98] But for historians of the Enlightenment, perhaps science and philosophy could have been rejoined quite some time ago.

While many historians exert themselves over Voltaire's confusion or lament the abandonment of an Enlightenment that never was, the twentieth century is validating the ideas of David Hume. Hume hoped that his philosophy would revolutionize thinking and in the process give man a more accurate and, therefore, more useful understanding about himself. Having observed in himself the nature of conviction, he attempted to demonstrate the benefits of restricting our inquiries to those in our experience.

> Nothing is more requisite for a true philosopher, than to restrain the intemperate desire of searching into causes, and having establish'd any doctrine upon a sufficient number of experiments, rest contented with that, when he sees a farther examination would lead him into obscure and uncertain speculations.[99]

A. P. Cavendish in <u>David Hume</u> believes that through his epistemology Hume was trying "to persuade us to abandon the search for a higher kind of knowledge." Our limited imagination and experience limit our understanding. According to Robert Ginsberg, Hume taught us that experience, our only basis for knowledge, cannot assure us that "workable habits are the truth." Our belief in necessary causality "is a <u>habit of thinking</u> . . . founded on patterns of experience. That it is a useful habit is no proof that it holds true of reality." Hampshire further notes that Hume "also looked for the sources of metaphysical enthusiasm, for the type of mistake that we are making when we are inclined to claim some ultimate insight into the nature of things, an insight that is independent of experience."[100]

Hoping to pry us loose from systems, Hume alerts us to the danger of twentieth century "newspeak." Jones quotes Hume's concern that if "the hearer or reader is perplexed between different meanings, he can assign no determinate idea to the speaker or writer." Gaskin credits Hume with asserting

> the obvious fact about language that if you wish words to carry their common meanings (or even something like their common meanings) then you cannot insist that they be used regradless of their appropriateness. If you do . . . then . . . either the word means what it commonly means and what you say by means of it is false, or the word does not mean what it commonly means and either you convey nothing by its use or you convey something different from what you intended.[101]

Hume's remedy for the confusion in communication was to avoid general terms representing non-existent "abstract or general ideas" and to anchor language to experience. A significant result of this endeavor would be to wean us from ideals or rather expose them as chimera, i.e. generalizations or

systemizations of particular experiences. For example, whereas the western world, especially the United States, idealizes "free trade" as a righteous universal, Hume's philosophy demonstrates this presumption to be the result of the practical and beneficial experience of its exponents. The Scottish ideal of "free trade," disseminated by Adam Smith, grew out of Scotland's suffering under a mercantile system.[102] The universal appropriateness (or righteousness) of free trade does not necessarily follow in a world of diverse social organizations and experience. Hume's is a genuinely secular philosophy, oriented to practical existence and skeptical of eternal truths such that Hume urged a procedure of "timorous and sure steps," the frequent review of conclusions, and the accurate examination of the consequences of these conclusions.[103]

Hume asserted that we do not go beyond ourselves. He realized that science begins with man, not an external reality, since it is the perception of the phenomena, not the "phenomena" itself, that constitutes knowledge, and therefore, science. The "connexion, tie, or energy [of causes] lies merely in ourselves, and is nothing but that determination of the mind, which is acquir'd by custom."[104] Although we cannot know the true nature of the universe, we can know ourselves. As H. R. Klocher points out, Hume did not question whether there are things, but "why we believe that there are things." Similarly, Cavendish observes that Hume does not tell us "how we ought to proceed, but how we do proceed, how in fact as human beings we are bound to proceed."[105]

Hume's epistemology and psychology offer remarkable insights into human behavior as valid in the twentieth as the eighteenth century. He observed tendencies in our thinking processes that Gordon Allport

documented in his contemporary study of prejudice,[106] such as our proclivity to suppose our particular experience to be true in instances "of which we have no experience," our tendency to judge objects (especially ourselves) "by comparison [rather than by] their intrinsic worth and value," and the essential influence of personality or temperament on our belief and motivation. Since belief results from habitual experience, Hume attributed over half of mankind's opinions to education and they are often so deeply rooted as to prevail over cause and effect.[107] Describing human nature more in terms of common potentialities than common characteristics, Hume's psychology accounts for great diversity among and within individuals.[108]

Hume has provided us the useful information historians have not. He explained the cul-de-sac of Enlightenment reason, i.e. "human nature's will to exercise that reason."[109] While historians, such as Barbara Tuchman, The March of Folly, continue to direct traffic to the cul-de-sac, bemoaning our willful resistance to reasoned wisdom and pleading for reason's dominion over mankind, Hume asserted the futility of appeals to reason. Will cannot resist reason since reason is subservient to the passions, and because of this- -because reason is the "slave of the passions"--people "reason" in different ways. Reason cannot justify our beliefs and, therefore, plays no role in motivating human actions. While the twentieth century, the result of a century's development and assimilation of Enlightenment truth, watched dumbfounded the surge of fascism and the ascendance of Hitler and Mussolini with their intellectual apologists, Hume knew that if we want to govern a man, we should work his violent rather than calm passions "and rather take him by his inclination, than what is vulgarly call'd reason." We should put him in situations that "encrease the violence of the passion."[110]

Mossner points out that "it is the key to [Hume's] teaching that man, [is] a _feeling_ rather than primarily a _reasoning_ creature," and that he is dominated "by sentiment, emotion, passion, appetite."[111] With this understanding Hume explained some of our most irrational "rationalizations," such as our conviction that "freedom fighters" are never "terrorists" despite the similarity of their methods, or our conviction that democracy and free enterprise are righteous universals, not ideologies like the artificial constructs of our opponents. Hume wrote,

> When our own nation is at war with any other, we detest them
> under the character of cruel, perfidious, unjust and violent: But
> always esteem ourselves and allies equitable, moderate, and
> merciful. If the general of our enemies be successful, 'tis with
> difficulty we allow him the figure and character of a man. He is
> a sorcerer: He has a communication with daemons. . . . He is
> bloody-minded, and takes pleasure in death and destruction. But
> if the success be on our side, our commander has all the opposite
> good qualities, and is a pattern of virtue, as well as of courage
> and conduct. His treachery we call policy: His cruelty is an evil
> inseparable from war.[112]

Historians note that Hume denied the philosophical justification of the assumptions we make in daily life. Indeed, there can be "no rational basis for moral action: . . . [therefore] the basis of moral behaviour must lie elsewhere than in reason."[113] He asserted that we are more than our reason; "that reason is but one tool in guiding [man] in his search for values."[114]

Through the careful observation of his subject, Hume came to know himself and his kind very well. The fundamentally passionate man of the Humean Enlightenment is the irrational believer of the allegedly modern and scientific twentieth century. Misled by Enligtenment history, he remains a man in search of himself.

NOTES

[1]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 117.

[2]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, pp. xi, 6, 165.

[3]Collingwood, Idea of History, p. 78; Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. xvi; Manuel, Age of Reason, p. 1; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:191; Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, pp. 58-59. The enclosed quotation is from Cassirer.

[4]Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 4.

[5]Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 118; Manuel, Age of Reason, p. 2.

[6]Becker, Heavenly City, pp. 102-3. In the textbook rendition, Enlightenment writers were "convinced that human beings could comprehend the operation of physical nature and mold it to the ends of material and moral improvement. The rationality of the physical universe became a standard against which the customs and traditions of society could be measured and criticized. Such criticism penetrated every corner of contemporary society, politics, and religious opinion." Craig, et al. Heritage of World Civilizations, p. 775.

[7]G. P. Gooch, "Voltaire as Historian," in Catherine the Great and Other Studies (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954), pp. 272, 271.

[8]Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, pp. 32-33. Hume, of course, maintained that even everything within the realm of reason was doubtful. Ibid., p. 33.

[9]Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, pp. 57, 59. A few years before his death, Voltaire wrote that he would die faithful "in human reason which is beginning to develop in the world." Ibid., p. 68.

[10]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 153.

[11]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:281.

[12]Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 141, 173.

[13]Manuel, Age of Reason, p. 39.

[14]Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 457.

[15]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 117, 110.

[16]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:162.

[17]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 222; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:351. "It was the primary task of society to increase its net product, and the primary task of economists to show society how to increase it." Ibid.

[18]Quoted in Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 22.

[19]Ibid., pp. 33, 32.

[20]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:3. In the Party of Humanity (p. 271), however, Gay maintains that inevitable progress was not a general feeling of the age.

[21]Gay, "Light on the Enlightenment," in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 42.

[22]Manuel, Age of Reason, p. 35.

[23]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. viii; Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. xix; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:99; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 220.

[24]Gay, Party of Humanity, p. 270.

[25]Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 211, 184, 222.

26Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed.
Rockwood, p. 41.

27Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:161.

28Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 65.

29Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:162.

30Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 81.

31Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 94.

32Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 121.

33Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 192, 129.

34Quoted in Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 193. Hume
agreed that feeling/impressions preceded ideas, but where Rousseau
asserted an ultimate morality, even political system, Hume would never have
acknowledged sentiment as a basis for truth.

35Ibid., p. 222.

36Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 76; Crocker, Age of Crisis,
p. 20; Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 220, 231, 221-2. Peter
Jones, Hume's Sentiments: Their Ciceronian and French Context
(Edinburgh: The University Press, 1982), p. 173.

37Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 183; Gay, The Enlightenment,
2:27.

38Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:105.

39Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 182, 198; Becker, Heavenly City,
p. 102; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, pp. 166, 117; Gay, The
Enlightenment, 1:246; Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 186.

40Hume, Treatise, p. 44; Enquiries, p. 44.

[41]Hume, _Enquiries_, p. 13.

[42]Stewart, _Moral and Political Philosophy_, p. 12.

[43]Hume, _Treatise_, pp. 53, 58.

[44]Hume, _Enquiries_, p. 25; _Treatise_, p. 119. In the _Treatise_, Hume excludes geometry because of a "want of such a standard of equality in extension," but he includes it in the _Enquiries_, apparently on the basis of standard formula.

[45]David Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in _Hume Selections_, ed. Charles W. Hendel, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), pp. 354-5.

[46]Hume, _Enquiries_, pp. 26-27, 29.

[47]Hume, _Treatise_, pp. 223, 189. Hume asserts "That there is nothing in any object, consider'd in itself, which can afford us a reason for drawing a conclusion beyond it"; and that even after observing "the frequent or constant conjunction of objects," we cannot draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have had experience."

[48]Hume, _Enquiries_, pp. 44, 74.

[49]Hume, _Treatise_, p. 144; _Enquiries_, p. 49.

[50]Hume, _Treatise_, p. 234. Norman Kemp Smith observes that Hume concluded "that it is upon Nature's guidance, operating in all the really ultimate issues not through reason but by way of feeling (inclusive) of belief, that we have to rely." _Philosophy of David Hume_, p. 545.

[51]Hume, _Treatise_, pp. 462, 511, 510.

[52]Ibid., p. 510.

[53]Hume, _Enquiries_, p. 12.

[54]Philip A. Moritz observes that after Hume exposes the unreliability of our senses and the lack of necessary relation between cause and effect,

progressive empiricists have "little left . . . on which to base their world-theory syntheses." "Is Hume the End?" The Philosophical Journal 8 (July 1971): 123.

[55]Hume, Treatise, pp. 267, 231; Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 175.

[56]Hume, Treatise, pp. 315-7.

[57]Ibid., p. 234.

[58]Ibid., p. 235.

[59]Ibid., p. 238; Mossner, Introduction to Treatise, by Hume, p. 17; Hume, "Dialogues," pp. 290-291; Norman Kemp Smith perceives that Hume has not undermined "the assurance required in the reasonings of common life, and for action." Philosophy of David Hume, p. 546; R. G. Collingwood also realizes that while Hume showed reason "incapable of dispelling the clouds of doubt," he perceived "that Nature herself (our human nature) suffices for that purpose and lays upon us in our practical life an absolute necessity to live and talk and act like other people." Idea of History, p. 73.

[60]Hume, Treatise, p. 273; Enquiries, p. 161.

[61]Hume, Treatise, p. 132; David Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, p. 323.

[62]Quoted in Jones, Hume's Sentiments, p. 137.

[63]Quoted in Jones, Hume's Sentiments, pp. 137-8.

[64]Ibid., p. 141.

[65]Hume, Enquiries, p. 80.

[66]Hume, Treatise, p. 110; Jones, Hume's Sentiments, p. 146. Jones observes that in philosophy "we often find that such thought is itself confused or incoherent."

[67]Quoted in Jones, Hume's Sentiments, p. 144.

[68]Hume, Enquiries, p. 158; Treatise, p. 64.

[69]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 287, 62, 21.

[70]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 1.

[71]Jones, Hume's Sentiments, pp. 7, 136, 148.

[72]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:408.

[73]Rousseau, quoted in Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 222.

[74]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:140, 143; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 208; Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 255; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:352.

[75]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 153. Baumer states that Hume believed in a common human nature throughout the world. The importance of this contention, however, depends on a specific description of human nature.

[76]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:458; Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 42.

[77]Sir William Cecil Dampier, A History of Science and its Relations with Philosophy and Religion, 4th ed. (1948; reprint ed., Cambridge: At the University Press, 1966), p. xv.

[78]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 142.

[79]Crocker presents these assumptions: (1) "the notion that the physical and social worlds are intelligible through the same processes; [2] . . . understanding in terms of these processes is all that is needed for control of these two worlds." Age of Crisis, p. 458.

[80]Ibid., p. 222.

[81]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 222.

[82]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:32.

[83]Ibid., pp. 161, 104, 105,

[84]Ibid., 1:13.

[85]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 138; Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:401.

[86]Quoted in Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. 67.

[87]Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 239; Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:13; Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 159. It might be noted that skepticism is an "extreme" only to believers.

[88]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 135.

[89]Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 643, 633.

[90]Cragg, Reason and Authority, pp. 128, 125.

[91]Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, pp. 63, 64; Mossner, Life of David Hume, pp. 126, 125; Hampshire, "Hume's Place in Philosophy," in David Hume, ed. Pears, p. 4; Collingwood, Idea of History, p. 74; quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:177; Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. 458.

[92]Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 186; quoted in Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 78, 76.

[93]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 22, 7.

[94]Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 225.

[95]Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 627-8.

[96]Baumer calls it "one of the greatest, and most erroneous predictions of the eighteenth century." Modern European Thought, p. 207.

[97]Dampier, History of Science, p. vii.

[98]Bronowski and Mazlish, _Western Intellectual Tradition_, p. 475.

[99]Hume, _Treatise_, p. 60.

[100]A. P. Cavendish, _David Hume_ (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1968), p. 26; Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 637, 642; Hampshire, "Hume's Place in Philosophy," in _David Hume_, ed. Pears, p. 5.

[101]Jones, _Hume's Sentiments_, p. 137; Gaskin, _Hume's Philosophy of Religion_, p. 81.

[102]Stewart, _Moral and Political Philosophy_, p. 3.

[103]Hume, _Enquiries_, p. 150.

[104]Hume, _Treatise_, pp. 116, 314.

[105]H. R. Klocher, S. J., "Empiricism and Reality," _The Heythrop Journal_ 4 (1963): 47-48; Cavendish, _David Hume_, p. 78. Cavendish maintains that Hume implied that belief is not an object of choice.

[106]See Gordon Allport, _The Nature of Prejudice_ (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1954).

[107]Hume, _Treatise_, pp. 155, 420, 344, 169, 165-6.

[108]Hume writes: "All operations of the mind depend in a great measure, on its disposition, when it performs them." The causes and effects of "violent and calm passions are pretty variable, and depend, in a great measure, on the peculiar temper and disposition of every individual. . . . [The] struggle of passion and of reason, as it is call'd diversifies human life, and makes men so different not only from each other, but also from themselves in different times." _Treatise_, pp. 147, 484.

[109]Krieger, _Kings and Philosophers_, p. 164.

[110]Hume, _Treatise_, p. 466.

[111]Mossner, Introduction to _Treatise_, by David Hume, pp. 17, 22.

[112]Hume, _Treatise_, p. 397.

[113]Cobban, _In Search of Humanity_, p. 216.

[114]Ibid., p. 65

CHAPTER V

HUME AND "ENLIGHTENED" RELIGION

For the enlightened philosopher, one of the revelations that would
result from the development and dissemination of reason was the precepts of
"natural religion." Although Enlightenment histories emphasize the
philosophes' preoccupation with morals, they also acknowledge the
prevalent assumption during the era "that right conduct depended on right
belief," and the consequent formulation of a basic theology.[1] Expectedly,
opinion varies as to the definition and degree of "enlightened" religious
sentiment. The case is made for the skeptical and atheist philosophers, like
Diderot and Holbach, trying to "eliminate God entirely from the system of
nature,"[2] and the materialists, devising "a religion of reason, a system of
ethics without all the nonsense of theology."[3] Many historians observe an
evolution during the century from a reasoned belief in God to a radical
denial of religion, natural or revealed.[4] But regardless of how the century is
depicted in particular studies of it, a "fundamental attitude,"[5] especially
evidenced in the leading spokesmen of the era (Newton, Locke, Voltaire,
Rousseau), is acknowledged in all Enlightenment histories and, especially in
textbook renditions, usually proffered as characteristic of the Age of Reason.
This attitude is the effort to free God from the constraints of dogma to the
end "of an all-comprehensive, a truly universal awareness of" him.[6]
Historically, this attitude is generally identified in deism.

As Carl Becker observes, the distinguishing character, "the very foundation of the new philosophy was that the existence of God, if there was one, and his goodness, if goodness he could claim, must be inferred from the observable behavior of the world."[7] Ernest Mossner, identifying two schools of Anglican religious thought during the century, claims that by 1750, the "a posteriori" group, impressed by Newton's empiricism, had triumphed over the "dogmatic a priori group." William Paley's "narrowly empirical school of theology" at Cambridge institutionalized this victory.[8] Reason and empirical observation, beginning with nature and its laws seemed more scientific,[9] and therefore, more legitimate to the philosophes. Whereas Descartes had deduced the truth of nature from God's existence, now God was deduced from nature.[10] Newton himself drew the theological inferences from his method. J. C. A. Gaskin notes that in the Optiks and Principia, Newton supported the "regularity/order argument" and the "teleological/purpose argument."

> ... the first contrivance of those very artificial parts of animals, the eyes, ears [etc.] ... can be the effects of nothing else than the wisdom and skill of a powerful and ever living Agent.
>
> This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being.[11]

For Voltaire, Newton's system never denied God and a "stable, lawful universe" was "the only basis for true natural religion."[12] He credited Newton with breaking "the old conception of the universe" and substituting "a cosmology appropriate to modern man." Science, obviously, was a "pious undertaking." In essence, Newton "created the impression that science had

produced a conclusive demonstration of the existence of God."[13] As the
author of the article on anatomy in the Encyclopedie reasoned:

> Knowledge of the self presupposes knowledge of the body, and
> knowledge of the body presupposes knowledge of a network of
> causes and effects so prodigious that there is not one that does
> not lead directly to the notion of an all-knowing and all-powerful
> intelligence. Anatomy is, so to speak, the foundation of natural
> theology.[14]

The British periodical, The Spectator, offered the new physics and
astronomy as arguments for the beneficence of the Creator.[15] Deism,
founded on the modern scientific method as promulgated by Newton, was
"the neatest possible reflection of Newton's orderly universe, spinning
around according to law."[16]

Amidst some qualification of the term "deist,"[17] Enlightenment
historians, nevertheless, demonstrate a consensus regarding the character of
eighteenth century deism. This includes its (1) rational foundation, (2)
universality, (3) simplicity, and (4) sense of superiority.

Reason established at least three tenets of deist "theology": the
dispelling of mystery (which included anti-clericalism), the revelation of
God's existence , and the accessiblity of belief to all people. According to
Carl Becker, deists maintained that "the light of reason and experience"
would effect the good life on earth, beginning with man's liberation from
ignorance, superstition and oppression. Cassirer notes deism's purpose to be
that of eradicating "mysteries, miracles, and secrets from religion," and
similarly, Peter Gay describes the deist universe "as rational and God as
beneficent . . . [The deists] despised enthusiasm and mysticism, . . . [and]
were critical of the written tradition and long catalogs of dogma." As for

God's existence, Robert Ginsberg enumerates the rational proofs of the deists: (1) First Cause, (2) design, (3) the concept of perfection deduced from the awareness of personal imperfection, and (4) the observation of one's existence and the knowledge that one did not create oneself. This "golden age of rational or natural theology," as Baumer describes the early part of the century, held much promise not only for revealing God's existence but also his nature. Finally, since all men could reason, an understanding of the natural laws of ethics were accessible to all. Peter Gay notes Tindal's "confidence in the natural religion of reason, inscribed in the hearts of humanity and accessible to men of the highest as well of those of the meanest understanding."[18]

Historians also note the universal, simplistic, and superior claims of deist "theology." Gay writes of the intellectuals' understanding that peace would be achieved through the discovery of a truly catholic religion, based on man's nature, not the "accident" of his heritage or environment, "expressing universal truths which all sensible human beings could accept," a "pure, a natural Christianity." Baumer describes an "Ur-religion" common to all, worshipping a god who favored no single people and ruled under the restraint of his own laws of nature, who "promulgated the moral law" and gave men the capacity to follow it without his intervention. It was a "simple religion of nature, which . . . preceded, and was superior to, all the positive and revealed religions of the world." This was a god reduced "to the point of dechristianization and even depersonalization." In noting Diderot's claims regarding the superiority of natural religion and its unification of all other religions, Cassirer concurs in this historical depiction of deism.[19]

While some historians limit deism to characterizing the early
eighteenth century, others attribute to it a more pervasive influence. J. C. A.
Gaskin finds among eighteenth century writers "such confidence in the
design argument that its conclusion is stated without discussion." In France,
according to Krieger, it was "the central theological position in the whole
intellectual community of philosophes." G. R. Cragg writes that "the
authority claimed by natural religion and the universal respect accorded it
were among the most characteristic features of eighteenth century
thought. . . ." Writing about mid-century, David Hume acknowledged the
design argument "as the most formidable and popular proof of his day."
Baumer contends that its influence extended into the nineteenth century and
was clearly displayed during the French Revolution. Crocker notes the
persistent "faith in an immutable moral order supported by the Divinity." In
Cassirer's view, deism overcame all obstacles until the skeptical argument
(pronounced by Hume) broke its hold on contemporary thought. While
deism may very well be representative of eighteenth century thought (and
so the textbooks maintain), at the very least, it is widely acknowledged as a
distinctively "enlightened" credo--"empirical, tolerant, reasonable and
capable of virtuous living."[20]

Despite the identification and description of the deist phenomenon in
the eighteenth century, it is not at all clear in Enlightenment histories
exactly how deism characterizes the era or exerts an influence on later times.
It is readily apparent that deism cannot buttress the "unified" Enlightenment
theory. On the contrary, it is generally depicted as an early phase of the
religious attitudes of the century or as a major, but not necessarily
predominant, religious opinion among philosophes. Crane Brinton describes

three attitudes towards truth in the eighteenth century: (1) a new truth would necessarily supplant Christianity; (2) truth required the human endeavor of discovery, and (3) there is no truth. Baumer suggests that during the "battle of the proofs," confidence diminished such that "nearly everybody confessed to skepticism in some degree," doubtful of even "rational, scientific, and historical arguments." In fact, much diversity among and confusion or changeability within the individual philosophes is revealed in Enlightenment history: from Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity to Holbach, "the personal enemy of God," the era's best-known atheist. Gay describes Diderot as "driven from position to position and haunted by doubts . . . [He] moved from Catholicism to theism . . . to deism . . . to skepticism . . . to atheism," with which he was never comfortable. Gaskin notes that while the design argument was assumed too obvious for discussion, "a definitive version of the argument . . . [was] hard to find. . . ."21

Again, the most glaring and devastating deist contradiction, one that sheds much light on the significance of the deist movement for the era and, therefore, the legacy of the eighteenth century, is the deists' claim of empiricism in light of their actual neglect or misuse of the scientific method. Historians seem well aware of this problem, but, for the most part, fail to analyze its implications. Mossner writes of Joseph Butler's treatise that showed deists through empirical argument that their refutations of Christianity were equally valid against their own Religion of Nature. In Diderot's Treatment of the Christian Religion in the Encyclopedie, Joseph Barker determines Diderot's purpose to be that of changing "by education and propaganda the common way of thinking about religion and the Church," and of promoting the moral philosophy he "considered superior to

that of Christianity." Lessing's historical process in which men progressively develop their religious belief has been aptly designated "a providential and teleological theory" by Baumer who identifies Lessing as an "abolutist," who "foreshadowed Hegelianism."[22] While Cassirer asserts that, in order to withstand the assault of skepticism, natural religion "had to be related to a definite content," i.e. a foundation not in reason alone but in history, Baumer concludes that eighteenth century thinkers did not "think in terms of the historical development of religious ideas and beliefs." They "thought of the 'true religion,' or of morality . . . in largely absolutist and static terms." Even confronted with Hume, who "most certainly did think about religion historically," deists, "aware of greater subtleties in religious inquiry," could not distinguish between his skepticism and atheism.[23] In fact, deism depended on the assumption of a human nature everywhere the same; this was dogma. Peter Gay notes that with all their secularism and incredulity, "deists retained some rhetorical and even some emotional connections with the 'religious hypothesis.'"[24]

Voltaire, depicted by historians as deist and popularizer of Newton's method, is the best example of the misuse of the method as applied to Enlightenment "theology." "Clearly a 'final-causer' in the manner of Newton," Voltaire used "teleological and analogical arguments" and "astronomical and anatomical analogies" to refute the atheists, all the while believing "he was being very scientific, the reverse of metaphysical, in his proof of God's existence." He appreciated doubt but "did not doubt the immutable laws and forms of nature, or nature's God"; he toned down "his ridicule of the providentialists, in order to defend his system against the materialists." He ridiculed scientific discoveries that supported materialism

and challenged his static view of nature.[25] He admired the religion of the Chinese and Indians because of its concept of a single deity, pure morality, and lack of supersitious worship,[26] apparently blind to the extensive ritual and polytheistic character of these religions. Margaret Libby observes that "Voltaire never imagined that change might be woven into the fundamental constitution of things." His "deist theory is far less conducive to scientific inquiry than those of the Christians, for with him the whole subject is closed." His prejudice against "the flood" was as blind as the theologians' acceptance of it. In his popularizing of Newton and natural science, Voltaire brought the reader "definite philosophy": God created natural laws discoverable through the experimental method (though Voltaire never discovered first principles) and the "fundamental constitution of the world does not change." He directed his readers away from atheism. Matter and movement were not enough; there had to be God and gravity.[27] Voltaire's contention that if God did not exist he would have to be invented[28] reveals his spiritual needs and/or his social dictum, not his empirical observation.

It is the incompatibility of Voltaire's method and his conclusions that explains the apparent confusion, hypocrisy, even torment in his religious views, that is universally reported in Enlightenment histories. Cassirer states that Voltaire considered God's existence "a strictly demonstrable truth" and wished to refute Pascal (and the notion that reason without revelation led to skepticism), to whom he nevertheless yielded indirectly. "Since on the problem of the origin of evil Voltaire had deprived himself of all the weapons against skepticism, he finds himself henceforth driven hither and yon in a skeptical whirlpool. He embraces all solutions and he rejects them all." Robert Anchor confirms this "confusion" in Voltaire's philosophy,

noting that Voltaire actually confirmed Pascal's view, but could not abandon deism, "for fear that the world would seem altogether arbitrary and meaningless." Crocker traces the struggle, "the genuine metaphysical anguish," of Voltaire in attempting to maintain his confidence in the moral universe necessary for "Natural Law ethics," in the face of obvious evils such as the Lisbon earthquake. Persistently adherent to final causes, "insist[ing] on making room for God" in his "materialistic naturalism," Voltaire ended up with a "universe with no law except violence and survival of the strong," yet "he does not embrace the outlook he paints--he will always struggle not to. . . ." Baumer concurs in Voltaire's arrival at "serious doubts about divine Providence" and his abandonment of "belief in God's omnipotence, or beneficence toward men--save as the ultimate source of reason and the moral instinct in man." Yet, coming full circle in his life's progression, Voltaire died "with faith, hope, and charity . . . a good Christian."[29] It is clear that for Voltaire the scientific method produced no theology more valid or comforting than traditional, revealed faith. Voltaire's method is mere rhetoric; it could not validate his cause or his conscience.

Any attempt to portray an empirical or reasonable Enlightenment necessitates the exclusion of Rousseau, especially in the religious context. Although Emile was to learn only by observation, he was "advised to consult his heart in matters of religion and conduct." Crocker points out that for Rousseau, "our place in the harmony of the whole is beyond our knowledge--except by deduction from God's perfection." He held a "firm belief in God's direct, continuing providence." In his words, "All the subtleties of metaphysics will not make me doubt for a moment the immortality of the

soul and a beneficent providence." It was error to read God into natural events.[30]

The widespread failure of the philosophes to use or accept the findings of their highly touted empirical method suggests that an empirical approach was beyond the capacity of the "enlightened" philosopher. But the example of Hume as reported by Enlightenment historians demonstrates that empiricism was a viable philosophical approach to the questions of life and did provide useful conclusions. These conclusions, however, do not reflect the typical eighteenth century opinions.

Historical opinion consistently emphasizes Hume's method in his study. H. E. Root calls him a "thoroughgoing empiricist." Mossner points out Hume's contention that all philosophy in the world and religion cannot carry us beyond experience, that no new information beyond what is already known through practice and observation can be provided to us. Becker credits Hume with knowing better than anyone else that the eighteenth century image of nature was an illusion, that design in nature was "derived a priori" from a presumed character of the Creator. According to Cassirer, Hume's objection to deism was not with regard to "its doctrine of reason . . . or revelation"; his only purpose is "to evaluate it from the viewpoint of the standards of experience of pure factual knowledge." John Price observes that Hume's method, his "historical-anthropological" study of religion, irritated the philosophes. J. C. A. Gaskin is impressed by the "critical aloofness" of Hume's religious critique and its "unusual degree of externality to religion." He observes that because Hume was not "worried or emotionally involved in the issues . . . he is the more able to go wherever the argument leads. . . . There is no hint that he ever views religion from within as a way of life, a

metaphysic of existence. . . ." Concurring in this point, Ginsberg comments
that "Hume refuses to acknowledge more than is warranted by experience
even if it leaves him with unanswered first questions and a suspended
epistemology." We cannot give the "universe a structure convenient to our
experience." The essential point, however, is clearly enunciated by Cragg
and Crocker. Hume's threat to deist "theology" specifically challenged its
claims to have discovered "sure grounds on which belief can rest." As
Crocker puts it, Hume's argument "is consistent with [his] views on empirical
inference, and they are certainly appropriate, for it was in a special
application of empirical inference that the [design] argument was supposed
to have its strength."[31] Using the very means by which the deists claimed
the legitimacy and superiority of their religious belief, Hume undermined
that belief and in the process, i.e. through the honest, consistent, and fearless
use of empirical observation, demonstrated that useful information regarding
the human condition was available. Hume's conclusions, however, differed
radically from deist belief and the historical rendition of "enlightened"
religion. If modern man is seeking knowledge of the world through the
world, then Hume is the more legitimate and revealing reference.

Hume's religious argument is essentially presented in his works, The
Natural History of Religion, "Of Miracles," and "Dialogues Concerning
Natural Religion." In each of these, as historians widely acknowledge, his
approach to the study is distinctively empirical and this leads him, then, to a
psychological characterization of religion, rather than a rational one.

As for his method in The Natural History of Religion, Hume urged his
readers to "behold . . . the clear testimony of history." With this approach--
basing his conclusions on "travelers' and historians' reports," Baumer

contends that Hume "definitely broke new ground," and as a result "dismembered all the . . . rational proofs" of religion. Cassirer similarly notes Hume's process of tracing religious ideas "back to their origin" and his examination of their "growth and development." In his refutation of the "cherished conviction of the Deists" that primitive man's religion was monotheistic, Hume pointed out that "as far as writing or history reaches," polytheism was the belief of antiquity. He, then, questioned the basis for monotheism pre-dating this situation, using contemporary anthropological observations of the "savage tribes of America, Africa, and Asia." He observed the evolution of abstract thinking.[32]

As observed by Root, the major theme of Hume's natural history is his "firm conviction that there is always a wide gulf between any alleged rational basis for religion and the actual origins of religion in human nature and in history."[33] He attacked the unphilosophical deduction of a single effect from "the combination of several causes" as artificial and contrived. Focusing on experience, Hume asserted that contradiction and unpredictability, in contrast to order and design, must be acknowledged. Primitive man "pressed by such numerous wants and passions, has not leisure to admire the regular face of nature, or make enquiries concerning the cause of those objects, to which from his infancy he has been gradually accustomed." Even among modern men, the vulgar do not base their theism on "the beauty of final causes, of which [they are] wholly ignorant." Rather, they are led to it, not through reason and philosophy, but fear and superstition. Consequently, based on his analysis of what could be called "experiential psychology," Hume concluded that "the primary religion of mankind arises chiefly from an anxious fear of future events."[34] Ultimately,

Hume concluded that while religious belief is universal, it is not uniform. There is no "original instinct" for belief; it arises from human experience.[35]

In fact, as far as reason and religion go, Hume found "traditional, mythological religion" more reasonable than "a systematical, scholastic one," on the grounds that it implies "no express absurdity and demonstrative contradiction" and it "makes no such deep impressions on the affections and understanding." By comparison, Hume found theism a deleterious social phenomena leading to fanaticism and persecution.[36] Because polytheism is so muddled of myth and superstition, "it does not admit of any serious attempt to rationalise it," while monotheism encourages rationalization in order to frame a system.[37] Typically, Hume's method, restricting the authority of reason and observing the complexity of real life, urged the reader to skepticism. "The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspension of judgment appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny, concerning this subject."[38]

In the debate on miracles, Hume's critique, relying on psychology and history, was so devastating, he is credited with having the last word.[39] Hume defined a miracle as " a violation of the laws of nature," which have been established by "a firm and unalterable experience." Consequently, "the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." Without the uniformity of experience contrasting a miraculous event, the distinction of that event is impossible. Hume declared that the "ultimate standard" of judging the testimony of witnesses in proving a miracle "is always derived from experience and observation." Philosophically, he pointed out that testimony establishing a miracle would have to "be of such a kind, that its

falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish. . . ." Consequently, he identified the psychological basis for belief in miracles-- "the strong propensity of mankind to the extraordinary and marvellous."[40]

Should, however, this propensity be joined with "the spirit of religion," "there is an end to common sense." A "religionist" may continue to knowingly speak falsely in the name of a holy cause. Miracles that establish a particular religion work to destroy those of others. The sense of ultimate spiritual assurance that miracles foster threatens peace among mankind.

In other essays, Hume exposed the philosophical errors of theological assertions concerning the immortality of the soul and suicide. He argued that attributes such as future retribution cannot be assigned to God on the basis of our knowledge of him in Nature. There is no basis for rational inferences regarding God's purpose, standard or timing of divine punishment. As for God's dictum against suicide, Hume raises various arguments: that on the basis of the theory of the immutable laws of God (that all events proceed from God) suicide could be part of that order; that if taking one's life encroaches on the "provence of the Almighty," saving life does also; that if life is not one's own, then it is criminal ever to endanger it; that we do, in fact alter the course of nature in various ways, so why is suicide unacceptable intervention; and, essentially, how do we know that God "placed me in this station" such that I may not vary from it. Hume asserted that there is no Scriptural text prohibiting suicide. Overall, he concluded that philosophically "in all cases Christians and Heathens are precisely upon the same footing; . . . " and, therefore, he prescribed a skeptical attitude which, as Cobban observes, results in tolerance.[41]

The important aspect of Hume's skepticism that is often missed by historians and was almost universally misunderstood by his contemporaries is the case it makes for faith. By limiting the capacity of reason to reveal truth, Hume asserted that religious belief must be an act of faith. Those who try to defend Christianity "by the principles of human reason" are "dangerous friends" to it. "Our most holy religion is founded on Faith, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure." In view of Hume's analysis of structured or doctrinal religion in all his writings, this comments reads as a cautious, or palatable, offering of skepticism to his readers, at least such as might restrain the self-righteousness or fanaticism that were always Hume's deepest concerns. Nevertheless, his point is well-made that "Christian Religion not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one."[42]

Hume's greatest work on religion was the posthumous "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," according to John Price, "the most cogent presentation of any religious view in eighteenth century English literature."[43] In it Hume critiqued, or rather, "thoroughly undermines the Argument from Design," in its claim to be the empirical justification of God.[44] In the "Dialogues," Philo is not so much interested in the question of God's existence, but quizzes "Demea and Cleanthes about the methodology to be used in an inquiry into natural religion."[45] Despite all the prescriptions of theology and philosophy, "we must treat of religion, as it has commonly been found in the world." Philo repeatedly insists that "our ideas reach no farther than our experience," which offers the only "just reason, why [one] adheres to one idea or system, and rejects the others, which are equally

possible."[46] Hume's point was method, that starting with God we can reconcile the world with that idea but starting with the world would never take us to belief in God.[47]

As Demea, Cleanthes, and Philo converse, Hume subjected the design theory "to searching and devastating criticism."[48] He thoroughly undermined two basic deist assumptions: (1)"nature's laws are clear and unalterable" and, therefore, so are deductions from them; and (2) "the exercise of reason can dispel all the mysteries and uncertainties of life."[49] The discussion reveals that God's existence is not contested; the question is his nature. Through Philo, the skeptic, Hume attacked all the philosophical contrivances that characterized the deist God. Philo rejects the deist inference by analogy that the Author of Nature revealed in his works resembles the mind of man. He allows that a house presumes an architect, but the universe is not comparable to a house. As for the workman, even a perfect world cannot necessarily be ascribed to him. He could be a stupid imitator of another design, who finally produced a workable product only after many previous botched attempts. "He" could be a group; why only one creator? It may after all be a faulty world, "only the first rude essay of some infant deity, who afterwards abandoned it, ashamed of his lame performance." Philo cautions that nature itself demonstrates diverse and various alternatives or possibilities: "Is nature in one situation, a certain rule for nature in another situation, vastly different from the former?"[50]

Most important is the question of God's moral attributes. In the Enquiries, Hume maintained that there is "no reason to ascribe to these celestial beings any perfection or any attribute, but what can be found in the present world." He reasserted this in the "Dialogues": "no view of human

life or of the condition of mankind" can portray or define "the moral attributes" or "infinite benevolence" with "infinite power and infinite wisdom." In fact, benevolence is not absolutely (certainly not infinitely) discernible in nature. Infinite power, perfect benevolence should do better than allow any misery in life. Philo insists that such concepts are beyond human capacities, that Cleanthes, the deist, is trying to prove "pure, unmixed, and uncontrollable attributes from the present mixed and confused phenomena, and from these alone."[51]

The most obvious and persistent obstacle in the design theory was the problem of evil. Arguing a continuous chain of causes back to First Cause involves the Creator in guilt, moreso than ignorant, impotent man. Therefore, either nothing man does is criminal, because God--the Creator-- is perfect, or God is not perfect because man's behavior is criminal.[52] Philo reviews various rationales for evil (with the intriguing observation that "none ... appear necessary or unavoidable"). He points out that these conditions are explainable if the goodness of the deity can be established a priori. but if the goodness is "inferred from the phenomena" (as in the design argument), "there can be no grounds for such an inference, ... " In the Treatise, Hume reasoned that if the deity is "the great and efficacious principle which supplies the deficiency of all causes," then this is true of "interior" operations--"our volitions and perception"-- as well as the operations of nature. He exposed the contrivance of Malebranche and other Cartesians of excepting volition from the First Cause as a "pretext, to avoid the dangerous consequences of that doctrine," i.e. God as the author of evil.[53] The problem for Anthropomorphites is that they "must assign a cause for [evil], without having recourse to the first cause."[54] Since,

therefore, God's moral character is elusive to man's reason, Hume asserted that it is "not a fit subject for adoration as a sacred mystery."[55]

Through Philo's argument in agreement with the theist Demea, Hume insisted on the "narrow limits of human reason." "Confin[ing] our view entirely to that principle, by which our own minds operate" results in error.[56] Philo criticizes Cleanthes's "relational logic," i.e. "our knowledge of mundane events bears the same relation to their cause in the same manner that our knowledge of divine events bears a relation to their cause." Cleanthes mistakenly equates experience with knowledge and "we have had no experience of divine events."[57] Philo contends that we should "limit all our enquiries to the present world, without looking any farther."[58]

In Hume's opinion there was but one acceptable tenet of the design theory--"That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence." This "discovery," however, is neither satisfactory nor revealing. It tells us nothing; it is meaningless. Hume demonstrated the contrivance of the design theory when he has Cleanthes respond to Demea's assurance of the "perfect simplicity of the Supreme Being":

> A mind, whose acts and sentiments and ideas are not distinct and successive; one, that is wholly simple, and totally immutable; is a mind which has no thought, no reason, no will, no sentiment, no love, no hatred; or in a word, is no mind at all.[59]

As John Price observes:

> If we have no words within our language with which God can be appropriately described, then we are hard-pressed to assert any proposition, a priori or a posteriori, about Him. . . . And-if His mind is literally unknowable because it is totally different from ours, we would have no critieria for recognizing knowledge of

> God when it was thrust upon us. Not even divine revelation
> could have any force because it would be expressed in a manner
> whose accuracy we could never possibly verify--emotionally,
> physically, or intellectually. To know God, or even God's
> attributes, we must have a means of knowing. . . . [60]

After all the verbiage, the intellectual meanderings, and the animosity among the disputants, "all these systems . . . of Scepticism, Polytheism, and Theism [in light of deist principles, are] on a like footing, and no one of them has any advantage over the others." In fact, philosophical skepticism is "the first and most essential step towards being a sound, believing Christian; . . . " since it acknowledges "the imperfections of natural reason."[61] The skeptic, however, does have the advantage in the argument, for he is always on the offensive with no system to defend.

> All religious systems . . . are subject to great and insuperable
> difficulties. Each disputant triumphs in his turn; while he carries
> on an offensive war, and exposes the absurdities, barbarities, and
> pernicious tenets of his antagonist. But all of them, on the whole,
> prepare a complete triumph for the Sceptic; who tells them, that
> no system ought ever to be embraced with regard to such
> subjects: For this plain reason, that no absurdity ought ever to
> be assented to with regard to any subject. A total suspension of
> judgment is here our only reasonable resource.[62]

In contrast to the deists, then, Hume denied any rational proof of God's existence. He found that religious belief is not a universal phenomenon among men. In fact, "experience reveals human nature to us in an entirely different light from all the constructive attempts of the deists." The more we learn about it, "the more it loses the appearance of rationality and order."[63] He asserted, rather, the psychological nature of religious belief-- that hope and fear lead us to God. Hume made an intriguing observation that in religion, as in dramatic performances, we can enjoy being terrified

because of "the want of belief in the subject." In the "Dialogues," Philo emphasizes the emotional character of religion, concluding that "for that purpose a talent of eloquence and strong imagery is more requisite than that of reasoning and argument. . . . 'Tis only necessary to make us feel [what was within us] more intimately and sensibly." As Robert Ginsberg comments, in Hume's view "our commitments to god's existence are shaped by our personalities."[64]

Hume's "attack" on religion was that part of his philosophy that the philosophes found most righteous. His essay "Of Miracles" lent support to their "clockworks" characterization of the universe. In the "Dialogues," the philosophes found substantiation of the artificial and deleterious nature of religion, "which inspires our whole conduct, and prescribes an universal rule so much the more austere [than philosophy], as it is guarded by infinite, though distant, rewards and punishments; and no infraction of it can ever be concealed or disguised." Especially gratifying to the philosophes was Hume's attack on the clergy. He repeatedly demonstrated priests to be pernicious manipulators keeping their flock frightened, ignorant, and superstitious, "only to gain a livelihood, and to acquire power and riches in this world."[65]

A non-selective analysis of Hume's religious writings, however, directly threatens deism as well as organized religions. In the Enquiries Hume states that theology

> admits of no terms of composition, but binds every branch of
> knowledge to its own purpose, without much regard to the
> phenomena of nature, or to the unbiassed sentiments of the mind,
> hence reasoning, and even language, have been warped from
> their natural course, and distinctions have been endeavoured to

be estimated where the difference of the objects was, in a manner, imperceptible.[66]

As has been discussed, deist "theology" is clearly guilty of these charges. Furthermore, deists asserted with Cleanthes that religion was better than no religion at all. The "doctrine of a future state" was necessary for moral life. Through Philo, Hume refuted the "rewards" theory, noting that men act in the present without an eye to the remote or distant. There is then a contradiction in the complaint of divines that humanity is unconcerned about religious interests and their insistence that civil society could not exist without religion. While the philosophes assert the necessity of religion for the vulgar because of their limited or negligent reasoning abilities, Philo asks why, "if vulgar superstition be so salutary to society," does history abound "so much with accounts of its pernicious consequences on public affairs. . . . If the religious spirit be ever mentioned in any historical narration, we are sure to meet afterwards with a detail of the miseries, which attend it." Philo then goes on to enumerate the psychological abuses of religion for the vulgar. It creates a "new and frivolous species of merit" which weakens "men's attachment to the natural motives of justice and humanity."

> Such a principle of action . . . not being any of the familiar motives of human conduct, acts only by intervals on the temper, and must be roused by continual efforts, in order to render the pious zealot satisfied with his own conduct, and make him fulfill his devotional task. Many religious exercises are entered into with seeming fervour, where the heart, at the time, feels cold and languid: A habit of dissimulation is by degrees contracted: and fraud and falsehood become the predominant principle. [This is the reason for] that vulgar observation, that the highest zeal in religion and the deepest hypocrisy . . . are often commonly united in the same individual character.[67]

As for the "future state," a constant focus on the next world "is apt to extinguish the benevolent affections, and beget a narrow, contracted selfishness." Hume maintained that people do not need gods or a future state to promote virtue and public welfare. "I see not what bad consequences follow, in the present age, from the character of an infidel; especially if a man's conduct be in other respects irreproachable."[68]

Since "abstract reasonings cannot decide any question of fact or existence," "the Supreme Cause . . . ought always to be excluded from philosophy." Gaskin surmises that Hume's "true religion" may be that characterized by Cleanthes, with no objection from Philo. It would "regulate the heart of men, harmonize their conduct, infuse the spirit of temperance, order and obedience." H. R. Trevor-Roper describes this church as one of little doctrine, supportive, or at least inoffensive, to arts and letters, and ministered by laymen, i.e. "an established church which has accepted the society around it and become settled, civilised and worldly." In Hume's philosophy, "there is a humanizing experience in intelligent tolerance of diverse arguments about god." As his final word on his deathbed, Hume told Boswell "that he had some belief," but that he held to his "Objection both to Devotion and Prayer and indeed to everything we commonly call Religion, except the Practice of Morality, and the Assent of the Understanding to the Proposition that God exists."[69]

Unfortunately, in the attempt to identify and analyze a religious character of the eighteenth century, historians have, for the most part, fomented confusion and misrepresentation of the era and its legacy. To begin with, a deist eighteenth century is extremely dubious. In a confusing, but blatant, contradiction, Cassirer's "Enlightenment" formulates its religious

ideals in direct contrast to its absolutely certifiable "pure intellectualism . . . for however much the Enlightenment strives to found a 'religion within the bounds of mere reason,' it attempts on the other hand to emancipate religion from the domination of the understanding."[70] This scenario cannot include deism, which relied on the understanding to establish a natural theology more legitimate than church dogma. Also, it is not clear how this emancipation from the understanding differs from acceptance of revealed truth, whatever that truth might be. Invariably, historians describe trends, then note significant and numerous exceptions ("But Hume's rhythm was different, as was Rousseau's and Immanuel Kant's."[71]), that, nevertheless, do not alter the "general" characterization. Rousseau is the antithesis of deism. Love of order reveals nothing to him, for without God, one order is no better than another. "If the Divinity does not exist, only the evil man reasons, the good man is insane."[72]

The critical question of "what was deism" is not clarified in Enlightenment history. J. C. A. Gaskin characterizes early eighteenth century deism as conceding the argument from miracles and fulfillment of prophecy as proof "that the Christian revelation ought to be accepted by every rational man." Krieger describes the typical "deistic principle of a universal standard implanted in nature and in man" and the belief that "divine rules" were discoverable in this nature. For such deists, the "only authentic worship of God lay in the knowledge of and the voluntary obedience to the fundamental laws of human nature." Peter Gay's depiction of the deists' natural religion as "a religion without miracles, priestly hierarchy, ritual, divine saviors, original sin, chosen people, and providential history" raises the serious question of definition. Take these characteristics

away from religion and what is left--philosophy? Immanuel Kant's "deist" was minimized to a "man who believed in God but not a living or personal God."[73]

Enlightenment history has failed to differentiate some crucial terms intelligibly. "Natural religion" is equated with Holbach's atheism and various brands of "deism," which have been demonstrated (by Hume) to be "unphilosophical." Furthermore, there is the question of who was a "deist" and when? Diderot's religious odyssey included deism, but left him torn between what he believed to be true (atheism) and what moved him (Catholicism).[74] Voltaire's "confusion" over the skeptical implications of a rational theology demonstrate his particular brand of deism to be one of conviction, not conclusion.[75] By Kant's definition, David Hume could be a deist. Leonard Krieger, in fact, while acknowledging that Hume's "philosophy undermined the invariable laws and necessary connections so prominent in the rational faith of the philosophes," insists that Hume was one of them because of his essay on miracles and his Natural History of Religion, "which he designed precisely to show positive religion as the social effect of human foibles."[76] This interpretation necessitates a selective analysis of Hume's work, i.e. neglect of his Dialogues, as well as a particular characterization of deism excluding the design argument. Enlightenment histories have not illuminated the fundamental questions of who was a deist, what was the nature of deism, and what did the phenomena of deism mean in relation to the Enlightenment.

The most obvious conclusion regarding deism is that it is a bankrupt theology/philosophy in terms of its own claims and adherents. While asserting the distinction of the Age of Reason to be its commitment to

observation and demonstration, few historians acknowledge the implications of an Enlightenment spiritual philosophy that denies its own premise and preaches an irrational credo in the name of reason. This failure is especially negligent in light of the fact that many historians observe the persistence of a deist cosmology in the twentieth century. Consequently, not only have historians misrepresented the eighteenth century, they have failed to offer useful explanations of contemporary religious attitudes.

As discussed above, deism was not an empirical, but rather a rational "theology." Despite its claims, it offered no better, or more comforting, answers to age old religious questions than the theologies it ridiculed. The problem of evil remained unexplainable, a mystery, for the "enlightened" philosopher, so he ignored it, even in the face of the obvious contradiction that he was crusading to reform a system that his metaphysics presumed to be perfect already.[77] Essentially, deism was a meaningless metaphysic. As Lester Crocker observes, the deist, hoping to establish a modus vivendi, tried to unite nature and reason, believing both to be "God-given and normative." Solutions, however, were unavailable. He notes that Voltaire, a believer in God, rejected both atheism and optimism because they accepted evil, but tried to reconcile the irreconcilable: God (from optimism) with "an impersonal world-machine" (from the materialism).[78] Cobban points out that the philosophes abandoned the principles of revealed religion but had nothing to substitute for them. This presented a serious dilemma in that they rejected "moral indifferentism," "the whole bias of their thought was moralistic." Describing the deist deity as "a sort of do-nothing God," Crane Brinton suggests that the move to no God from the Christian God was too dramatic a change and "deism was one of the unsatisfactory kinds of

compromise, as inadequate intellectually as emotionally." In identifying a "middle view" in the religious debate (that of the Earl of Shaftesbury and Kant), Baumer writes of a belief "in a moral God and in some sort of relationship between morals and religion." This says virtually nothing of importance or guidance regarding moral conduct and it is certainly nothing new. Hume's insight clearly shows up the fact that any religion based on the proposition that the "cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence . . . should have no prayer, no worship, no institutions, and no effect on moral conduct."[79] Amidst all its claims to novelty and legitimacy (always allegedly based on methodology), it is not at all clear how deism was superior to or even different from the cosmology of revealed religion.

Voltaire, usually presented as the consummate deist,[80] is an excellent example of deism's semantical sleight of hand. He believed in progress, not as the result of a law in history, but rather as "the result of a happy accident; and this fitted in with his view that God's purpose was inaccessible to man's knowledge." Denying that God punishes or rewards, he determined this to be the function of conscience, nature, and society, and these could be God's plan. Everything was a "blind instrument of God."[81] How this rationalization differs from the traditional case for "God's mysterious ways" is unclear. A believer of a different persuasion, a Christian perhaps, might consider "a happy accident" a miracle, or at the very least, divine providence.

In their attempt to characterize the novelty and "liberating" character of the Enlightenment, historians must account for the fact that Voltaire was too superficial a thinker, too much the propagandist, or too dishonest to perceive that "his hypothesis . . . was just as vulnerable as the rival

ideologies which he despised."[82] In face of the "facts," specifically Hume's theory of polytheism as man's first religion, Voltaire's philosophical response was: "I dare think, on the contrary, that people begin by acknowledging a single God, and that later human weakness led to the adoption of several." If Peter Gay can report that Voltaire recognized Hume's threat to the deists' "complacent epistemology, which held by instinct, or at least with ease," the design argument, he should recognize that he is describing presumption and faith, or at least shallow philosophy, not empirical enquiry.[83] Gay is remiss in accepting without serious analysis (merely acknowledging as "broad") Voltaire's "definition" of superstition: "Almost everything that goes beyond the worship of a Supreme Being, and the submission of one's heart to his eternal commands, is superstition."[84] At least the church was clear on its prescriptions. If the philosophes were characteristically oriented to worldly existence and morality, Voltaire's pronouncement is meaningless. What "eternal commands"? What kind of "worship" and "submission"? Who decides these specifically? This is precisely Hume's point on "general terms"--they are useless; they can be dangerous.

Despite the claims of some historians, the philosophes, in their religious beliefs, were systems-makers. The deists, believing they had discovered the basis for certainty in religious belief, were arrogant; one notes an attitude of "supercilious condescension" in their works.[85] Even in atheism, they gave "matter properties that were formerly possessed only by the Creator. . . . [I]n his System of Nature, [Holbach], in effect substituted nature for God."[86] An atheist king was unacceptable to Voltaire, for he "would feel liberated from all constraints with disastrous consequences to himself and his society."[87] Apparently, then, a "reasonable" atheist was

either a contradiction in terms, i.e. reason necessarily reveals God, or reason was an insufficient basis for morality, i.e. it did not reveal moral qualities or proper use of it was impossible to guarantee. Historians must penetrate the obscurity of semantics, whereby one can claim to hate systems in the midst of devising one. The method, as used by the philosophes, established a foundation for faith as uncertain as revealed truth, but the philosophes did not seek a basis for faith, as much as a basis for righteousness. As Voltaire said, if God didn't exist, "he would have had to be invented."[88] Hume clearly saw that an assured and certain, i.e. ultimate, basis for belief or morality (which the philosophes claimed to have established), was a bain for human society, not a benefit. "Where the interests of religion [or belief] are concerned, no morality can be forcible enough to bind the enthusiastic zealot. The sacredness of the cause sanctifies every measure, which can be made use of to promote it."[89] Baumer writes that l'infame was to be crushed

> [b]ecause it originated in imposture and fear; because it
> encouraged 'sick men's dreams' ..., superstition and fanaticism,
> leading to wars and massacres, because it preached a false, cruel,
> and immoral God, ... because it blocked intellectual progress
> and subjected men to the rule of priests and tyrants.[90]

Yet, he fails to point out the similar failure of the deism he says was "institutionalized during the Revolution with the promulgation of the new non-Christian calendar in 1793 and the establishment of the cults designed to displace Christianity."[91] Deism apparently served as no better deterent to fear, fanaticism, massacre, or tyranny than the Church. The French Terror, although devoted to the Supreme Being, made the enemies of reason the enemies of the State. Deism provided no prohibition to the excesses of revolutionary fervor against monarchist French peasants or those of

nationalism against all of Europe. Righteousness is the danger, personified in the missionary, who sees the truth so clearly, he must impose it on the blind for their own good. It is this authoritarian attitude of the philosophes, so obvious in contrast to Hume, yet generally overlooked by Enlightenment historians, which has bequeathed a devastating legacy to modern Western society.

Typically, the philosophes abandoned the canaille to religion with disdain, for God's existence was obvious, but the vulgar refused to see. In fact, while they have documented and lambasted the deliberate institutional effort to blind the vulgar to truth, they end up blaming the "victim" for their lack of vision and collaborate in the now necessary religious control of the masses. Baumer distinguishes between two religions: (1) for the "uneducated masses, whom [the philosophes] feared," which worshipped a "just and vengeful God" in a civil religion; and (2) for the enlightened "who did not need such crude beliefs to perform the duties of citizenship."[92] In actuality, there is only one religion here for both the illuminated and the ignorant--the cult of the "Eternal Legislator,"[93] whose universal order is served in dutiful submission to the state. Having destroyed a primary institution of social control, the church, but insisting on the necessity of social control, the philosophes, by default, left the state in sole possession of the field of authority. Both Locke and Rousseau excluded certain groups from their prescription of tolerance. These groups were identified on the basis of "the requirements of the political community," and were judged on the basis of their opinions, not just their actions.[94] In these Locke included atheists and churches with allegiance to foreign rulers.[95] Rousseau, always a Calvinist, never a deist or philosopher, tried "to make use of religion for the

positive functions of legitimating the social contract and sustaining the public spirit." In his view the Christian of the Gospels made a lousy citizen. The illiberal effects of this scheme include the opportunity for manipulative demagogues and the suppression of the moral autonomy of the citizens.[96] Certainly, if the liberal tradition includes individualism, it can never look to Rousseau, although Enlightenment history continues in various arguments to include him in eighteenth century "unity" schemes. In this misinterpretation and in the general failure to appreciate the implications of deism for the enhancement of state authority, historians have seriously mistaken their Enlightenment's character and its influence on the present.

Since Hume is difficult to assimilate into the traditional Enlightenment picture, many historians neglect or misrepresent him. He is often used as an example of the "growing skepticism" of the era,[97] although it is not evident that skepticism was characteristic of any part of the century. If the "analytic critique" in the Dialogues "was too far in advance of the thought of his time," then Hume's method was not that of the Enlightenment. Although most choose Philo, historians continue to debate the character that represents Hume in the Dialogues.[98] That Hume is anywhere classified as an atheist, or must be distinguished from one, reflects a prejudiced reading of his works or misapprehension of the term "skeptic." Apparently, through misunderstanding Hume, Kant is credited with some undeserved ground-breaking. Why is Kant called the "'All-Destroyer'--the destroyer of natural theology," he who demonstrated that "neither philosophy nor science any longer led to God."? In truth, an "All-Destroyer" preceded Kant. If Kant "restored religion to faith, more than to reason, and ... subordinated it to morality," then he asserted Humean propositions. Kant's conclusions that "morality ... leads

ineluctably to religion," and that a moral universe (necessary for human morality) requires the existence of God are typically "enlightened" and similarly suffer from Hume's historical and philosophical critique.[99] Stewart and Root fault Hume for his "uncharitable" denunciation of religion resulting from his failure to perceive the "pragmatic value of religious rites and dogmas."[100] They do not, however, offer examples of these positive effects of religion; presumedly, their audience was aware of them. But in light of Hume's historical and psychological argument and the demeaning role of religion in the philosophe scheme, one yearns for a specific defense. Much of this response may well reflect the historian's own religious bias, for when Peter Heath writes that for Hume true religion "is a bleak and uncomfortable agnosticism, without practical influence or consequences,"[101] one must conclude that Heath is uncomfortable, not the congenial and eminently practical essayist, whose writings are consumed by the question of real-life human morality.

Rather than clarification, Enlightenment history has fostered much confusion on the subject of "enlightened" religious belief. While Peter Gay asserts that the philosophes worked to "unmask Christianity, . . . [to] contrast the virtues of common sense with the vices of enthusiasm and superstition, and construct a naturalistic philosophy based on recognition of the eternal laws of nature," he also writes that some deists felt there was nothing in the gospel against reason (revelation was reason expanded) while others emphasized the incredulity of the Bible. While Mossner writes that the "argument from design remained a powerful weapon in the armory of the theist," Cassirer states that Hume broke the hold of deism on contemporary thought and Gay comments that the deists faded because their teachings and

criticisms became commonplace (though it seems arguable that their teachings became untenable). Baumer credits Lessing with seeing the historical dimension of religion better than Hume, i.e. "as the development of man's religious consciousness."[102] But Hume observed the manifestations of man's religious practices. Baumer's phrase connotes a specific progress of sorts that apparently, he presumed along with Lessing. The most glaring error of Enlightenment historians is that of characterizing the Enlightenment as both deist and empirical. In light of Hume's argument, this characterization is an untenable contradiction.

Hume's Religious Enlightenment

According to Ernst Cassirer,

> the line of thought which Hume follows through to its logical consequences was not typical of the eighteenth century. This century placed too much faith in the power of reason to renounce it at this vital point. It did not want to surrender to doubt, but insisted on a clear and sure decision. Hume's Natural History of Religion remained an isolated phenomena in the intellectual history of the Enlightenment.[103]

Hume's "atypicality" probably explains the tendency of historians to neglect him in Enlightenment history; in the early twentieth century, the "Dialogues were out of print most of the time."[104] His neglect precipitated the erroneous characterization of the "typical" Enlightenment, and his acknowledgement constitutes an expose of Enlightenment history, which essentially validates Carl Becker's interpretation. As Robert Anchor discerns in Hume's refutation of deism, "the inference of a just God from nature was an ill-conceived attempt on the part of deism to transform traditional Christianity into a rational doctrine."[105] This is Becker's contention--that

the Enlightenment was merely an attempt to re-work the old faith into a churchless rationalization.

Of course, in a Humean Enlightenment the first corrective would be Hume's character. He was neither a materialist nor an atheist. Skepticism has been as difficult a concept for the twentieth as the eighteenth century, probably because we are the product of the eighteenth century. Whereas the philosophes attached Hume to their anti-religious/anti-clerical campaign, he was never a comrade-at-arms. He felt that the philosophes "got too excited about the non-existence of God. He smelt the odor of a negative fanaticism, and any fanaticism, for Hume, was as bad as any other."[106]

If contemporary scholars can at last comprehend Hume's "mitigated skepticism," there could follow other important Enlightenment revisions--the places of Locke and Kant. In Hume's view (voiced through Philo), the early church fathers agreed with the ancients with regard to reason. It was Locke who first asserted "that faith was nothing but a species of reason, that religion was only a branch of philosophy and that a chain of argument, similar to that which estimated any truth in morals, politics, or physics, was always employed in discovering all the principles of theology, natural and revealed."[107] Consequently, Locke "distorted" rather than restored the classical opinion on reason and Gay's characterization of philosophes as "modern pagans" is undermined. Locke simply rationalized an eighteenth century system for faith as did Aquinas before him. Also, if Kant concluded that neither science nor philosophy accessed God to man, but that "the idea of God could be useful," if "in Kant's new moral proof, God clearly never became more than a postulate of 'practical reason,' actually an 'object of

faith,"[108] he is re-hashing, actually codifying, Voltaire's metaphysical musings, just with more courage of his convictions. It may be that Kant "refutes/answers" Hume provided we misunderstand Hume.

The fundamental misconception of the Enlightenment is that which depicts it as an outgrowth of the "Age of Science," grounded on verifiable experience and demonstration. The characteristic rhetoric of the philosophes easily obscures their actual process, but the example of Hume, their contemporary colleague, clearly reveals this deception. Historians observe Hume's consistent empirical study: to know religion, study religious people.[109] Mossner quotes Hume asserting his intention to "confirm the common Opinion," but having to concede to the doubts that plagued him and prevented his belief.[110] Hume conscientiously and courageously followed where "matters of fact" led him. He constitutes for historians a demonstration that empiricism could provide useful and satisfying information for society and individual psyches. Unlike Voltaire, who at his death abandoned his foray into the complex and inconclusive evidences of real life, Hume died consistent in his thinking and content with not knowing. Urged on his deathbed to make his peace with God, Hume died at peace with himself.[111] Whereas historians admit "difficulties" and "inconsistencies" in philosophe systems, "Hume's conclusions about religion form a coherent whole," and "their present-day importance is clearly indicated by the continuous flow of articles and books which take Hume's criticisms on their philosophical merits rather than merely as episodes in the history of ideas."[112] If "enlightened" philosophy means a clearer, more legitimate demonstration of useful "truths" regarding man and his society, then Hume's is Enlightenment philosophy, not that of the philosophes.

despite their inflated claims. It would behoove Enlightenment historians to attend to Hume's assertion that "it is of greater consequence to attend to things than to verbal appellations."[113]

Consequently, the legitimate enlightened attitude towards religion, the one consistent with the empiricism that allegedly distinguished and elevated Enlightenment philosophy above all others, is Hume's. A textbook rendition, then, of "enlightened religion" should point out that

> Hume so undermined the argument from design that it is no longer an intellectually respectable argument for the existence of any god. In doing so, he separated religion from epistemology and ethics and suggested that it was a discipline that would have to survive without appealing to anything but its own internal authority.[114]

This acknowledgement casts the "philosophers" who nevertheless clung to the design argument in a particular light, that of Becker's Enlightenment. This is especially apparent in the manner Hume presented his own devastating argument. The Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion is "deliberately inconclusive."[115] After Philo makes his most persuasive critique, Pamphilus, the young observer of the discussion, awards the debate to Cleanthes. The reader is well aware of Hume's opinion, but is left with the question and the responsibility of resolving it himself.

In fact, there is no such concept as "enlightened metaphysics" because the "enlightened" philosopher (empiricist) abandons the debate. The Christian and the Deist are both wrong because "rationalistic proof of matters of fact is as invalid as authoritarian proof."[116] In the Dialogues Hume essentially ended the controversy between Skeptics and Dogmatists by demonstrating their argument to be merely one of degree. Both agree

that belief is necessary, but the Skeptics emphasize its difficulty while the Dogmatists emphasize its necessity.[117] In putting Christian mystics and atheists in the same category, Hume set off "a short, sharp slipping of the foundations, a faint far-off tremor running underneath the solid ground of common sense."[118]

Authentic enlightened philosophy perceives a psychological, rather than a rational, basis for religion. For this reason, it is anti-religion because it seeks to explain religious practices on the basis of man's nature, not to impose religious belief on the basis of God's. According to Hume, religious belief is not "a natural belief, [rather] there are general causes for the belief in human nature. These general causes produce the popular religions of the world."[119] Once institutionalized on the foundation of a rationalized theology, religion actually works against man's nature and good sense with its artificial and frivolous prescriptions for virtue. Hume believed that "morality would do better on its own";[120] religion was not necessary for morality. His "diffident affirmation" of God's existence "is completely without religious implications. . . . [It] carries no duties, invites no action, allows no inferences and involves no devotion." His "social utilitarianism is independent of religion . . . his secular morality . . . makes him approve of religion if and when it inculcates morality. . . ."[121]

"Enlightened religion," then, is not deism, atheism, or materialism; it is philosophy as an inquiry, i.e. skepticism. An authentic philosophe would be Philo with his "skeptical principles, his method of argument, his indifference to threats of eternal damnation, and his unwillingness to acquiesce to the gospels as the final authority in matter of fact. . . ."[122] Urging "steady virtue" in the interests of the "calm sunshine of the mind" as opposed to fear

and spiritual turmoil, Hume espoused philosophy and "the sovereign antidote which it affords to superstition and false religion." Furthermore, philosophy is more conducive to inquiry and adjustment. Hume maintained that

> There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blameable, than in philosophical debates to endeavour to refute any hypothesis by a pretext of its dangerous consequences to morality. When any opinion leads us into absurdities, 'tis certainly false; but 'tis not certain an opinion is false, because 'tis of dangerous consequence.[123]

Whereas religious error can be dangerous, in philosophy error is only ridiculous.[124]

As a corrective to Enlightenment history, Hume revealed the true character of that era and its true legacy. He also demonstrated that empirical observation provides useful and revealing responses to age old questions of man and his environment. Hume's relevance in the twentieth century validates his method and conclusions. In the person of David Hume, the eighteenth century offers novel, legitimate, and useful information about man's world and his place in it.

In Hume's scientific/empirical approach to the study of religion, he anticipated the conclusions of modern anthropology. His Natural History of Religion presents "the sort of story about the origin and development of religion which most anthropologists and many psychologists have told in our own time."[125] Modern world history textbooks report that "modern anthropologists emphasize the fact that early religion was not so much a matter of rites. For the most part, the rites came first; the myths, dogmas, and theologies were later rationalizations"[126]--precisely Hume's observation. Furthermore, in an intriguing comment in the Dialogues, Hume

seemed to propose the concept of natural selection. Cleanthes restates a proposition of Philo's:

> No form, you say, can subsist, unless it possess those powers and organs, requisite for its subsistence: some new order or oeconomy must be tried, and so on, without intermission; till at last some order, which can support and maintain itself, is fallen upon.[127]

It is Hume's psychological approach to the study of religion, however, that is profoundly instructive, even from the eighteenth century, especially since "[deism] still shapes the unexamined presuppositions which govern men's outlook, and those who make no allowance for its contribution are at a loss to understand the modern mind."[128] It is significant that Hume's intent is not to advocate but to explain--to tell us about ourselves. In the _Treatise,_ he emphasized the point that he makes no addition to religion but takes nothing from it either; "everything remains precisely as before." His method is the anchor of his study and the foundation of its legitimacy. In the dialogue in the _Enquiries,_ Hume corrects his friend in his supposition "that religious doctrines and reasonings _can_ have no influence on life, because they _ought_ to have no influence." He observed that people do allow religious belief to affect their lives: "Whether this reasoning of theirs be just or not, is no matter. Its influence on their life and conduct must still be the same." Similarly, in the case of miracles, as Cragg observes, "the relevant question was not whether a particular miracle had really happened, but why people believed it had."[129] For Hume, regardless of what we prefer for men and regardless of what we think we know about them, we must deal with people as we find them.

Consequently, Hume urged us to attend to the life we lead, not the other-world. "So long as we confine our speculations to trade, or morals, or politics, or criticism, we make appeals, every moment, to common sense and experience, which strengthen our philosophical conclusions. ..." Theology cannot provide a relevant basis for these considerations. It is interesting in the recent ecumenical religious movements, which encourage interdenominational intercourse and projects, that the grounds of clearest agreement have to do with addressing the problems of basic human needs. These we know. Doctrine, however, constitutes the clearest division among the participants. Lester Crocker notes that while the "Deists tried desperately to conserve a moral principle in an infinite, undifferentiated Newtonian universe," it became apparent that "divorcing God and the universe from human values" could not be stopped. "The upshot was that no significant purposes for life could be found in the history of the universe, but only within the life of man himself." Whereas this situation sent the philosophes scurrying to various ideal foundations for morality, including religion for the vulgar, Hume's response held that " ... morally contentious issues ... and moral distinctions in general, should not be referred to the decision of religious teaching but should be settled by reference to the needs and happiness of people."[130] Certainly, on issues like abortion, this controversy rages today. Should morality (and law in this case) serve the interests of heaven or the needs, desires, possibly the happiness of people? Hume would certainly urge us to pursue peace of mind over salvation.

In his study of religion in the here and now rather than the other-world, Hume asserted that we cannot "discover" God; rather we create him in our own image. Since attempts to define god go beyond our reason, "what

must be decisive in these matters is character, passion, habit, and utility."131
According to Hume, "the idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent,
wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own
mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualitites of goodness and
wisdom." It is, however, terror and melancholy that raise the questions of
ultimate cause and principle among most men. This fearful inquiry and the
contradictions of our own nature lead us to a confusing and discomfitting
concept of the deity. "Our natural terrors present the notion of a devilish
and malicious deity: Our propensity to adulation leads us to acknowledge an
excellent and divine." Ascribing omnipotence and omniscience to God
increases our terror of him since our most basic sentiments and "innermost
secrets" are known to him.132 This opinion

> contracts a kind of falsehood, and belies the inward sentiment.
> The heart secretly detests . . . measures of cruel and implacable
> vengeance; but the judgement dares not but pronounce them
> perfect and adorable. And the additional misery of this inward
> struggle aggravates all the other terrors.133

We create, then, a god whose character we would blame in men; yet, we
must still "affect to praise and admire that conduct in the object of [our]
devotional addresses." In Hume's opinion, "popular religions are really . . . a
species of daemonism"; the more powerful god is, the less is he
benevolent.134 Ultimately, whatever particular character we give God,
since he is invisible and incomprehensible, it is impossible to love him and
Hume absolved us of any duty to do so.135 Through his religious study of
man, Hume explained (and as a result diminished) the complex and
confusing concept of God. He demonstrated that man's beliefs about God
reveal man not a Supreme Being.

Hume's work is a marvelous expose of what we really believe. In the Treatise he asserted that we "are really infidels in [our] hearts, and have nothing like what we call a belief of the eternal duration of [our] souls." The reason for this is that the concepts of eternity or heaven are too far removed from our present experience.

> By what arguments or analogies can we prove any state of existence, which no one ever saw, and which no way resembles any that ever was seen? ... Some new species of logic is requisite for that purpose, and some new faculties of the mind, that they may enable us to comprehend that logic.[136]

The validity of Hume's conclusions has finally become apparent in the twentieth century. Today, "preachers ... are hesitant to describe places that no one has actually seen." More fundamentally, "the [mainstream Protestant] clergy simply don't believe in the afterlife themselves, either the Biblical view or any view." Studies reveal that in popular, American opinion, meeting God is less important to people than the reunion of family members, because "they've never met God. They don't know what God is like...." Expecting a continuation of the happier aspects of life on earth, people conceive of God on the neighborhood street with great difficulty. Hindus conceive of heaven as a sort of "extended vacation;" the Islamic heaven provides male-oriented delights. Having experienced the Holocaust, Jews anticipate no hell in the afterlife. Echoing Hume, the twentieth century is determining that

> how we imagine heaven tells us more about who and where we are now than what the afterworld is like.... If most Americans imagine heaven as a family reunion, the reason, perhaps, is that that is all we know of love. The hell of thinking about heaven is that we cannot imagine--or trust--a love that surpasses our own understanding.[137]

Although contemporary opinion may continue to require God as the foundation of morality,[138] Hume drew a clear distinction between morals and religion, which does much to explain the apparent "hypocrisy" of believers. He declared it

> unsafe to draw any certain inference in favour of a man's morals, from the fervour or strictness of his religious exercises, even though he himself believe them sincere. . . . Hear the verbal protestations of all men: Nothing so certain as their religious tenets. Examine their lives: You will scarcely think that they repose the smallest confidence in them.[139]

The abortion issue is a clear example of this theological or moral ambivalence. Although church influence is a prime factor in this legal controversy, polls indicate that the popular attitude reflects a "curious ambiguity." In a 1989 Wall Street Journal-NBC poll, 61% of Americans thought abortions should be legal and 54% "believed abortion was wrong." In Missouri, where cases challenging the Roe vs. Wade decision have several times reached the U.S. Supreme Court, polls reveal that 51% oppose a reversal of Roe vs. Wade though 83% believe abortion is wrong and "27% of those who thought abortion never should be legal under any circumstances also did not want to revoke Roe vs. Wade."[140] Apparently, religious belief is not easily or clearly applicable to real life situations.

Hume's constant attention to the use of language is especially revealing in religious applications. As J. C. A. Gaskin observes,

> . . . if someone uses an ordinary language word in contexts which do not satisfy the commonly accepted range of application of the word then the result will be confusion or dishonesty. In religious language, according to Hume, such confusion or dishonesty results when the theologian insists upon applying such anthropomorphic attributes as 'good' or 'intelligent to a god

whose apparent nature is incompatible with the normal
meanings of these words. . . . . [Hume contends] that dishonesty
through fear, or confusion through a religious version of
Newspeak, is characteristic of much of the language used to talk
about god or to address him.[141]

In the Dialogues Hume identified the argument concerning theism as a

verbal dispute. "The Theist allows, that the original intelligence is different

from human reason: The Atheist allows, that the original principle of order

bears some remote analogy to it." Their quarrel is one of degree and,

therefore, perpetually ambiguous; it has no precise meaning. The only

remedy is in "clear definitions" and precise ideas "so as to enter into each

other's meaning." Through Philo, Hume urged us to "consider then, where

the real point of controversy lies, and if you cannot lay aside your disputes,

endeavour, at least, to cure yourselves of your animosity."[142]

Hume's work regarding religion not only offers illuminating

explanations of our human condition; it also presents us with fascinating

possibilities for our earthly existence. He suggested that among the causes

of evil "none . . . appear necessary or unavoidable." Since man does pursue

pleasure, "it seems . . . plainly possible to carry on the business of life without

any pain" to spur us to activity. There is no reason for a supreme and

allegedly benevolent creator to have created or be restrained by his own

seemingly imperfect general laws or to have inadequately endowed his

creations with sufficient survival faculties.[143] Consequently, pleasure and

happiness could be encouraged in our lives and suffering need not be

submitted to because of its divine intent. It can be questioned, even

challenged.

As Price interprets Hume, "fear of what we do not know enslaves us."

Consequently, fear of God and/or the devil paralyzes our judgement or

surrenders it to any person or institution convincingly in possession of the divine agenda. Philo asserts that, having secured himself against real enemies in society, man conjures up imaginary ones. In truth, "man is the greatest enemy of man," not God or the devil. Acknowledging this, Hume empowered man to use (or abuse) his natural capacities for benevolence and sympathy in the interests of the peaceful kingdom that religion promises only in the afterlife. Not only is man naturally equipped for benevolent judgment and action, religion works to subvert this inherent tendency.

> It is certain, from experience, that the smallest grain of natural honesty and benevolence has more effect on men's conduct, than the most pompous views suggested by theological theories and systems. A man's natural inclination works incessantly upon him; it is for ever present to the mind, and mingles itself with every view and consideration: whereas religious motives, where they act at all, operate only by starts and bounds; and it is scarcely possible for them to become altogether habitual to the mind.[144]

Aware and amazed that people resort to "strange salvos and excuses . . . when they follow their inclinations in opposition to their religious duty," Hume held that "whatever weakens or disorders the internal frame promotes the interests of superstition." As A. O. Williams interprets Hume, if religious types act benevolently, it is not because of religion but rather because of a natural human tendency to sympathy and benevolence--"they so act because they are men." What requires explanation is persecution and hatred and at the root of these lies religion.[145]

The essential moral of the Dialogues is that acknowledging the limited nature of our understanding "may teach, all of us, sobriety in condemning each other." The "answer" is unknown and while "heaven and hell suppose two distinct species of men, the good and the bad; . . . the greatest part of

mankind float betwixt vice and virtue." In the twentieth century, Joseph Campbell argued Hume's eighteenth century critique of monotheism. Rather than a holy universe, there is a "choosing of righteousness and the right." There is only one "holy thing"--Israel, the Christian community, Islam. Using Lebanon and Beirut as examples of the intolerance of the three major religions of the West, Campbell concluded that the future demands "a dissolution of those three systems and an opening up of the horizons to the planet." This endeavor may be helped along by the apparent difficulty contemporary evangelicals have in "conceiving of people, especially virtuous nonbelievers, going to hell. . . . [T]o say a good man . . . is in hell is to say that friends of [ours] who are not born again will also go to hell, and socially that's a difficult position to maintain."[146] As Hume pointed out long ago, our immediate and personal experience adjusts our religious belief often with the effect of formulating a morality at odds with theology.

Hume's belief, in accord with Campbell's prescription, is "the religion of a 'citizen of the world.'" He hoped his argument against miracles would be "an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion" forever. He allowed Philo to seriously press the debate on Natural Religion because he knew that he "[could] never . . . corrupt the principles of any man of common sense, and because no one . . . in whose eyes I appear a man of common sense, will ever mistake my intentions." Unfortunately, Hume's intent has been largely mistaken by philosophers and historians both. He has even been accused of fomenting the "total commitment" of anti-rational theology because of his demonstration of "the barrenness of natural theology." In Hume's defense, Gaskin asserts: "He did not. He showed instead what a

modest thing a rational man's religion would be and how diffidently it should be held."[147]

NOTES

[1]Baumer, _Modern European Thought_, pp. 194-5.

[2]Ibid., p. 210.

[3]Brinton, _Shaping of Modern Thought_, p. 120. Brinton also points out the atheists "positive belief" in their atheism.

[4]Ibid., pp. 119-120; Baumer, _Modern European Thought_, p. 183; Gaskin, _Hume's Philosophy of Religion_, p. 106; Collingwood views the Enlightenment as "essentially a polemical and negative movement, a crusade against religion." _Idea of History_, p. 78.

[5]Cassirer, _Philosophy of the Enlightenment_, p. 166.

[6]Ibid. Cassirer quotes Diderot, "Men have banished divinity from their midst; they have relegated it to a sanctuary; the walls of a temple are the limits of its view; beyond these walls it does not exist. Madmen, that you are, destroy these enclosures which obstruct your horizon; liberate God; see Him everywhere where He actually is, or else say that He does not exist at all." Baumer observes Diderot's development from this "theology" to a strictly naturalistic cosmology. _Modern European Thought_, pp. 211-12. According to Gay, Diderot never really "discarded deist rhetoric." _The Enlightenment_, 1:383.

[7]Becker, _Heavenly City_, p. 67.

[8]E. C. Mossner, "The Enigma of Hume," _Mind_ 45 (July 1936): 335.

[9]Baumer, _Modern European Thought_, p. 188.

[10]Cobban, _In Search of Humanity_, p. 61.

[11]Quoted in Gaskin, _Hume's Philosophy of Religion_, pp. 11-12.

[12]Gay, _The Enlightenment_, 2:142.

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[13]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 17. Hume, it will be remembered, while granting Newton's genius, nevertheless, observed his demonstration of the mysteries of nature, not God's existence.

[14]Philippe Aries, The Hour of Our Death, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 364.

[15]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:55.

[16]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 119.

[17]Baumer, for example, notes Kant's clarification of the definitions of "deist" and "theist" and Samuel Clarke's classification of deist belief. Modern European Thought, p. 193.

[18]Becker, Heavenly City, pp. 102-3; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 171; Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:327; Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 620; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 188. Here Baumer refers to the early eighteenth century. Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:375, 379.

[19]Gay, The Enlightenment, pp. 297, 375; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 194; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 170. Voltaire is often used to exemplify deist belief. Baumer quotes him thus: "United in this principle [i.e. of divine Providence] with the rest of the universe he [the theist] embraces none of the sects which all contradict each other. His religion is the most ancient and the most widespread: for the simple adoration of a God has preceded all the systems of the world. He speaks a language which all peoples understand. . . . He has brothers from Peking to Cayenne, and he counts all the sages among his brothers. He believes that religion consists neither in the opinions of an unintelligible metaphysics, nor in vain appearances, but in worship and justice. To do good, that is his cult; to submit to God, that is his doctrine." Modern European Thought, p. 195.

[20]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 9. He adds that "Butler speaks of the argument as if its validity were too obvious to need discussion . . ."; Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 161; Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 9; Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 189, 194. He quotes Sir Leslie Stephen that "deism was not dead, but sleeping." Crocker,

Age of Crisis, p. 449; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 177; Craig, et al, Heritage of World Civilizations, p. 781.

[21]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 105; Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 185, 191; Gay, Party of Humanity, p. 125-6; Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 10. He observes that Hume complained of this problem in constructing the part of Cleanthes in the "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion."

[22]Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 110; Joseph Edmund Barker, Diderot's Treatment of the Christian Religion in the Encyclopedie (Morningside Heights, New York: King's Crown Press, 1941), p. 129; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 200. He further notes that this view could only come "out of the German Enlightenment, which was never so antireligious, or anti-Christian, as the French," again raising the questions as to Enlightenment unity--which Enlightenment, whose Enlightenment?

[23]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 182; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 199. Specifically, neither Kant nor Wolff thought "at all historically about religion and morals."; John Valdimir Price, David Hume (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1968), p. 125.

[24]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 178; Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:418.

[25]Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 189, 206, 212.

[26]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:391.

[27]Libby, Attitude of Voltaire to Magic, pp. 180, 184-5, 272-3.

[28]Quoted in Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 119.

[29]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, pp. 146-7; Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 65; Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 63, 65, 24, 66. Crocker summarizes the deist problem of evil in the attempt "to combine the scientific need for unalterable law and the belief in God [which] was obliged, then, to have recourse to the kind of 'providence' . . . which imprinted the moral nature of God in the totality of his original creation. . . ." Ibid., p. 19; Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 195-6; See Anchor for Voltaire's

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letter to the Comte de Leninhaupt proclaiming his commitment to "the three theological virtues which are my consolation." Enlightenment Tradition, p. 68.

[30]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 193; Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 59, 32-33.

[31]H. E. Root, Introduction to The Natural History of Religion, by David Hume (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1956), p. 7; Mossner, "Enigma of Hume," p. 342. Mossner observes Hume's critique of the ancients' moral philosophy--that it was not based on experience. Life of David Hume, p. 73; Becker, Heavenly City, p. 55; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 178; Price, David Hume, p. 125; Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 173; Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 624-5. Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 89. Cragg sees "Hume's strength as a critic of theological views . . . in his detachment"; but he also considers Hume's "position as a neutral observer [to be] his greatest weakness." Ibid., p. 141; Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 86.

[32]Hume, Natural History of Religion, p. 23; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 190; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 179; Root, Introduction to Natural History of Religion, by Hume, p. 7; Hume, Natural History of Religion, pp. 23-24.

[33]Root, Introduction to Natural History of Religion, by Hume, p. 11.

[34]Hume, Natural History of Religion, pp. 27, 24, 41, 42, 65. " . . . [T]he first ideas of religion arise not from a contemplation of the works of nature, but from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears, which actuate the human mind." Ibid., p. 27.

[35]Ibid., p. 21.

[36]Ibid., pp. 65, 49.

[37]A. O. Williams, "Hume on Religion," in David Hume, ed. Pears, p. 82. In Hume's words, "Religions that arise in ages totally ignorant and barbarous, consist mostly of traditional tales and fictions, which may be differnt in every sect, without being contrary to each other; and even when they are contrary, every one adheres to the tradition of his own sect, without much reasoning or disputation." Christianity, however, felt obliged in the

face of philosophy "to form a system of speculative opinions, to divide, with some accuracy their articles of faith, and to explain, comment, confute, and defend, with all the subtlety of argument and science." As a result, great disputes arose when the divisions occurred. Hume, "Of Parties in General," in Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary (1963; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 61.

[38]Hume, Natural History of Religion, p. 76.

[39]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:407; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 64.

[40]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 114-5, 112, 116, 118. Nor can miracles be ascribed to the Almighty, who is only known through our "experience of his productions in the usual course of nature." Ibid., p. 129.

[41]Ibid., pp. 117-118; Hume, "On the Immortality of the Soul," in Essays, pp. 598, 600; Hume, "On Suicide," in Essays, pp. 587, 590-2, 595; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 67.

[42]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 130-1. "Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity: and whoever is moved by Faith to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience." John Price notes Kierkegaard's concurrence with Hume's opinion that faith is the necessary foundation of Christian religion. David Hume, p. 151.

[43]Price, David Hume, p. 128.

[44]A. O.Williams, "Hume on Religion," in David Hume, ed. Pears, p. 85.

[45]Price, David Hume, p. 133.

[46]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 396, 302, 305-306.

[47]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 140.

[48]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 9.

[49]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 89.

[50]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 301, 304, 330, 310.

[51]Hume, Enquiries, p. 138; "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 370, 369.

[52]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 99-101. Philo raises the question of Epicurus: "Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil? "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, p. 365.

[53]He lists four possible causes: (1) evil (pain) as contrived to "excite all creatures to action"; (2) the conduct "of the world by general laws" restricting divine intervention; (3) the limitations of the "powers and faculties" of all species of creation; and (4) "the inaccurate workmanship of all the springs and principles of the great machine of nature." Philo denies all of these, asserting that better, rather perfect, workmanship and/or benevolent volition could correct them all. Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 373-80; Treatise, p. 297.

[54]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, p. 382.

[55]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 167. Since philosophy has failed to illuminate the question of evil and God's nature, Hume stated, "Happy, if she be thence sensible of her temerity, when she pries into these sublime mysteries; and leaving a scene so full of obscurities and perplexities, return, with suitable modesty, to her true and proper province, the examination of common life; where she will find difficulties enough to employ her enquiries, without launching into so boundless an ocean of doubt, uncertainty, and contradiction!" Enquiries, p. 103.

[56]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 288, 343.

[57]Price, David Hume, p. 137.

[58]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in _Hume Selections_, ed. Hendel, p. 325.

[59]Ibid., pp. 400-401, 322.

[60]Price, _David Hume_, p. 139.

[61]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in _Hume Selections_, ed. Hendel, pp. 339, 401. In the _Treatise_, Hume stated that both theology and Spinoza's atheism are of a common substance--both are absurd and unphilosophical. _Treatise_, p. 291. In the _Enquiries_, Hume indentified "_faith_ and divine revelation" as the "best and most solid foundation" for religious belief. _Enquiries_, p. 165.

[62]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in _Hume Selections_, ed. Hendel, p. 352.

[63]Cassirer, _Philosophy of the Enlightenment_, pp. 178-9.

[64]Hume, _Treatise_, p. 164; "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in _Hume Selections_, ed. Hendel, p. 358; Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 623.

[65]Hume, _Enquiries_, p. 342. In _The Natural History of Religion_, Hume commented that the inaccessible "infinitely superior" deity "sinks the human mind into the lowest submission and abasement . . . [encouraging] virtues of mortification, penance, humility, and passive suffering, ..." However, when gods were viewed as little better than men, emulation, even competition, was inspired, with the virtues of "activity, spirit, courage, maganimity, love of liberty, ..." Catholicism had subdued the spirit of mankind and made it fit "for slavery and subjection." _Natural History of Religion_, ed. Root, p. 52. This is what Rousseau said about "Christians"; they didn't make good citizens. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, _Du Contrat Social_, edited by Ronald Grimsley (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 231, 229. Hume, "On the Immortality of the Soul," in _Essays_, p. 599.

[66]Hume, _Enquiries_, p. 322.

[67]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 391-392, 393-394. In The Natural History of Religion, Hume had written that the method for seeking favor with divinity in most religions is "not by virtue and good morals, . . . , but either by frivolous observations, by intemperate zeal, by rapturous extasies, or by the belief of mysterious and absurd opinions. . . . Hence, the greatest crimes have been found, in many instances, compatible with a supersitious piety and devotion." Consequently, one cannot determine a man's morals from the "fervour or strictness of his religious exercises, . . ." Natural History of Religion, pp. 70, 72.

[68]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 394-5; quoted in Mossner, "Enigma of Hume," p. 341.

[69]Hume, "On the Immortality of the Soul," in Essays, pp. 597-8; Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 147; H. R. Trevor-Roper, "Hume as a Historian," in David Hume, ed. Pears, p. 97; Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 623; quoted in Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 147.

[70]According to Cassirer, religion dominated by the understanding resulted in mere belief without any "moral and practical force." Through this force "all the differences of religious ideas and concepts" are transcended and the unity of religion formulated by Nicholas of Cusa is revived. Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 165. Hume denied that belief results from the process of the understanding and can never be dominated by it.

[71]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 182. He also notes "waves of the crisis" in religious thought that at first attacked superstition but preserved theism and then threatened all religious belief. Ibid., p. 183.

[72]Quoted in Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 34.

[73]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 106; Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 163; Gay asserts that even atheists and skeptics conceded that only this natural religion "was tolerable and intellectually respectable." The Enlightenment, 1:373; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 196.

[74]Gay, Party of Humanity, pp. 125-6.

[75]Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 65.

[76]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 162.

[77]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 90; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 120-1; Crocker notes that a rationally ordered world forced the philosophes to believe it was so arranged for the needs of reasonable beings and that this could not be established. Age of Crisis, p. 70.

[78] Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 23, 65. Voltaire was "driven to deprive man of autonomy and responsibility. Yet he realizes the danger of his own conclusions, and warns that a system of necessity must lead to atheism, which is destructive of human society." Ibid., p. 67. Apparently, the tool of metaphysical liberation--empiricism, the scientific method--could not be trusted in the search for truth.

[79]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 144; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 119; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 198; A. O. Williams, "Hume on Religion," in David Hume, ed. Pears, p. 87.

[80]Voltaire "epitomizes the spirit of critical deism." Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 197.

[81]Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 260; Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 23-24.

[82]Gooch, "Voltaire as Historian," pp. 270-1.

[83]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:413; Gooch holds that Voltaire never wavered from the design argument. "Voltaire as Historian," p. 268.

[84]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:396.

[85]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 89.

[86]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 211. This is precisely the point made by Carl Becker.

[87]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:397.

[88]Quoted in Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 119.

[89]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, p. 393.

[90]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 197.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid., p. 197.

[93]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:384.

[94]Theodore J. Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion: John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau," Journal of Church and State 23(Winter 1981): 101.

[95]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 60.

[96]Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion," pp. 99, 106, 112.

[97]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 189.

[98]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, pp. 40, 160-1.

[99]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 192. Hume noted that morality and philosophy held sway among many of the ancients without "ineluctably" evolving a religion. He also argued persuasively that morality needs no religious base, i.e. the presumption of God's existence.

[100]Stewart, Moral and Politcal Philosophy, p. vii; Root, Introduction to The Natural History of Religion, by David Hume, p. 19.

[101]Peter Heath, "The Incredulous Hume," American Philosophical Quarterly 13(April 1976): 161.

[102]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:399-400, 376, 384; Mossner, "Enigma of Hume," p. 338; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 178; Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:375; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 199.

[103]Cassirer, <u>Philosophy of the Enlightenment</u>, p. 182.

[104]Gaskin, <u>Hume's Philosophy of Religion</u>, p. 40.

[105]Anchor, <u>Enlightenment Tradition</u>, p. 62.

[106]A. O. Williams, "Hume on Religion," in <u>David Hume</u>, ed. Pears, p. 88.

[107]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in <u>Hume Selections</u>, ed. Hendel, p. 297.

[108]Baumer, <u>Modern European Thought</u>, p. 192.

[109]Root, Introduction to <u>The Natural History of Religion</u>, by David Hume, p. 14.

[110]Mossner, <u>Life of David Hume</u>, p. 64.

[111]"That he was TRUE TO THE END, according to his family motto, we may be certain from the lack of any contrary evidence--evidence so eagerly sought by those about him that had any existed it could never have been concealed." Gaskin, <u>Hume's Philosophy of Religion</u>, p. 172.

[112]Ibid., pp. 5, 39.

[113]Hume, <u>Enquiries</u>, p. 322.

[114]Price, <u>David Hume</u>, p. 151.

[115]Ibid., p. 144. "The major achievement was to lay to rest any pretense to validity that the argument from design might have had."

[116]Mossner, <u>Life of David Hume</u>, p. 112.

[117]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in <u>Hume Selections</u>, ed. Hendel, pp. 390-1. The Dogmatist admits "that there are difficulties both with regard to the senses and to all science; and that these difficulties are in a regular, logical method, absolutely insolvable." The

Skeptic admits that even with these limitations "we lie under an absolute necessity . . . of thinking, and believing, and reasoning with regard to all kind of subjects, and even of frequently assenting with confidence and security." Ibid., p. 390.

[118]Becker, Heavenly City, p. 68.

[119]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 158.

[120]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 198. Hume wanted "to establish a science of morals that was free of religious motives and sanctions."

[121]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, pp. 167, 169.

[122]Price, David Hume, p. 131.

[123]Hume, Natural History of Religion, p. 281; "On Suicide," in Essays, p. 585; Treatise, pp. 456-7.

[124]Hume, Treatise, p. 319.

[125]Root, Introduction to Natural History of Religion, by David Hume, p. 8.

[126]Edward McNall Burns, et al, World Civilizations: Their History and Their Culture, 7th ed., vol. 1 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), p. 17.

[127]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 350-1.

[128]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 92.

[129]Hume, Treatise, p. 299; Enquiries, p. 147; Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 139.

[130]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, p. 293; Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 451; Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 169.

[131]Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 625.

[132]Hume, Enquiries, p. 19; Natural History of Religion, p. 66. He added that "the influence of these opposite principles are various, according to the different situation of the human understanding."

[133]Hume, Natural History of Religion, p. 67.

[134]Ibid. Hume observed that superstition "depresses the Deity far below the condition of mankind; and represents him as a capricious daemon, who exercises his power without reason and without humanity!" "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, p. 399.

[135]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 168.

[136]Hume, Treatise, p. 163; "On the Immortality of the Soul," in Essays, p. 604.

[137]Kenneth L. Woodward, "Heaven," Newsweek, 27 March 1989, pp. 52-53, 55.

[138]Ibid., p. 55.

[139]Hume, Natural History of Religion, pp. 72, 75.

[140]Jim Henderson, "Missouri Exemplifies Abortion Ambiguities," Dallas Times Herald, 11 June 1989, sec. A, p. 8.

[141]Gaskin, Hume's Philosophy of Religion, p. 79.

[142]Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 389-90.

[143]Ibid., pp. 373-80.

[144]Price, David Hume, p. 126; Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, pp. 361, 392.

CHAPTER VI

HUME AND "ENLIGHTENED" MORALITY

Besides being "irrational," the great failure of revealed religion in the opinion of the philosophes was its inability to justify "a genuine morality and a just social and political order." In characterizing the Enlightenment's "search for a basis for values," what Crocker calls the "heart of the ethical problem of the eighteenth century," historians emphasize the fundamental importance of method. The search for perfect moral virtue as well as perfect knowledge, led the "early philosophers" to co-opt the Newtonian method as the means to their end.[1]

Although Newton and Locke were more reserved in their prognostications than their followers, they did indeed consider the implications of their ideas regarding religious and moral themes and "this set the pattern for the coming century." G. R. Cragg points out that in the Optiks Newton speculated "that the methods used in natural philosophy, if wisely applied, might greatly extend the bounds of moral philosophy." Science applied to man could order into "law" human nature and society. Bredvold writes,

> The belief that an irrefutable geometry of morals and politics was about to be written was the first article in the new creed. As it was commonly expressed at the time, what the world awaited was the Newton of the science of ethics and human society.[2]

Robert Heilbroner notes the philosophes' enthusiasm for Newton's science in that they were not "long in seeing the resemblance between a physical

universe of interacting particles and a social universe of interacting human beings." Crocker observes that in applying "the empirical method to ethics," the philosophes hoped "to find a way in which they could live without illusion, and yet live as moral beings. . . . " According to Frank Manuel, the method of science held out the assurance of "greater social progress for humanity" for once men became aware of these laws, they "would inevitably follow them." Gay emphasizes the reliability of the method in acquiring knowledge in diverse "contexts," which subsequently led the philosophes to the realization that it could be applied to society and "become the instrument for the creation of future values." He contends that the philosophes were realists because "they took the material for their activity from the concrete experience of daily existence."[3]

Historians further note the Enlightenment assertion of a "reasonable" morality as a result of the nature of scientific study. Cavendish notes that vicious conduct was always assumed to be the outcome of uncontrolled passion and virtue was the control and proper direction of the passions by reason. "Unreasonable" passion was dangerous. Manuel observes the assumption among philosophers that once society was "governed in accordance with the laws of reason, . . . progress, justice, and the good life were assured." General opinion in the eighteenth century did not share "Hume's anti-intellectualism in the realm of ethics."[4]

Finally, as inferred from a mechanistic universe and the common faculty of reason, moral truths were unchanging, accessible, and universal. Baumer affirms Emile Durkheim's conclusion that the "philosophes assumed human nature was always and everywhere the same, that, in other words, humanity was not 'a product of history.' This assumption . . . was 'the

immovable rock on which they based their political systems as also their moral speculations."[5] Presumably, on the basis of this universal human nature in compliance with natural law, men, through self-love and the pursuit of their own enlightened self-interest, would serve the interests of all. Adam Smith's economics pointedly demonstrated this assertion. The "invisible hand" led a person pursuing private gain to promote the general welfare. Nature assured that individuals worked for the public good even if they had no intentions of doing so.[6]

It is interesting, however, that what historians assert in general about Enlightenment morality is often challenged, or at least confused, in the study of particular philosophes. Becker recounts Diderot's consternation over morality and man's capacity for virtue. Although unable to establish rational grounds for virtuous conduct, he could not renounce his preference for it. For this reason, according to Crocker, deists clung to God. Voltaire, therefore, (and Montesquieu) never wavered from the belief that "the basis of all moral judgments is an aprioristic 'Natural Law,' a moral 'instinct' or responsiveness built into us by God--who thereby becomes the origin and guarantor of value." Rousseau maintained that the inability to understand Creation did not matter; it did "not affect his duties." Crocker quotes him: "... what matters to explain the origin of beings, as long as I know how they subsist, what place I should fill among then, and in virtue of what this obligation is imposed on me?" As Crocker observes,

> The obligation is imposed, and by higher authority. Doubt, scepticism, and relativism are thereby excluded. The world is an order, a moral order, a beneficent order. It contains a hierarchy of values, laid out by God's wisdom. All is set and given. Right and wrong are clearly made known, now and for all time.[7]

Cobban, too, notes that Rousseau identified an "innate principle of justice and virtue in the individual conscience," which brought him close to the "tradition of intuitive ethics, founded on the moral sense." Claiming agreement with Cassirer, Herbert Dieckmann states "that the traditional aprioristic conception of natural law and ethics is still accepted by the most representative philosophes."[8] Apparently, rather than define virtue as it was demonstrated in the real day-to-day existence and language of man, the philosophes presumed a universal understanding of virtue that, nevertheless, remained to be revealed through the increased exercise of reason. Instead of applying the method to observe, they employed it to justify. In truth, "enlightened" virtue closely resembled Christian values and, for deists at least, was dependent on the existence of an "undemonstrable" God.

In contrast, David Hume maintained that only through experience can we know the workings of cause and effect--"the foundation of moral reasoning, which forms the greater part of human knowledge, and is the source of all human action and behaviour." We should "reject every system of ethics, however subtle or ingenious, which is not founded on fact and observation."[9] He faulted the ancients for hypotheses more dependent "upon invention than experience," for consulting "their fancy without regarding Human Nature." This was the focus of Hume's study and, therefore, the basis for his conclusions regarding morality. As John Stewart interprets Hume, "We can have no standard of moral conduct, and thus no conception of the morally virtuous man, until we know the nature of human beings.... [Moral standards are] not prior to, or independent of, our knowledge of human nature."[10] Consequently, Hume alerted readers to be

cautious, as authors were not, of the "imperceptible" change in moral

philosophies from "is and is not" to "ought and ought not." He insisted that

this "new relation or affirmation" demanded explanation. Especially in

moral philosophy,

> where there is a much greater complication of circumstances, and
> where those views and sentiments, which are essential to any action
> of the mind, are so implicit and obscure, that they often escape our
> strictest attention, and are not only unaccountable in their cases, but
> even unknown in their existence,

he urged "the utmost constancy [of study] and the utmost sagacity [in

analysis]."[11] For their part, historians recognize Hume's consistent

empiricism--his "descriptive, not prescriptive" ethic, and it is likely because

of his method that his "naturalistic ethic is often considered the most

plausible yet offered," surviving assault by "very able and clear-headed and

persuasive debaters [such as Richard Price and Thomas Reid] . . . who

rather confirm [Hume's] doctrines by the ineffectiveness of their

criticisms."[12]

As in other aspects of "enlightened" thought, Hume's empirical study

led him to conclusions regarding morality that starkly contrasted with the

prevalent philosophe opinion. He denied an immutable natural law that

defined an ultimate moral code. Observing Hume's "careful study of

empirical data," G. R. Cragg notes that for Hume "moral distinctions are

relevant only to man's immediate situation; in themselves they have no

permanent significance. There are no eternal laws of justice. . . . " In

Hume's theory, according to Norman Kemp Smith, there is "no such thing as

moral obligation, in the strict sense of the term. There is . . . no intrinsically

self-justifying good that with authority can claim approval. The ultimate

verdict rests with the _de facto_ constitution of the individual." As John
Stewart points out, if "standards of moral virtue exist," Hume identified
them "in the distinct nature of human beings," and, consequently, "they are
no more eternal or immutable than is human nature." Hume considered the
"the principles upon which men reason in morals [to be] always the same"
but he asserted that the "conclusions which they draw are often very
different."[13]

Aware of the ancient debate among philosophers regarding the
"combat of passion and reason" and "the suppos'd pre-eminence of reason
above passion," Hume asserted, on the basis of his epistemology, that
"reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and . . . it can
never oppose passion in the direction of the will." Reason informs us of
cause and effect relations which arouse a passion, but only a "contrary
impulse" can "oppose or retard the impluse of passion." These "relations" in
themselves cannot demonstrate a basis of moral good and evil, and even if
they could, this constitutes no "universally forcible and obligatory" morality.
The moral quality/feeling "lies in [ourselves], not in the object." Since the
general nature of moral judgments arouses calm rather than violent
passions (which are excited in our particular interests), we tend to mistake
"their influence on us . . . for reasoning." Consistent in his limitation of
reason, Hume stated "that the ultimate ends of human actions can never, in
any case, be accounted for by _reason_, but recommend themselves entirely to
the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependence on the
intellectual faculties."[14]

Determining the innate "perception of pain and pleasure" to be the
"chief spring and moving principle of all . . . actions" of the human mind,

Hume discovered what he believed would advance the "speculative sciences" along with physics. He concluded that judgment of vice and virtue was but the "feeling or sentiment of blame" or approval, which arose "from the constitution of [one's] nature," that is, vice and virtue were not "qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind," like color, sound, heat. Once we are informed "of an object or action, [n]othing remains but to feel, on our part, some sentiment of blame or approbation;" and by nature our minds are formed to immediately evoke such sentiment. Consequently, " . . . morality is determined by sentiment. It defines virtue to be whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation; and vice the contrary." This is not "the work of the judgment, but of the heart; . . . " According to Hume, if we are indifferent to "images of human happiness or misery," we cannot conceive virtue and vice.[15]

This reaction to the human condition, which Hume identifies as sympathy "is the chief source of moral distinctions." "A very powerful principle in human nature, . . . it produces our sentiment of morals in all the artificial virtues." Since nature has established "a great resemblance" among mankind, what we perceive in others may be found to some degree in ourselves. Hume wrote, " . . . no passion when well represented [e.g. in the theater], can be entirely indifferent to us; because there is none, of which every man has not, within him, at least the seeds and first principles."[16]

Through his "sympathy principle," Hume attacked the "enlightened" theory of self-love, "one of the most common principles in the eighteenth century for ethical systems." Citing instances where we praise actions from the distance of time and space, praise noble action in an adversary, and

praise descriptions of virtuous persons without question of time or place or circumstances, Hume further objected to self-love morality for the "most obvious" reason, that it required "the highest stretch of philosophy to establish so extraordinary a paradox." Believing the simplest explanation to be the most likely, he suggested an original inclination in human nature to enjoy the prospect of another's well-being, "which, by means of that affection becomes our own good, and is afterwards pursued, from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyment." He identified two philosophical errors regarding self-love: (1) Rather than the virtuous act producing a pleasurable sentiment, Hume maintained that "the virtuous . . . passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend, because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure." (2) The love of fame for laudable action is so closely related to the love of laudable action for its own sake that it is unjust to depreciate such action as vainglorious. In truth, Hume's description of pleasure is much more complex than simple hedonism. Among the requisites for happiness he included "inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct." Noting that by nature we "are not totally indifferent" to the interests of others, Hume held that "self-love" philosophers had confused the interests of the self with the "close union of interest . . . between the public and each individual."[18]

Rather than a universal moral code, Hume observed moral behavior determined by the unique personal make-up of every individual. As John Stewart comments:

> What causes an individual to feel pain or pleasure depends on the character (or nature) of that individual which at any moment is a

product, within the range possible for human nature, of his education, his direct and sympathetic experience, his station in life, and his interests. ... Within the limits of their physical and moral environments men are free to do what they will to do, but what each man wills is the expression of his character.[19]

Morality, then, is a matter of taste. In Hume's words, "Truth is disputable; not taste: what exists in the nature of things is the standard of our judgement; what each man feels within himself is the standard of sentiment." What essentially determines morality is "fashion, vogue, custom, and law."[20]

Taste, although fundamental, is not immutable or universal. Although not disputable, it is particular and, therefore, relative and variable. Hume stated that "no quality . . . is absolutely either blameable or praise-worthy. It is all according to degree."

In general, all sentiments of blame or praise are variable, according to our situation of nearness or remoteness, with regard to the person blam'd or prais'd, and according to the present disposition of our mind.[21]

General rules cannot account for many events in society, therefore, chance must be acknowledged a "great influence on national manners." Comparing Diogenes and Pascal, Hume found them complete opposites in virtue and character and yet both were admired and imitated "in their different ages." "Where then is the universal standard of morals, which you talk of?"[22]

Furthermore, Hume again located the source of debate and variety in moral questions in the verbal element of the argument. Since determining vice and virtue is more a process of comparison than an appeal to "any fixed unalterable standard in the nature of things," we must determine that we are comparing the same things. For instance, the "appellations of wise and

virtuous are not annexed to any particular degree of those qualities of wisdom and virtue, but arise altogether from the comparison we make between one man and another." Consequently, wise men must be few in the world in order to merit that distinction. We need not, then, be scornful "of our species in general" because so few wise men exist. Were the least gifted of men as wise as Lord Bacon, we would still have few "wise" men, having redefined the term so as to continue to connote by it exceptional, rather than common, ability. Similarly, Hume asserted that we cannot define vice and virtue as "natural" or "unnatural" without defining "natural." If we mean by "natural" "opposed to miracles," then both vice and virtue are natural. If we mean "opposed to rare and unusual," then virtue is the most unnatural. If we mean "opposed to artifice," then "both vice and virtue are equally artificial, and out of nature." Both represent actions "perform'd with a certain design and intention." Hume concluded then "natural" and "unnatural" cannot meaningfully characterize vice and virtue.[23]

Hume also observed the importance of language in revealing the moral sense of a particular social grouping of human beings. In the dialogue in the Enquiries, Hume's friend Palamedes (a "great . . . rambler in his principles [and] person") describes a nation of people whose sense of morality was "diametrically opposed to ours," and was to be understood through learning "the meaning of the terms in their language, and then . . . know[ing] the import of those terms, and the praise or blame attached to them." In one of his most intriguing insights, Hume demonstrated the limitations of his own language to describe "that sentiment of conscious worth, the self-satisfaction proceeding from a review of a man's own conduct and character. . . . " "Pride" is inappropriate because it "is

commonly taken in a bad sense." In fact, in the attempt to establish or validate this sentiment, Hume proposed definitions of "pride" and "humility" at odds with the definition "of the schools and pulpit." They determine pride a vice and humility a virtue, whereas Hume understood

> by pride ... that agreeable impression, which arises in the mind, when the view either of our virtue, beauty, riches or power makes us satisfy'd with ourselves: and ... by humility ... [he understood] the opposite impression.[24]

Hume maintained that "the chief obstacle ... to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences is the obscurity of the ideas, and ambiguity of the terms." His "prescription" for clarification and, therefore, meaningful communication was to "produce the impressions or original sentiments, from which the ideas are copied. These impressions are all strong and sensible. They admit not of ambiguity."[25]

Amidst the diversity and debate, however, Hume identified a foundation common to all social morality. Considered as a means to an end, virtue is "only valued so far as the end is valued." "Allegiance ... the laws of nations, ... modesty, and... good manners ... are mere human contrivances for the interest of society." Utility, then, is the "foundation of the chief part of morals, which has a reference to mankind and our fellow-creatures." It disarms Pyrrhonian skepticism and directs the formulation of social virtue.[26]

Although acknowledged as the first to identify utility "as an explicit moral principle," Hume's philosophy must be distinguished from later utilitarian schools. As J. L. Mackie observes Hume never espoused "maximizing" or promoting utility. He asserted no formulas for general

happiness or ideal political systems capable of effecting such ends. In fact, he asserted that the public interest would be hurt by detailed plans to promote it. Mackie emphasizes that for Hume, "motives, and character as a durable system of motives, are the primary subjects of moral judgments, and not actions. ... Actions are ... merely ... signs of motives. ..."[27] The motive then may remain fairly constant, but its manifestation is subject to great change. For example, in analyzing the "female virtues," which imposed restraints on women that were not imposed on men, Hume grounded them in the social necessity of caring for offspring (i.e., men will only make the necessary sacrifices if they are sure the children are theirs). But the implications of this artifice, acknowledge that as long as the social necessity is accomodated, feminity and its virtues (as well as masculinity) can be redefined endlessly, refuting any "natural" dictum.[28]

Furthermore, Hume's utility "is only a tendency to a certain end; and were the end totally indifferent to us," so would be the means. Therefore, a sentiment must determine

> a preference to the useful above the pernicious tendencies. This sentiment can be no other than a feeling for the happiness of mankind, and a resentment of their misery. ... Here therefore reason instructs us in the several tendencies of actions, and humanity makes a distinction in favour of those which are useful and beneficial.[29]

Hume's utility is a means to an end, not the end itself. It must therefore be distinguished from a philosophy of mere efficiency. What is deemed useful for society must indeed satisfy and fulfill the needs of human nature as characterized by Hume. Personal merit, then, constitutes "mental qualities, useful or agreeable to the person himself or to others." And in Hume's view only "systems and hypotheses" could have perverted our understanding of

"so simple and obvious" a theory. In fact, in common life the principles are maintained; only in the schools are men confused on this topic.[30]

The most dramatic demonstration of Hume's concept of "utilitarian" morality is his theory of justice, perhaps the most prevalent theme in Western political ideology. According to Hume, "the sense of justice and injustice is not deriv'd from nature, but arises artificially, tho' necessarily from education, and human conventions." Its institution is necessitated by the "confin'd generosity of man" and the "scanty provision of nature," though a change in either circumstance would pre-empt the need for justice. Until such time, however,

> the rules of equity or justice depend entirely on the particular state and condition in which men are placed, and owe their origin and existence to that utility, which results to the public from their strict and regular observance. ... By rendering justice totally useless, you thereby totally destroy its essence, and suspend its obligation upon mankind.[31]

Justice is strictly a social virtue. By nature, men "accomodate themselves to circumstance and have no stated invariable method of operation." Such judgment being partial and arbitrary is disruptive of society, therefore, we have created general and inflexible principles to which we submit. The benefit of these rules of justice arises only "from the whole scheme or system concurred in by the whole, or the greater part of society." In fact, individual application may be pernicious.[32] The ideal/generalized nature of justice is wholly artificial so as to give order to society, but when established by convention, "it is naturally attended with a strong sentiment of morals; which can proceed from nothing but our sympathy with the interests of society." The feelings of approval and disapproval aroused over

time through sympathy "and urged upon us through education [i.e. socialization] . . . constitute the moral character of justice and duty."[33] By secularizing justice, i.e. rooting it in human experience, Hume accounted for its apparent relativity. Obviously, if there were an ideal justice we cannot know it innately or we, as a species, would define and apply it similarly throughout time. What is universal, however, is the usefulness of justice in man's social interactions, and this is specifically characterized through conventions, which "are descriptive, not prescriptive: they depend for their force on the prevailing conditions."[34]

It is perhaps because of Hume's distinction from the "philosophe flock" that he has not influenced the general historical characterization of the Enlightenment. David Broiles points out that until recently Hume's importance lay in his relation to Kant, i.e. philosophy students were asked how Kant advanced beyond Hume. Only with twentieth century empiricism has interest in Hume revived, but with emphasis on his epistemology. Historians, in fact, debate the major aspect of Hume's work, and Norman Kemp Smith acknowledges Hume's focus on morality as a revelation to him (Smith). Broiles contends that if many ethical schools appeal to Hume, it is not that he was inconsistent, but rather that he "is studied piece meal." L. A. Selby-Bigge cannot accomodate Hume's concept of sympathy with his "atomistic or individualistic . . . psychology." His objection that one can "enter into the feelings of another person, when I can only know my own feelings. . . . " seems to demonstrate Hume's point about verbal disputation regarding degree. Jonathan Harrison, Hume's Moral Epistemology, mistakenly believes that Hume assumed that the similarity of men's constitutions would lead all men to approve or disapprove that which

"one man approved or disapproved." Hume asserted a common capacity for approval and disapproval among men, the particular manifestations of which were determined by fashion, custom, education.

Emphasizing the need for semantical clarification, Broiles maintains that Hume limits reason unduly because we do "do things that we do not desire to do, nor enjoy doing, but prefer to do because we believe the weight of reason lies behind our decision." He further contends that although reason does not cause action, "reasons do influence our conduct, for we seek to take the best course of action in what we do. And the best course of action is that course of action supported by the best reasons."[35] First of all, preferring unpleasant tasks to pleasurable ones does not necessarily signify rational behavior. Rather it more likely signifies a desire to be or seem dutiful, responsible, self-sacrificing, circumspect, perhaps even wise. Believing that "reason lies behind our decision" suggests that reason is an ultimate or standard guide to action. If not, the "weight of reason" is no more than heavy rationalization as particular as the individuals formulating it. Such particular rational expression certainly constitutes the revelation of an individual character, but as means to the end. Therefore, the course of action reflecting the best reasons merely indicates the individual character of a pursuit of ends.

Perhaps because of an affinity for neat labels and categorizations, most historians fail to study Hume seriously. Thus, philosophical studies tend to present the more accurate analyses of his work. Unfortunately, people usually meet philosophers through the chapter sub-headings of historians. Philosophical evaluations assert that Hume resisted "the materialist views of La Mettrie and others." J. L. Mackie is amazed that

Jeremy Bentham could attribute his brand of utility to Hume's Treatise, asserting that Hume eschewed a doctrine of utility by acknowledging, for example, the public interest served by property rules but remaining suspicious that such rules were frivolous products of our imagination. Meanwhile, a historian can flippantly dismiss him as "far too cheerful and corpulent to exhaust himself improving the world."[36] In whatever ways he has been misinterpreted or ignored, Enlightenment history has suffered. If we cannot understand him, then we cannot understand the method of the Enlightenment. If we describe a general character of the era in which he had no influence, then we cannot use terms like empirical, relative, or skeptical. Rather we must acknowledge a rationalist, absolute, and devout Enlightenment.

Notions like the "invisible hand," through which a generally unadmirable human nature might still contribute, "or rather be made to contribute, to a beneficial social result,"[37] must be acknowledged systems and probed for its process if an accurate Enlightenment legacy is to be discerned. How does it work that seriously flawed individuals can effect virtuous ends in the whole through possibly "vicious" means of the self? Surely, only faith can support such assurances. Certainly, the authoritarian and "unnatural," i.e. artificial, character of such systems is apparent, i.e. making human natures serve the (must-be-defined) public good. If historians can describe systems, they should be able to call them such. Gay observes "philosophy narrowed to the sharp point of the search for right thought that would support right action." He sees Enlightenement ethics as the "link that made the relation of theory to practice rational rather than

fortuitous."[38] This is system; and when an agenda is devised to implement the right thought (ascertained how?), it is authoritarian.

Historians must be more precise in their assertion of the historical distinction of "enlightened" virtue and morality. The ideal civilized man of the British periodical, Spectator, is one who "practices virtue and recognizes his duties; the man who makes it his business 'to advise the Ignorant, relieve the Needy, comfort the Afflicted.'"[39] Apparently, he is still something of a Christian. Presumably, however, he has been freed from the superstition and "unnatural" virtue of the church, but it may be that he has merely been transferred to a new authority that will define duty and virtue and expect "industrious and rational"[40] performance of it--the state. If such is the case, we haven't been freed; we just serve a new master.

Among Enlightenment historians, Lester Crocker in Age of Crisis clearly presents the dilemma and contradictions of "enlightened" ethics.

> ... the liberal and humanistic philosophes ... wished to construct a humanistic ethics on the basis of Natural Law, or man's moral nature and needs--all of which are singular and distinguishing traits of mankind; and yet they also wished to assure his re-entry into the common realm of nature and his submission to the rule of its laws. ... In the case of Diderot ... it produced a split or dual ethical philosophy that is understandable only in the light of this general background.[41]

He delineates two contradictions in philosophe thinking: (1) in Voltaire and "one phase of Diderot", and (2) in writers like d'Holbach and Helvetius.

> [1] ... an opposition. ... between an ethical system based on the golden rule and Natural Law, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, a theory of human nature which indicated springs of action quite contrary to this law; a theory that was accompanied, moreover, by a social philosophy which contemplated using these same springs in its

plans to achieve the ethical ends. This signified a reluctance to be rigorously consistent in the surrender to utilitarianism, and to sacrifice completely reliance on a moral good will. . . . [and 2] the . . . inconsistency . . . that men are not and cannot be disinterested and truly moral; while at the same time, their own assumed attitude and their own efforts, in teaching men the right way, disproves that very generalization.[42]

For practical, reforming philosophers, such contradictions are devastating. The means to the ends are not at all clear, or worse, totally inappropriate. These means are irrelevant to the desired ends, thus making the goals of the process completely unpredictable, actually haphazard. In essence, this philosophy is wishful thinking, a rhetoric of faith.

For all the talk of utility and worldly virtue, the philosophes proposed an ethic to which they themselves could not submit. While pontificating on the proper upbringing of children, Rousseau could not bring himself to apply the program in his own household and gave away his five children. Lichtenberg, miserable in his own marriage, nevertheless, wrote glowingly of the bond of marriage, which allowed each soul to expand over a greater area than it could alone.[43] Why should historians glorify a "philosophy" that was unproven by its formulators and chastise us for failing or abandoning what has never been established or understood? If the ideal is unlivable in the world, then the philosophes have merely concocted another "other-worldly" philosophy. Historians must question this. If unhappily married philosophes felt "they owed it to their philosophy to praise marriage as an institution,"[44] this is dishonest and authoritarian. Peter Gay hardly validates an Enlightenment concept of children as "human beings in their own right" with the comment that at least Rousseau knew how many children he abandoned. That "the philosophes were ungenerous and

prejudiced and still right in substance"[45] demonstrates Gay's acceptance of the doublethink in <u>philosophe</u> ethics. If "relativism was not disinterested but in the service of absolutes," if the <u>philosophes'</u>* concern for morality was the source of their intolerance of the opposition,[46] then they have perverted their own ideal. Historians must clarify how this differs from the irrational righteousness of theology and how "worldly" moralists enlightened mankind with a personal ethic as unlivable ("unnatural"?) as the religious road to salvation, based on an appeal to means seemingly contradictory to the ends. If Hume's moral "program" was impractical "because it was on principle so undoctrinaire,"[47] historians must question their assumptions regarding the humane, relative, skeptical, and tolerant nature of "enlightened" morality and human nature.

If experience and observation interested historians as much as <u>philosophe</u> rhetoric, a Humean Enlightenment would require some serious adjustments to the traditional characterization of "enlightened" morality. John Stewart emphasizes Hume's "wide significance of the word 'moral.'" He contends that "moral subjects" for Hume were "historical subjects, those treating of subject matter in which the changes that take place, and that are described in histories, are traced not to physical causes, but to 'human' causes." In essence, moral subjects were the humanities, social science. He quotes Hume:

> By <u>moral</u> causes I mean all circumstances, which are fitted to work on the mind as motives or reasons, and which render a peculiar set of manners habitual to us. Of this kind are, the nature of the government, the revolutions of public affairs, the plenty or penury in which the people live, the situation of the nation with regard to its neighbours, and such like circumstances.[48]

Mossner notes Hume's unique contribution to philosophy as the "extension of sentiment or feeling beyond ethics and aesthetics . . . to include the entire realm of belief covering all relations of matter-of-fact."[49] For Hume, morality encompassed the whole man--temperament, beliefs, personal experience--in a social whole. Consequently, the study of morality would peruse a broad field, coordinating, rather than compartmentalizing intellectual disciplines, and history, encompassing the totality of man's existence, might well be the most useful and important insight into morals.

The Humean Enlightenment would be committed "to a subjectivist theory of ethics," and on the basis of "useful and agreeable" virtue, it would exclude Kant and Rousseau, who saw virtue as inspirational.[50] Rationalist moral philosophy, which Hume considered more an obstacle to the acceptance of his theory than theological moral philosophy,[51] would be demonstrated to be an eighteenth century variation of an old theme, and the debt of William James and early twentieth century pragmatism to Hume would be more clearly revealed.

The debate over the naivete and prevalence of Enlightenment optimism would be resolved. Only the misrepresentation of Hume's skepticism can characterize his Enlightenment as anything other than optimistic. In fact, he supposed the appeal of his philosophy wherein "moral distinctions [were] deriv'd from so noble a source, which gives us a just notion both of the generosity and capacity of human nature." He asserted that virtue was better served by those "who think favourably of mankind." For "[w]hen a man is prepossessed with a high notion of his rank and character in the creation, he will naturally endeavour to act up to it. . . ." He wrote in the Enquiries:

> All mankind so far resemble the good principle, that, where interest or revenge or envy perverts not our disposition, we are always inclined, from our natural philanthropy, to give the preference to the happiness of society, and consequently to virtue above its opposite. Absolute, unprovoked, disinterested malice has never perhaps place in any human breast; or if it had, must there pervert all the sentiments of morals, as well as the feelings of humanity.[52]

As A. O. Williams observes, for Hume, "moral attributes are derived from human nature, and only make sense in relation to it--our ideas of moral goodness are necessarily ideas of human goodness," and cannot be applied elsewhere (i.e. religion).[53]

As with reason and religion, Hume's thought on morality is valid and relevant in the twentieth century, providing useful and revealing information regarding personal values and social mores (hopefully, an incentive to historians to re-evaluate Hume's thought and its implications for the Enlightenment legacy). Since "only experience . . . teaches us the nature and bounds of cause and effect. . . . [it] is the foundation of moral reasoning, which . . . is the source of all human actions and behaviour."[54] Our notions of morality arise from experience, not from reason or revelation. In his landmark study of American racism, Gunnar Myrdal observes that social and economic experience change attitudes, not rational thought. He notes that "the entire work around 1900 to legalize political discrimination is being rapidly undone by various social trends."[55] If the concept of the American family (and values) is changing, it is despite the prescriptions of traditional Western religious and social values and because of present economic and social realities. More specifically, if feminine virtues are being redefined in American society, it is not due so much to the preaching

of a feminist vanguard as it is to the inadequacy of one income for a family faced with rising prices. Social commentators, who observe a dichotomy between ideals and real life, assert that we are what we do. While we romanticize and advertise an ideal vision, we spend our money and our time on pursuits drastically at odds with the vision, and we end up consternated about the moral degeneracy of our society. Apparently, like the philosophes of the eighteenth century, we proclaim a moral code that is irrelevant to daily life, leaving us to perpetually denigrate ourselves for failing it or to cynicism.[56]

Hume instructed us that "Whoever chuses the means, chuses also the end." The means create (or teach) the end. If our process contradicts our end (goal/ideal), we will pervert the end. Like the contradictory philosophy of means and ends of the philosophes, it is not at all clear how the experience of war and militarism teaches us what it takes to create and live in a peaceful world or how values of extreme competitiveness and winning encourage fair play. Rather we are noticing that an abused child knows how to be an abusive parent and that extreme individualism creates a social "free-for-all" rather than a social conscience.[57] If we desire a certain end, Hume maintained that we must bring the means into line with it. We must pursue means that are an "exercise" in the desired end.

But in determining such, Hume emphasized that reason is not sufficient. If "deterence . . . does not seem to be a reasonable argument in favor of capital punishment," (based on studies of it), retribution, in "satisfying the psychological needs of victims' survivors," explains its appeal. Some observers of controversial issues (like abortion) note that

"what [they] think and how [they] feel . . . are two entirely different matters." As Hume pointed out:

> 'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole
> world to the scratching of my finger. 'Tis not contrary to reason for
> me to choose my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of an
> Indian or person wholly unknown to me. 'Tis as little contrary to
> reason to prefer even my own aknowledg'd lesser good to my greater,
> and have a more ardent affection for the former than the latter.[58]

This conclusion is evidenced in the modern political contention that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice" or in the American major's comment that it was necessary to destroy a Vietnamese city in order to save it.[59] Though contemporary intellectuals, like the philosophes before them, bemoan our inability to be reasonable, especially in terms of our own self-interest, Hume insisted that the happy and peaceful human existence we supposedly long for is not achievable through the rational pursuit of ideals. In truth, Hume's legacy is very much the attempt to wean us from ideals and concern us with practical morality.

Hume's work offers two important insights regarding ideals: (1) that they are virtually meaningless and consequently, useless for daily existence, and (2) for the most part, they can be dangerous. Hume maintained that there is

> no such thing as abstract or general ideas, properly speaking . . . all
> general ideas are, in reality, particular ones, attached to a general
> term, which recalls, upon occasion, other particular ones, that
> resemble, in certain circumstances, the idea, present to the mind.[60]

Therefore, while everyone talked of rights and justice during the American civil rights movement in the 1960s, Martin Luther King, Jr. understood something entirely different from the Attorney General of Mississippi, who

complained that "the constitutional rights of over 5,000 students [had] been ignored to gratify the pretended constitutional rights of one"[61] black student, James Meredith. The particular ideas presented no common ground for the general term of justice. By meaning anything to anybody, ideals are meaningless; they are not relevant/useful in a world of experiential consciousness. Their lack of meaning makes it possible for rhetoric to contradict practical manifestations thereof.

Actually, ideals do not apply to society because public utility, which is changeable and diverse, must be served. By identifying the "sole origin . . . [and] sole . . . merit"[62] of justice to be utility, Hume could explain how a society obsessed with justice is constantly accused of injustice by its own minority populations. If the "plight" of the minority does not seriously endanger the public welfare, justice is under no obligation to address the grievance. Furthermore, those who demonstrate little respect for justice may be those who are poorly served by it, i.e. those for whom it is useless.[63] In his contention that judicial decisions are "founded more on taste and imagination than on any solid argument," Hume is affirmed by the American Supreme Court Justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes:

> What the courts declare to have always been the law . . . is in fact new. It is legislative in its grounds. The very considerations which judges most rarely mention, and always with an apology, are the secret root from which the law draws all the juices of life. I mean, of course, consideration of what is expedient for the community concerned.[64]

Holmes defined the judicial process as "overwhelmingly a means of rationalizing preferred ends."[65]

Besides, or perhaps because, ideals are not commonly comprehensible, Hume warned of the dangers of enthusiastic commitment to them. Those submitting to such an _artificial_ life, "are in a different element from the rest of mankind; and the natural principles of their mind play not with the same regularity, as if left to themselves, free from the illusions of religious superstition or philosophical enthusiasm." In Reinhold Niebuhr's view, "a too-confident sense of justice [which Hume determined particular and arbitrary] always produces injustice."[66] Rather than immutable and perpetual morality, Hume postulated the constant of man's capacity to feel the sentiments of approval and disapproval. Emmanuel Mesthene, director of Harvard's Program on Technology and Society, re-states this theme: "It is not existing values that are valuable but the continuing human ability to extract values from a changing experience and to use and cherish them." To remedy the ambiguity and confusion of moral terms, Hume urged us to "produce the impressions or original sentiments."[67] If justice is ambiguous, compassion is not.

The experiece of our twentieth century world reveals the validity and fascinating possibilities for Hume's concepts of sympathy and utility. According to Hume,

> No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than the propensity we have to sympathize with others and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however, different from, or even contrary to, our own.[68]

However, "the sentiments of others have little influence, when far remov'd from us, and require the relation of contiguity, to make them communicate themselves entirely."[69] In their reports on American racism, both Myrdal

and Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice, recommend expanded

opportunities of more personal individual interaction between whites and

blacks.[70] Myrdal observes the structure of Southern racism in America

deliberately regimenting contacts between whites and blacks so as to keep

such contact "as impersonal as possible." He perceives "one of the effects of

segregation and discrimination is to minimize the number of situations in

which Negroes in desperate need of help appear before whites." By staying

ignorant of the Negro "as an individual human being," the white southerner

sustains "a strained type of systematic human indifference and callousness."

Allport points out the importance of identifying a hated group (a generality)

rather than an individual.

> One human being is, after all, pretty much like another--like oneself.
> One can scarcely help but sympathize with the victim. To attack him
> would be to arouse some pain in ourselves. Our own "body image"
> would be involved, for his body is like our own body. But there is no
> body image of a group. It is more abstract, more impersonal.[71]

Although couched in psychological terms, this is essentially Hume's view.

As our social interactions expand, so does our "sphere" of sympathy

and so do

> the boundaries of justice . . . in proportion to the largeness of men's
> views, and the force of their mutual connexions. History, experience,
> reason sufficiently instruct us in this natural progress of human
> sentiments, and in the gradual enlargement of our regards to justice,
> in proportion as we become acquainted with the extensive utility of
> that virtue.[72]

Certainly, telecommunications (especially television) have expanded our

opportunity to sympathize with African famine victims, Chinese student

protesters, victims of natural disaster or aggression, even a Texas toddler

who fell down a well and was trapped there for hours. Most analysts believe that, if it had not been for television evoking the sympathy of the nation, the American civil rights movement in the South would have been quietly beaten into submission. Television can expose people to different cultures and ethnic groups in a non-threatening way so as to arouse curiosity and appreciation. Although the intermingling of diverse cultures within and over national boundaries does not preclude animosity, in Hume's view our potential for sympathy in conjunction with utility is the basis for improved human relations.

The world realities that result from economic, social, or environmental conditions constitute the foundation for cooperation and accomodation. As Allport observes, the growing interdependence of the earth's inhabitants will present a need for decreased friction.[73] The international market is encouraging, actually necessitiating, an understanding of Asian language and culture, especially Japanese. The futility of another world war has urged us to the careful handling and dissemination of nuclear weapons. The common danger of the disintegrating ozone layer and accidents like that at Chernyobyl require international cooperation in a way no philosophical or theological scheme of ideal existence can. If morality and law (justice) arise from utility, a new sense of international morality, and thus precepts, may be in the making, for Hume proposed that though each man has a particular ambition, "the humanity of one man is the humanity of every one, and the same object touches this passion in all human creatures."[74]

Finally, that sentiment that Hume observed unnamed in the eighteenth century may be conceived and defined in the twentieth century

term of "self-esteem." Apparently, the negative connotations of "pride" (most likely due to the church's influence) have been too difficult to overcome, so the acceptance of this concept, identified by Hume as self-satisfaction, is asserted in modern society/psychology in a new word. Peter Jones observes Hume's notion in essays where the epicurean "argues that worthwhile pleasure cannot result from self-absorption," and the stoic contends that virtue is the "balance between . . . passions" (as opposed to their denial or suppression). Rather than deny the "duty to ourselves" that he observed in even "the most vulgar system of morals," Hume urged an examination of "that duty, in order to see whether it bear any affinity to that which we owe to society." He proposed the probability that the approbation attending the observation of our duties to ourselves and society "is of a similar nature, and arises from similar principles, whatever appellation we may give to either of these excellencies." In John Price's interpretation, the similarities of the approbation we give these duties asserts that "individuals are uniquely responsible for their actions, and they neither should nor can expect that responsibility to be assumed by others. Man . . . is capable either of moral strength or moral weakness, but the decision is exclusively his." While the _philosophes_ devised various plans for the modification of human behavior, which would coerce men to be free and reasonable and virtuous (many ultimately despairing of the possibility), Hume refrained because he understood that no system can truly usurp (at least for long) this decision-making within human beings. John Stewart writes: "Hume's argument is that by every act, by every word and deed, a man expresses his character. Between a man's character and his acts . . . there is no elastic phase, no chance, no unnatural, non-causal relation."[75] The Enlightenment

allegedly freed man to manifest his natural goodness, but actually the philosophes indentured him to new schemes of reform, manifesting his malleability. Although Hume could not guarantee the exercise of man's natural capacities to the "good" of society, his analysis of human potential gives weight to the human desire for happiness through self-satisfaction and posits individual responsibility as fundamental in moral reasoning. If Hume cannot offer man Eden, he does offer him personal dignity.

NOTES

[1]Cassirer, _Philosophy of the Enlgihtenment_, p. 132; Crocker, _Age of Crisis_, p. 100; Cavendish, _David Hume_, p. 86.

[2]Cragg, _Reason and Authority_, pp. 5, 217; Bredvold, _Brave New World_, p. 40.

[3]Heilbroner, _Future as History_, p. 31; Crocker, _Age of Crisis_, p. 450; Manuel, _Age of Reason_, p. 39; Gay, _The Enlightenment_, 2:164, 1:178.

[4]Cavendish, _David Hume_, pp. 86-87; Manuel, _Age of Reason_, p. 44; Baumer, _Modern European Thought_, p. 173.

[5]Manuel, _Age of Reason_, p. 40; Baumer, _Modern European Thought_, p. 180; Cassirer claims that Diderot also "believed in the immutable moral nature of man and in a firm principle of justice arising from this nature. . . ." but then changed to a more empirical conclusion that man's common faculty is not reason but "inclinations, instincts, and appetites," which motivate human behavior. He describes Diderot moving from _a priori_ to utilitarian ethics. _Philosophy of the Enlightenment_, pp. 246-7.

[6]Condorcet considered this a "general law of the moral world." Quoted in Baumer, _Modern European Thought_, pp. 231, 179.

[7]Becker, _Heavenly City_, p. 80; Crocker, _Age of Crisis_, pp. 34, 26.

[8]Cobban, _In Search of Humanity_, pp. 155-6; Dieckmann, "An Interpretation of the Eighteenth Century," p. 306.

[9]Hume, _Enquiries_, pp. 164, 175. Hume wrote that "morality is a subject that interests us above all others: We fancy the peace of society to be at stake in every decision concerning it. . . ." _Treatise_, p. 507. Historians continue to debate the primary focus of Hume's work.

[10]Quoted in R. David Broiles, The Moral Philosophy of David Hume, 2d ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p. 35; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 90.

[11]Hume, Treatise, pp. 521, 225.

[12]Price, David Hume, pp. 100, 150; J. L. Mackie, Hume's Moral Theory (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 144; Mossner notes that Hutcheson criticized Hume for a lack of "Warmth in the Cause of Virtue" in the Treatise. Life of David Hume, p. 134.

[13]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 134; Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. 201; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 91; Hume, Enquiries, pp. 335-6. Collingwood believes that Hume considered human nature unalterable itself, but progress was possible through our better understanding of it. Idea of History, p. 83.

[14]Hume, Treatise, pp. 460-2, 518, 520; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 103. Stewart claims that Hume does not deny reason an "important role in determining our acts." It takes us out of the present (to past and future) and so orders, balances, and restrains our feelings into calm ones. Ibid., pp. 78-79; Hume, Enquiries, p. 293. Hume observes the argument for reason's pre-eminence in moral judgments to be unphilosophical: " . . . say you, the morality consists in the relation of actions to the rule of right; and they are denominated good or ill according as they agree or disagree with it. What then is the rule of right? In what does it consist? How is it determined? By reason, you say, which examines the moral relations of actions. So that moral relations are determined by the comparison of action to rule. And that rule is determined by considering the moral relations of objects. Is this not fine reasoning?" Ibid., pp. 288-9.

[15]Hume, Treatise, pp. 167, 520-1; Enquiries, pp. 290, 102, 225.

[16]Hume, Treatise, pp. 668, 628, 368; Enquiries, p. 222.

[17]Price, David Hume, p. 97.

[18]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 215, 298, 302; "Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature, in Essays, p. 87; Enquiries, pp. 283, 217-9.

[19]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 78, 75.

[20]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 171, 333. In accord with his assertion that an individual's temperament and disposition largely determine his moral choices, Hume acknowledged limitations in his philosophy, actually in all philosophy. If "one is born of so perverse a frame of mind, of so callous and insensible a disposition, as to have no relish for virtue and humanity, no sympathy with his fellow-creatures, no desire of esteem and applause, such a one must be allowed entirely incurable; nor is there any remedy in philosophy. . . . For my part, I know not how I should address myself to such a one, or by what arguments I should endeavour to reform him. . . . nor could I do anything but lament this person's unhappy condition." "The Sceptic," in Essays, p. 172.

[21]Hume, Enquiries, p. 233; Treatise, p. 633.

[22]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 340, 342-3.

[23]Hume, "Of the Dignity or Meanness," in Essays, p. 82-85; Treatise, pp. 526-7.

[24]Hume, Enquiries, p. 324, 314; Treatise, p. 348.

[25]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 61-62.

[26]Hume, Treatise, pp. 668, 628; Enquiries, p. 231, 159-60.

[27]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 165; Mackie, Hume's Moral Theory, p. 152.

[28]Hume, Treatise, p. 620. Hume observes that rather than nature, "education takes possession of the ductile minds of the fair sex in their infancy," thus establishing the acceptable feminine behavior. Ibid., p. 623.

[29]Hume, Enquiries, p. 286.

[30]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 268-9. For these reasons Hume considered "monkish virtues"--"celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude"--to be vices. "A gloomy, hair-brained enthusiast,

after his death, may have a place in the calendar; but will scarcely ever be admitted, when alive, into intimacy and society, except by those who are as delirious and dismal as himself." Ibid., p. 270.

[31]Hume, Treatise, pp. 535, 547; Enquiries, p. 188. For instance, in social crises such as famine or war, legalities of ownership are necessarily ignored. A virtuous man in the clutches of ruffians dispenses with legality or fair play to preserve himself. Warring nations abandon any restraint in the interests of victory, devising new useful rules upon the conflict's end. Treatise, p. 549.

[32]Hume, Treatise, p. 584; Enquiries, p. 304; Treatise, p. 630.

[33]Hume, Treatise, p. 630; Enquiries, p. 289.

[34]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 145.

[35]Broiles, Moral Philosophy of David Hume, pp. 1-3. Broiles disagrees with Smith and others regarding Hume's principle study being morals. He believes Hume studied (in his words) "Human Nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend." Ibid., pp. 35-36; Selby-Bigge, Introduction to Enquiries, by David Hume, p. xxi; Jonathan Harrison, Hume's Moral Epistemology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 124. Harrison, although "fairly critical of Hume's views and arguments," considers him "the greatest of British philosophers and one of the greatest philosophers who have lived anywhere at any time." Ibid., 125; Broiles, Moral Philosophy of David Hume, pp. 41, 94.

[36]Jones, Hume's Sentiments, p. 174; Mackie, Hume's Moral Theory, p. 153, 152; Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:190.

[37]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 179.

[38]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:190.

[39]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:54.

[40]Ibid., p. 55.

[41]Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 73-74.

[42]Ibid., pp. 459-60.

[43]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:35, 33.

[44]Ibid., p. 33.

[45]Ibid., pp. 44, 34-35; 1:324.

[46]Ibid., 2:392; 1:180.

[47]Ibid., p. 401.

[48]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 83, 10-11.

[49]Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 76.

[50]Philippa R. Foot, "Hume on Moral Judgment," in David Hume, ed. Pears, pp. 71, 68.

[51]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 89.

[52]Hume, Treatise, p. 668; "Of the Dignity or Meanness," in Essays, p. 82; Enquiries, p. 227. Hume acknowledged Nero, but questioned if his cruelty was truly voluntary or the "effect of constant fear and resentment." Ibid.

[53]A. O. Williams, "Hume on Religion," in David Hume, ed. Pears, p. 87.

[54]Hume, Enquiries, p. 164.

[55]Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Bros. Publishers, 1944), 1:660, 514.

[56]"Playing Both Mother and Father," Newsweek, 15 July 1985, pp. 42-50; Nicols Fox, "What Are Our Real Values," Newsweek, 13 February 1989, p. 8. Fox notes that "we complain about the invasion of

drugs but our culture tells us that no discomfort can be tolerated and that every desire deserves to be satisfied. We complain about crime but our system demonstrates that good guys finish last--crime pays. We complain about the moral decadence of our young and the high incidence of teen pregnancies but our young have been carefully taught, by example, that responsibility is old-fashioned. We'd like to do something about pornography and violence but we buy it and we tolerate it. . . . "

[57]Hume, Treatise, p. 587. See Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, Steven M. Tipton, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). The 1987 Canadian debate over capital punishment raised the "means and ends" issue. Opponents of capital punishment noted that "execution of an individual is an act of violence, and as such it can never be moral in a society which supposedly abhors violence. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that violence tends to provoke further violence." The sentiment is capsulated in the slogan, "Why kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?" Ronald Sklar, "Canadians Resist Revival of Death Penalty," Dallas Times Herald, 21 October 1987, sec. A, p. 19.

[58]Sklar, "Canadians Resist Revival," p. 19; Rachel Richardson Smith, "Abortion, Right and Wrong," Newsweek, 25 March 1985, p. 16. Hume, quoted in Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. 192.

[59]Barry Goldwater, quoted in William Manchester, The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America 1932-1972, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1973, 1974), 2:1257; Tom Schachtman, Decade of Shocks: Dallas to Watergate, 1963-1974 (New York: Poseidon Press, 1983), p. 180.

[60]Hume, Enquiries, p. 158.

[61]Quoted in Manchester, The Glory and the Dream; 2:1159. The Governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, during the desegregation crisis at Central High in Little Rock wondered, "In the name of God, whom we all revere, in the name of liberty which we hold so dear, which we all cherish, what is happening in America?" Ibid., 2:988.

[62]Hume, Enquiries, p. 183.

[63]The ideal is particularly irrelevant to the Negro, "whose only concern is his daily encounter with the end results of white attitudes." Robert Conot, <u>Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness: The Unforgettable Classic Account of the Watts Riot</u> (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 425.

[64]Hume, <u>Enquiries,</u> p. 309; Holmes, quoted in <u>The Supreme Court Under Earl Warren,</u> ed. Leonard W. Levy (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972), p. 11.

[65]Levy, ed., <u>The Supreme Court,</u> p. 11. Hume maintained that "the rules of equity or justice depend entirely on the particular state and condition in which men are placed." <u>Enquiries,</u> p. 188.

[66]Hume, <u>Enquiries,</u> p. 343; Niebuhr, quoted in Schachtman, <u>Decade of Shocks,</u> p. 20. Novelist Dorothy L. Sayers makes a literary illustration of this point in a conversation between Lord Peter Wimsey and the Warden regarding World War I:
[Lord Wimsey:] " . . . principles have become more dangerous than passions, It's getting uncommonly easy to kill people in large numbers, and the first thing a principle does--if it really is a principle--is to kill somebody."
[Warden:] "'The real tragedy is not the conflict of good with evil but of good with good'; that means a problem with no solution."
[Lord Wimsey:] "Yes. Afflicting, of course, to the tidy mind. One may either hulloo on the inevitable, and be called a bloodthirsty progressive; or one may try to gain time and be called a bloodthirsty reactionnary. But when blood is their argument, all argument is apt to be--merely bloody." <u>Gaudy Night</u> (1964; New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Perennial Library, 1986), p. 330.

[67]Quoted in Schachtman, <u>Decade of Shocks,</u> p. 234; Hume, <u>Enquiries,</u> pp. 61-62. Hume asserted that language was very revealing as to "the manners and customs of different nations." Jones, <u>Hume's Sentiments,</u> p. 142; John Price also observes that the modern age is intrigued "by Hume's discussion of the coextensiveness of ethical speculation and the structure of language." <u>David Hume,</u> p. 150.

[68]Hume, <u>Treatise,</u> p. 367.

[69]Ibid., p. 369.

[70]Myrdal, American Dilemma, p. 654; Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1954), pp. 472, 483, 281.

[71]Myrdal, American Dilemma, 1:607, 616, 657; Allport, Nature of Predjudice, p. 363.

[72]Hume, Enquiries, p. 192.

[73]Allport, Nature of Prejudice, p. 15.

[74]Hume, Enquiries, p. 273.

[75]Jones, Hume's Sentiments, p. 174; Hume, Enquiries, p. 322; Price, David Hume, p. 150; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 74. Although he realized the world applauded other virtues, Hume wrote: "Give me my choice, and I would rather for my own happiness and self-enjoyment, have a friendly, humane heart, than possess all the other virtues of Demosthenes and Philip united. . . ." Enquiries, pp. 315-6.

CHAPTER VII

HUME AND "ENLIGHTENED" POLITICS

Noting that social relevance was the "touchstone of all [the philosophes']

thinking," and that "the quest for a science of politics was one of the great

intellectual adventures of the Enlightenment," historians long have

emphasized the important character and legacy of "enlightened" political

philosophy.[1] At odds regarding any precise consensus on this philosophy,

historians do agree on the reforming inclination of the philosophes to

construct a better, perhaps ideal, society. Some writers describe the

sentiment that social institutions corrupted man's innate goodness. Others

perceive an "enlightened" opinion that socialization rather than nature made

good or bad men. Regardless of disagreement among the philosophes

concerning the basic goodness or evil of human nature, most all believed

that changing society changed man.[2] Therefore, Cobban asserts the

philosophes' interest in "education and legislation . . . the keys to the reform

of society." He observes "politics [as] the practical application of morals,

and. . . . the art of politics . . . that of regulating the passions of mankind and

directing them to the good of society, which is the general interest."

Crocker notes that their "confidence in the power of conditioning processes

increased" as the century progressed and Gay characterizes "enlightened"

politics as a practical science directed "to provide intelligent, humane

administration, and to discover forms of government that would establish,

strengthen, and maintain rational institutions in a rational political

atmosphere."[3] In this drive for reform modern historians discover the seeds of modern liberal politics and "the political attitudes we Americans inherit first hand."[4]

Enamored of Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and especially Rousseau, historians acknowledge and often espouse an "Enlightenment ideology" characterized by natural law, natural rights (especially justice), and a chaotic state of nature harmonized with the law of nature through contract government and the state. Enlightened government was the channel for universal justice and the entire providential design, whether through popular institutions or enlightened despots. Crane Brinton perceives the belief that man could acieve on earth "a state of perfection hitherto in the West thought to be possible only for Christians in a state of grace, and for them only after death." According to Cobban, the "emancipation of politics" occurred in the idea of the secular state,[5] a state presumedly free of ecclesiastical interference and directed by a social philosophy derived from the empirical observation of man's needs and behavior.

Presumably, as in all "enlightened" thought, experience and observation formed the basis of social and political philosophy. Condorcet stated, "The social art . . . is a true science based, like all the others, on experiments, reasoning, and calculation." The application of reason to human society would reveal laws in human relationships similar to those found in physical nature, establishing social science. As Cassirer notes, as knowledge advanced, "a new moral order and a new orientation of the political and social history of man" could be realized.[6]

While characterizing the Age of Reason in terms of empiricism, historians, nevertheless, are well aware of the philosophes' philosophical

deficiencies (although the implications of this crucial contradiction are rarely analyzed). Lester Crocker notes that while the reform programs appeared empirical and scientific, they were "fundamentally rationalistic and even Cartesian." Leonard Krieger writes of doctrines invented by the philosophes to connect "alternative philosophical and political categories." In their travel writings, the philosophes invented

> wise Persians, Chinese, Hindus, Hurons, and South Sea Islanders who, coming in contact with European ways, brought to the criticism of Europe the wisdom of their own points of view. The trouble is that all these yellow, black, brown, and red men, bringing to bear on European problems their own supposedly native wisdom, turn out to be themselves European philosophes, with exactly the same ideas about right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, reason and superstition, nature and convention the other enlightened had.[7]

As for the "father of liberalism," John Locke, C. E. Vaughan notes that the law of nature described in Locke's Civil Government, is an innate idea. "It springs fully armed from the brain of man, at the very dawn of his history. It owes nothing to experience. It is the gift of intuition, pure and simple." Lawrence Wanlass maintains that Locke never reconciled proclaiming "innate concepts" (such as natural rights) with asserting an empirical base for all ideas. According to Sterling Lamprecht, Locke did not derive his principles empirically. Rather, he deduced his philosophy from the effects and "implications of his principles," anchoring their validity "in the nature of things." He evaluated political society in light of the future, rather than its evolution from the past. Consequently, in W. H. Greenleaf's opinion, through an "appeal to natural law and rights based on reason, [Locke] helped to shunt political discussion from the sceptical and empirical to the certain and rationalistic."[8]

Similarly, Montesquieu is judged as "too Cartesian in his approach . . . often us[ing] the facts to support a priori principles." Cobban observes the combination of rationalism and empiricism that persisted throughout the Enlightenment to be most striking in Montesquieu's concept of the nature of law. For him, Nature is not merely "the way things work, but . . . also the way . . . they ought to work. Spirit of the Laws is not "mere academic musings; it is an attempt to change the conditions and ends of political action." Becker concurs in demonstrating the "fundamental role" of "ought" in the Esprit des Lois.

> Open the book anywhere: "Religion and civil law ought to have a tendency to make men good citizens." The laws of chastity "arise from those of nature, and ought to be respected in all nations." The political and civil laws "of each nation ought to be no more than special applications of the law of human reason." Although the principle of a republic is virtue, "this does not mean that in any particular republic the people are virtuous, but that they ought to be so." One might go on indefinitely. It is too obvious to be missed. . . . [9]

He notes D'Alembert's opinion that Montesquieu "occupies himself less with laws that have been made than with those that ought to be made," and concludes that Montesquieu was not "concerned with the laws as they exist, but with some ideal quality of rightness which . . . they ought to have." Voltaire complained that there was no method in Montesquieu's book and that he was uncritical of facts and inaccurate in his citations. Unable to disentangle the complex factors that characterize a national identity, Paul Chamley contends that Montesquieu worked through them with "dogmatic statements" that dismissed numerous inconsistencies, some of which raise serious questions as to the "actual meaning of Montesquieu's tenets relating to national character." In direct contrast to Hume, Montesquieu "leads

empiricism astray," disregarding Hume's warning about hypotheses that propound "the ultimate original qualities of human nature." "Prone to rash deductions . . . , [Montesquieu's] empiricism is pushed almost to a caricature."[10]

Reading Rousseau demonstrates that reasoning need not be clear to be effective philosophy. Although "scarce two agree in his interpretation," his influence is undisputed. He defined the state of nature, a primary tenet in his political scheme, as "a state which no longer exists, perhaps never did exist, and probably never will exist; and of which it is nevertheless necessary to have true ideas in order to form a proper judgment of our present state."[11] So far from accepting human nature (although he asserts its natural goodness), Rousseau proposed changing it through civil religion to mold natural man into his "unnatural" role of citizen.[12] He never tried to prove the paradox of private advantage secured through obedience to the General Will, nor did he explain how to discover the General Will. As Crane Brinton points out

> the ultimate test is a transcendental one, a matter of faith. . . . [His social contract evokes] a feeling for a group will transcending the nominalist limitations of most eighteenth century reason, a feeling that the poltical whole is greater than the sum of its parts, a feeling not unfairly labeled mystical.[13]

It was not observation that Kant learned from Rousseau, but rather the use of thought in the cause of establishing humanity's rights. In Rousseau, E. F. Carritt, Morals and Politics, finds an "inextricable tangle of obscurity, confusion, contradiction, and absurdity." Nevertheless, he long has held a secure, usually revered, position in Enlightenment political history, credited

as the source of political postures from liberal democracy to authoritarian elitism to nationalism.[14]

Other philosophes were likewise remiss as empiricists. Gay writes that despite Voltaire's good history and good politics, "in a revolutionary situation, it seemed, empiricism was not enough," and that when Voltaire's political observations were nonsense, it was because he was uninformed or because he deliberately kept himself uninformed. Ernst Cassirer, observing Diderot to be more visionary than intellectual, comments that he was led by "his ever active and versatile imagination . . . beyond all limits of the strictly demonstrable." Describing the philosophes, Condorcet stated, "Il se forma bientot en Europe une classe d'hommes moins occupees encore de decouvrir ou approfondir la verite que de la repandre." In Gay's opinion, Cesare Beccaria's science of law was "less empirical and more deductive" than that of Montesquieu and the Scottish school, "offer[ing] partial observations as total history." Apparently, rather than empirical politics,

> the political and moral thinking of early modern times had by the eighteenth century turned definitely into rationalist channels. But the result was not so much a science of politics as another political ideology, or rather a group of ideologies.

> Nature and Reason . . . were to the Enlightenment what . . . grace, salvation, and predestination were to traditional Christianity.[15]

With Hume, however, historians remark upon the objective and consistently empirical basis of his political thought. Gay notes Hume's use of political philosophy, but acknowledges the mainspring of his political thought to be the observable world around him. F. A. Hayek counts Hume among a select minority of social theorists cognizant "of the connection between the rules men obey and the order which is formed as a result."

According to Frederick Watkins, Hume never lost sight of "the empirically discoverable facts of politics" and shifted the basis of social and political normative judgment to "the plane of concrete historical experience" from that of pure reason. Cobban points out that Hume eschewed "hypothetical constructions, or fictions masquerading as truth," preferring the simpler, more direct explanations of observable experience. Some historians attribute the consistency of Hume's thought to this empiricism, which was a "ruthless application of Newton's 'chief rules of philosophizing,' 'explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes.'" For Sheldon Wolin, Hume's significance lies in his sensitivity to "the workings of actual institutions." Avoiding the concepts of freedom, will, rights, and virtues, Hume looked rather to patterns of human behavior, past and present.[16]

Rather than political philosophy, then, Hume worked to further a science of politics. This endeavor could reveal the "optimal arrangement" of different structures, but only through the empirical observation of the actual workings of these structures. It could never reveal the true or ideal political organization for man, but as the conclusions of physical science were similarly incapable of demonstrable truth, this deficiency did not preclude a political science. The study, however, would be more difficult because of the variety and scarcity of data. Method, then, was crucial in formulating accurate conclusions. Hume studied history and observed the contemporary workings of actual states. He drew inferences and proposed probabilities; he did not stipulate principles. As Robert Ginsberg notes, for Hume, the "only truths of politics . . . are behaviorable laws detectable in our experience."[17]

Asserting the relativity in time and place of morality, Hume advised that "all general maxims in politics ought to be established with great caution [because] irregular and extraordinary appearances are frequently discovered in the moral, as well as in the physical world." Hume's method (presumably that of the Enlightenment) urged him to caution readers and writers that the world was too young "to fix many general truths in politics which will remain true to the latest posterity." Obstacles to such postulating include the insufficient data produced over three thousand years of history, the imperfection of the art of reasoning in political science, and the ultimate variable--man himself. "It is not fully known what degree of refinement, either in virtue or vice, human nature is susceptible of, nor what may be expected from any great revolution in their education, customs, or principles." He noted that time and experience had refuted practically all Machiavelli's maxims in The Prince and that any writer of his (Hume's) age would be similarly corrected upon the experience of posterity.[18] The most carefully formulated conclusions cannot survive contradictory experience.

Hume's political observations do not just differ from the Enlightenment mainstream, they expressly deny the era's most fundamental theories. His most devastating critique of the philosophes' cosmology was his explicit rejection of the philosophy of natural law,[19] the keystone in the Enlightenment's harmonious universe. As it was impossible to demonstrate the existence or truth of a natural law, Hume was aware of the futility, even danger, of debating the status quo on a natural law basis. No particular natural law doctrine was as ominous as "the transcendent character of natural law itself." "To deprive it of that character became the first

objective of his political thought." Hume labelled <u>observable</u> norms of political and social conduct as natural. Common standards were "laws of nature," but they were always artificial--products of social experience,[20] not pre-existing (or eternal) metaphysical norms. In Hume's view, if man did it, it was natural; if all men tended to do it, it was a natural, but not an immutable, "law." Hume's political science, then, allows of no undemonstrable natural law directive to the foundation of society or government.

In similar fashion, Hume discarded the "philosophical fiction" of the state of nature. He attacked the concept "on historical, on mythological, and on moral gounds,"[21] and held that man's "very first state and situation may justly be esteemed social." The Hobbesian and Lockian description of savage, selfish, and untrustworthy "natural" man in an environment of chaos and perpetual war was preposterous for Hume. If it ever existed, Hume doubted that it could be maintained long enough to be designated a "state."[22] Furthermore, the real disadvantage of this state (then or in the absence of government now) "would not be hostility among men, but rather the general scarcity of a secure and bountiful supply of economic goods." Conditions would be primitive, but constant "'war of all against all' would not prevail." Some sort of social order has always been necessary and man has always been capable of satisfying that need. As John Steart observes, for Hume, "the basic step in the civilization of men is not one that was taken long ago, but rather is one that is repeated in the experience and education of each child."[23] Man is born to society; he has never "gone it alone."

In his <u>Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals</u>, Hume observed that "men are necessarily born in a family-society, at least; and are trained

up by their parents to some rule of conduct and behaviour." In "Of the Origin of Government," he stated that men are "compelled to maintain society from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit."[24] Society was never a rational decision by some people to escape "from the inconveniences of a state of nature."[25] Despite the assumptions of Hobbes and Locke, Hume observed that man cannot come into the world except through some sort of social (familial) relationship and, contrary to Rousseau, he denied that society is unnatural and an influence of perversion on the human spirit. It is the isolated and withdrawn man that is "unnatural." As John Stewart understands Hume, "To live in the world is to become civilized." To understand the individual, one must study him in his social setting. In Hume's Philosophical Politics, Duncan Forbes interprets Hume to mean that man cannot "become conscious of himself at all apart from society." Men's interdependence is psychological as well as material; they seek the approval of others, refer to them in judging themselves, and are molded in their belief by the group to which they belong. Forbes notes that this awareness makes Hume's study broader than psychology and his "appreciation of the variety of mankind can hardly be described as superficial."[26]

In his analysis of this variety, Hume's method refuted Montesquieu's "empirical" theory that physical causes solely differentiate mankind. He denied any essential (or necessary) influence of the physical environment on man's "temper or genius." Rather, he ascribed the moral causes of national character to various, even haphazard "circumstances which are fitted to work on the mind as motives or reasons, and which render a peculiar set of manners habitual to us." In nine empirical/behavioral

examples, Hume methodically dismantled Montesquieu's theory.[27] He wrote that while climate could affect "the grosser and more bodily organs of our frame," it did not affect "those finer organs on which the operation of the mind and understanding depend." Rather than precise and standard characterizations of nations, Hume maintained the inevitability of change in "the manners of a people . . . either by great alterations in their government, by the mixture of new people, or by the inconstancy to which all human affairs are subject."[28] Paul Chamley credits Hume with correcting Montesquieu's error of "superficial and abstract" conceptions of relationships and his grossly materialistic anthropology.[29]

While maintaining the utility, even necessity of government, Hume devastated the contract theory. As an empiricist, he dismissed it for lack of evidence; as a logician, he pointed out that the social contract "implies a preceding agreement that contracts should be kept." It required "the conditions that it is supposed to create."[30] The most untenable aspect of the contract origin of government is consent. Hume, referring to Locke, stated that "philosophers who have embraced a party (if that not be a contradiction in terms)," are not content with the available facts regarding the origin of government, but insist that original and existing government was founded on a promise of obedience made by individuals to their ruler, conditional on the sovereign's maintenance of justice and protection. The promise instituted authority and preserved a right to resistance. Blatantly observable experience, however, demonstrated that princes "claim their subjects as their property and assert their independent right of sovereignty from conquest or succession" and that "subjects acknowledge this right in

their prince, and suppose thenselves born under obligation of obedience to a certain sovereign."

> It is strange that an act of the mind, which every individual is supposed to have formed, and after he came to the use of reason too, otherwise it could have no authority; that this act . . . should be so much unknown to all of them, that over the face of the whole earth, there scarcely remain any traces or memory of it.[31]

If some sort of voluntary agreement was made in primitive times, "history and experience in any age or country of the world" denied its continued authority over time. In fact, experience teaches that the time when the people's consent is least regarded is the forming of a new government be it through conquest or usurpation, through "smooth transition" (as in marriage or a will, when the people are "disposed of like a dowry or a legacy according to the pleasure or interest of their rulers"), or through election (when "a few great men . . . decide for the whole . . . or the fury of a multitude [presents] . . . a seditious ringleader who is not known . . . to a dozen among them). Governments are maintained through violence, intrigue, manipulation and people obey initially out of fear and after a time out of obligation "because they think that, from long possession, [the prince] has acquired a title independent of their choice or inclination." Hume made a particularly astute observation in refuting even tacit consent.

> Can we seriously say that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives from day to day by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master, thought he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean and perish the moment he leaves her.[32]

Princes do forbid their subjects to leave their dominion, and continue to claim colonists, who remove to distant parts. Experience demonstrates that people do not and have never given promise or consent to authority; they are born to it. Government does not consider its authority based on consent--a rebel is not given consideration of consent upon a rebellious act; he is punished. People do recognize submission to government to which they did not consent. "Nothing is a clearer proof that a theory of [consent] is erroneous than to find that it leads to paradoxes repugnant to the common sentiments of mankind, and to the practice and opinion of all nations and all ages."[33]

Hume's own political theory, however, is not a convenient study. Since he compiled no major political treatise, his ideas must be picked out from the entire corpus of his writings. Rather than a rational and deliberate societal construct, Hume observed an evolution of social institutions. As Anthony Flew and Sheldon Wolin understand him, men "stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design." That which is "habitual and therefore, 'natural'" does not bespeak rationality. In fact, deliberate attempts to apply reason to society can be misguided if they are unrelated to human nature. A reasonable theorist or law-maker "unacquainted with human nature" could form rules of justice "which, in speculation, may seem the most advantageous to society, [but] may . . . be found, in practice, totally pernicious and destructive."[34] To be beneficial, rules must reflect and grow out of actual human capacities and behaviors.[35]

In Hume's view, man developed his social organization to "supply his defects, and raise himself up to an equality with his fellow creatures, and

even acquire a superiority above them." Society augments the individual's power by conjunction of forces; it increases ability through the division of labor, and it ameliorates the influence of fortune and accidents through mutual succour. In Stewart's analysis, society is "primarily an economic relationship, so that trading, not warring, is the most natural and, therefore, the most advantageous relation among societies." In direct contrast to the redemptive character of Hobbes's and Locke's government, Hume maintained that "the state of society without government is one of the most natural states of men, and must subsist with the conjunction of many families, and long after the first generation." In fact, it is only an "increase of riches and possessions that could oblige men to quit it."[36] Men can live and interact without government, but not without justice.

The true origin of government was force or violence arising not within a society, but among different societies. Monarchy was the first form of government, based on the efficiency of a single war-time leader, not the patriarchal experience of family. Force, by the prince, established a pattern of authority until time and habit accustomed men to compliant obedience. Obedience was maintained through the subjects' perceived interest in submitting to authority. Government transcends man's passion for the immediate present by creating a situation where it is the immediate interest of particular individuals to promote the long-term general interests through the execution of justice. As Robert Ginsberg observes, Hume "exchanged the rational foundation of the social contract for the empirical foundation of passionate self-interest."[37]

Hume established a secular origin of government. It was (is) not man's wickedness that necessitated its institution. Rather, our inadequate

"ability to see our long run good," the accumulation in a social unit of "great and unequal wealth," and the expansion of the market "to embrace men totally unknown to us" urges upon us the benefits of government. If God has a hand in it, it is only in that he created man needful of social interaction, which is well-served by government.[38]

Hume admonished all theorists and parties interested in reforms or the pursuit of "ideal" government that such endeavors do not start from scratch. All institutions and beliefs have a history that must be incorporated into any innovations[39] and peace is best served by stability and moderation. Consequently, ideal or rational schemes of "rights"--natural or contractual-- obscure our comprehension of the artificial (i.e. historical/evolutionary) nature of government and society and probably subvert the beneficial implementation of or adjustment to the change that is inevitable in human existence.

Hume then demystifies the rights to authority and rebellion, defining them in terms of the situation of human nature and behavior rather than incomprehensible tenets of immutable schemes. For Hume, the observable reality (and the basis of his denial of contract government) was that the "right to authority is nothing but the constant possession of authority maintained by the laws of society and the interests of mankind."

> No maxim is more conformable, both to prudence and morals, than to submit quietly to the government which we find established in the country where we happen to live, without inquiring too curiously into its origins and first establishment. Few governments will bear being examined so rigorously [regarding righteous institution].[40]

It is familiarity and habit that creates the assumption of righteousness. Hume's "circumstances" of legitimate rule do not necessarily provide the

ablest ruler but rather the one whose right to rule people will best recognize. Stewart observes, "Rights to govern are means, means to the performance of the work of a government." Because most men are "governed by authority, not reason," established government has the advantage in commanding allegiance, simply because it is established.[41] Herein lies the empirical explanation of why the multitude submits to the few: most people have no practical alternative,[42] and they do sense that without obedience society could not exist. We assume that we are "born to submission" and that "particular persons have a right to command."[43] Therefore, although the government's power is curtailed "by the motives of the obedience which makes government possible," Hume pointed out the irrational and widely permissive, or submissive, nature of those motives. In light of experience, he denied Locke's contention "that absolute monarchy is inconsistent with civil society" because it cannot take a man's property without his consent. It can and it does.[44]

Aware that "all human institutions, and none more than government, are in continual fluctuation," Hume was, nevertheless, critical of the doctrine and act of revolution. Justified by most _philosophes_ in terms of the theory of the origin of government, Hume refuted it in terms of history and its probable effects on society. Historically, Hume saw rebellion as a major cause of tyranny because of the fear and suspicion it bred in rulers. Also, Hume considered civil war one of the greatest human catastrophes, perceiving that men "are more apt to ascribe a right to successful violence, betwixt one sovereign and another, than to successful rebellion of a subject against his sovereign." The legitimacy of the new government of "rebels" would be difficult to assert. Furthermore, historically, civil war tends to

resolve in dictatorship. However, although submission is the common rule, men do allow exceptions for grievous instances of tyranny and although particular rules denoting appropriate circumstances for rebellion cannot be devised, men retain the right of resistance "since it is impossible, even in the most despotic governments, to deprive them of it."[45]

On these assumptions regarding legitimate rule and the duty of obedience is government based. "It is . . . on opinion only that government is founded, and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments as well as to the most free and most popular." Opinion is the basis of government's power and its fragility. Opinion does not demonstrate universal truth. It is particular, qualified, and arbitrary; it is changeable, never absolute. Yet opinion is the mortar of our political building blocks. We do not obey rules because they make sense to us. Obligation is a result of our feeling about the rules and obedience creates power.[46]

Through government men are better secured against their own and others' "weakness and passion" and "begin to taste at ease the sweets of society and mutual assistance." Nevertheless, despite the potential of such great benefits, Hume's data, exacted from history and experience, could not determine the ideal form of government. He observed that "democracies are turbulent," their urban population susceptible to "popular tides and currents," while aristocracies, "better adapted for peace and order . . . are jealous and oppressive."[47] Guides to good government, not idealistic formulas, can be the product of the science of politics, but as John Stewart reads Hume,

> we must always distinguish . . . between the ideal form of
> commonwealth and the best form of government for any particular

> place and time, because any existing form, even if highly imperfect, has the great advantage of being actual. To be good, a constitution must be one to which men give obedience. To be obeyed, it is not enough to be ideal. Long establishment may be far more important.[48]

Robert Ginsberg notes that for Hume the best state does not replace undesirable aspects of politics with "a new kind of moral life," rather it refines present habits and acknowledges the passions of men "in order to reach a balance." Good government does not require rulers of "extraordinary personal virtue," but they must be "neutral and disinterested." In advising that emergency power be left vague, Hume insisted that there are no ideal words or formulas and men's discretion is an ultimate determinant.[49]

Hume was no reformer in the "enlightened" or twentieth century understanding of the word. Maintaining that "all plans of government which suppose great reformation in the manners of mankind are plainly imaginary," he warned sovereigns to "take mankind as they find them."

> A long course of time, with a variety of accidents and circumstances, are requisite to produce those great revolutions, which so much diversify the face of human affairs. And the less natural any set of principles are, which support a particular society, the more difficulty will a legislator meet with in raising and cultivating them. It is his best policy to comply with the common bent of mankind, and give it all the improvements of which it is susceptible.[50]

Nor was Hume so ardent in the cause of social stability that he rationalized schemes of social control. The canaille was grounds for the utilitarian justification of the despotism of Hobbes, accepted by "the enlightened reform statesmen of the eighteenth century," such as Montesquieu, Holbach, Voltaire, Grimm, and Diderot. Although Hume

described the common people as "unfit for any science and ingenious profession," he attributed their condition to the "poverty and hard labour" which debase their minds. John Stewart notes that Hume would not dismiss them as foolish, since they were correct in many of their opinions. In fact, the increased experience of mankind has demonstrated that "the people are no such dangerous monsters as they have been represented, and that it is in every respect better to guide them like rational creatures than to lead or drive them like brute beasts." The habit of free discussion of public affairs could actually improve their judgment, which in the environs of their own experience--local assemblies--was good.[51]

As Robert McRae comments in "Hume as a Political Philosopher," for Hume

> institutions are products of human invention, not of superhuman or subhuman forces gradually unfolding their effects in history. Such development as there is in time is the work of man himself, as he overcomes prejudices, superstition, or enthusiasm to achieve the enlightened control of human affairs. . . . [H]e indulged no great expectations of increase in enlightenment. He was no reformer, though as a 'spectator' of history, he was interested in the sort of political conditions most conducive to increase in enlightenment.[52]

Rather than "rationalistic conceptions" of things that never existed in human experience (and for that reason, are incomprehensible, elusive, perhaps even "inhuman"), Hume offered politics as "an art of the possible," based on the observable facts that man is a social animal "dependent less upon positive law than upon social convention and habit." He postulated what Crane Brinton calls "realistic, pessimistic democracy--a democracy in which ordinary citizens approach morals and politics with the willingness to cope with imperfection that characterizes the good farmer, the good

physician, the good holder of the cure of souls." The most demanding, but possibly the most successful, of human cultures. For Hume, politics "is an art of moderation;"[53] he offered us the truly secular state.

Whereas Hobbes and Locke "treated the particular state as the universal political whole, . . . their interest . . . confined almost entirely to the relations among subjects and between the subject and his government," Hume observed relations among men, primarily the economic ones, which are served by justice. The state is inferior to the economic order; it is merely a "means to justice." Government was to increase, not supplant, individual initiative

> by insuring that men can safely follow the patterns of personal and social conduct suitable to human beings. The proper function of government is to provide confirming support to the personal and social relationships. Governments have no missions aside from the purposes of individuals; in relation to those purposes their task is that of an auxiliary, namely, to promote the implicit economic order and the implicit personal orders to develop as fully as possible.[54]

The distinctive secularity of Hume's politics, especially embodied in the state, seems best represented in philosophical, rather than historical, studies. According to Anthony Flew, "for Hume legitimate owners are, typically, flesh and blood individuals. For others, all, or at any rate most, property is properly and in the first instance vested in a collectivity, the people, or society; and hence, in practice, in the state." Sheldon Wolin notes that "Hume made no sharp distinction between government and society." Plamenatz states that Hume's "government . . . is not the maintainer of an eternal justice directly apprehended by reason; it is a device which makes it the immediate interest of some persons to promote the permanent interest of everyone." In John Stewart's interpretation, Hume's "state is an auxiliary,

secondary order which has no sufficient purpose" other than a reward-and-punishment support for the principles of justice. Government should secure property and contracts and "restrain dangerous hysteria." Hume "leaves the dynastic or national state . . . bare and exposed, stripped of grandeur and mystery." Distinguishing Hume from Burke, Plamenatz comments that "Hume is quite without reverence or admiration; he sees nothing divine or majestic about the State; it is merely a contrivance in the public interest." Frederick Watkins writes that Hume "never went so far as to regard the state itself as an exclusive source of social and political values." Noting the tradition of political thought to be that of a "unified . . . monistic view of politics in systems dominated by an idee maitresse," Thomas Cook esteems Hume as a pluralist thinker, who espoused "multivalued" ethics. Hume "has no single central theme--no sovereign state above, no system of constitutional rights and method as sovereign, no sovereign community, no sovereign individual--but spheres and orderings and counterbalancings and contingencies."[55]

For Hume, the rule of thumb for good government was the safety and happiness of the people.

> The maxim . . . let justice be performed, though the universe be destroyed, is apparently false, and by sacrificing the end to the means, shows a preposterous idea of the subordination of duties. . . . [C]ommon sense teaches us, that as government binds us to obedience, only on account of its tendency to public utility, that duty must always, in extraordinary cases, when public ruin would evidently attend obedience, yield to the primary and original obligation. . . . [T]he safety of the people is the supreme law.[56]

Therefore, he maintained that it is in the preservation of its people and industry that government keeps its gold and silver. Foreign war is

especially pernicious; it "often springs from the greatest and most unexpected Absurdity, and discourages every Project for serving or improving human Society."[57]

Eschewing simplistic and meaningless references to the "general welfare," Hume's concepts of moderation and the public weal present an astute assessment of the economic power structure of society. He observed that industry, arts, and trade make for a powerful sovereign and a happy people, but he also articulated the advantage in a large segment of the population enjoying the "productions" of "mechanical arts."

> A too great disproportion among the citizens weakens any state. Every person, if possible, ought to enjoy the fruits of his labor, in a full possession of all the necessaries, and many of the conveniences of life. No one can doubt but such an equality is most stable to human nature, and diminishes much less from the happiness of the rich, than it adds to that of the poor.[58]

The benefit to the state is voluntary and regular tax payments from a population, where the dispersed wealth makes the burden lighter. Hume further noted that the concentrated power that results from riches in the hands of a few, generally leads to attempts to lay the tax burden on the poor. When labor is accustomed to low wages and keeping little of it,

> it is difficult for them, even in a free government, to better their condition, or conspire among themselves to heighten their wages; but even where they are accustomed to a more plentiful way of life, it is easy for the rich, in an arbitrary government, to conspire against them, and throw the whole burden of the taxes on their shoulders.[59]

Hume's sense of social responsibility (or sympathy) transcends the equitable administration of government. His opinion is noticeably devoid of chastisements of the poor for idleness and unwillingness to work. He saw

the disadvantage of some citizens as a social problem requiring society's
attention.

> Men must have profits proportionable to their expense and hazard.
> Where so considerable a number of the labouring poor, as the
> peasants and farmers, are in very low circumstances, all the rest must
> partake of their poverty, whether the government of that nation be
> monarchical or republican.[60]

In Duncan Forbes's summation, Hume wrote to demonstrate that
good government is not inevitable, rather "political civilization is a
precarious thing." He meant to

> reveal the illusion of . . . a primeval perfection . . . ,to instruct men to
> cherish their present constitution . . . [and] to instruct them "in the
> great mixture of accident . . . with a small ingredient of wisdom and
> foresight, [that] erect[s] the complicated fabric of the most perfect
> government."[61]

Rather than institutional formulas and rationales, Hume emphasized a
modus vivendi, a means that, from his observation of human nature, might
best make men happy, rather than make them good. For Hume, the
perpetuity of even a "perfect commonwealth" was the subject of worthless
debate for "the world itself probably is not immortal." Even best-laid plans
are always subject to "enthusiasm or other extraordinary movements of the
human mind;" the most accurate political machine can rust. For example,
Hume warned that authority need be guarded with less jealousy than
liberty because it is absolutely essential to society and therefore, must
support itself. Liberty, however, "only contributes to [society's] perfection,
which the indolence of men is so apt to neglect or their ignorance to
overlook." Since man is preoccupied with the present and generally
unmindful of the future, it is enough (and worth the effort to institute it)

that good government "would flourish for many ages, without pretending to bestow on any work of man that immortality which the Almighty seems to have refused to his own productions."[62] Man should not burden himself and others with trying to realize an eternal ideal that God himself neglects.

In "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth," Hume described (in the interests of reviving speculation) "a form of government, to which I cannot, in theory, discover any considerable objection." John Plamenatz calls it "elaborate, ingenious, and moderate." And this is Hume's essential "prescription": "moderation in all our political controversies." "In every respect a gentle government is preferable and gives the greatest security to the sovereign as well as the subject."[63]

The Enlightenment's political legacy is certainly the most prevalent theme in Enlightenment studies and its inadequate and inaccurate assessment is at first apparent in the inadequate and inaccurate assessment of Hume, especially by Enlightenment historians. That Hume could pronounce the "most devastating, though not necessarily the most influential criticism of the contractual argument,"[64] suggests that his contemporaries were, and Enlightenment scholars are, not prepared to concede the philosophical (reasonable) demonstration that would require the abandonment of a beloved fiction. A study recognizing Hume as "the greatest legal philosopher whom Britain produced before Bentham" should challenge the traditional Enlightenment program of political values.[65] One that credits Marx as the first to shatter the "belief of the Enlightenment in the decisive power of individual reason," or one that asks in reference to Edmund Burke, "What other political thinker has dwelt on the importance

of manners or considered it pertinent to his subject?" either requires substantial clarification or is remiss in its scholarship.[66]

The studies that do treat Hume's politics offer such variety in their interpretation as to suggest great complexity or inconsistency in Hume's thought or a writer's own Enlightenment or philosophical bias. As Hume is generally acknowledged to be remarkably consistent, Enlightenment history and Hume studies are either inadequate or demonstrative of scholarly bias and personal temperament. Hume has been designated a "strong advocate of conservatism," a distinctive conservative, "a conservative rationalist," utilitarian, therefore, conservative, and "a Tory of a peculiar kind." There is also the proposal that Hume "transcended conservatism."[67] On the other hand, he has been characterized as a "typical eighteenth-century liberal," a conservatized liberal, opening perspectives for liberalism, and giving "us probably the only comprehensive statement of the legal and political philosophy which later became known as liberalism." Hayek contends that in Hume, not Locke, is liberal doctrine fully stated and that Hume's fair handling of Tories in History of England and his criticism of Whigs wrongfully labelled him a Tory. Gay concludes that "if [Hume] was not a radical, he was not a conservative either." Wolin summarizes the controversy, noting that Hume has been attached to Burke, in opposition to eighteenth century rationalism, and designated a "forerunner of the 'philosophical radicalism' of Bentham, Adam Smith, James Mill, and Ricardo."[68] The neglect, the misinterpretation or misrepresentation of Hume in Enlightenment political histories, reveals more about Enlightenment historians than Hume and their seriously mistaken concept of the secular state.

The difficulty of Hume for scholars lies in their own enthusiasm for reform and idealism, their own commitment to the Enlightenment they have created. Consequently, Hume is either forced into the "reformist" mainstream of the Enlightenment or is faulted for being outside it. Peter Gay acknowledges Hume's skepticism of the state of nature, natural law, and the social contract but claims that Hume shared the aims of liberalism with the philosophes, if not their reasoning. He asserts that Hume, in "Idea of a Perfect Comonwealth," "explicitly designed his personal utopia as a possible basis for future large-scale reform." Hume, however, merely claimed to be encouraging further speculation on the subject. His method of converting a doctrinaire antagonist was "to leave him to himself. For, finding that nobody keeps up the controversy with him, it is probable he will, at last, of himself from mere weariness, come over to the side of common sense and reason."[69] On this account he must be completely distinguished from the reforming zeal and schemes of the French philosophes and utilitarians. The fact that Hume, like most of mankind, hoped for a "better world" is a meaningless basis for his inclusion among the "enlightened" reformers.

Other writers do except him from the Enlightenment norm and critique him from the Enlightenment vantage point. While crediting Hume with establishing a better foundation for "normative concerns in politics," Robert Ginsberg, nevertheless, criticizes him for being too cautious in "his distrust of the ideal," too recalcitrant of the gamble of "the pioneering social programme." Because he did not consider the "truth and propriety" of ideas "apart from who advocate[s] them or what others might think of them," Hume did not take a stand on morality. Since he did not found the state on

what is right, he "abandons politics to might" and "accepts the status quo."
Actually, Hume credits monarchy with precisely that ability to "pioneer"--
"break through ancient customs" and remedy abuses--because of its position
in the opinion of its subjects. John Plamenatz argues that

> Hume does not rule out as harmful and absurd every broad scheme of
> improvement. Innovation can be large and yet beneficial, provided it
> is slow and cautious; provided those who undertake it attempt only a
> little at a time and always take care how what they do affects the
> people.[70]

Also, Hume precisely denied (at least, our ability to know) any truth
independent of an "advocate" or opinion. Morality is a matter of taste. His
philosophy cannot take a stand on morality nor identify a righteous
foundation for the state. Impossible of definition, "right" is impossible of
rational, universal agreement. Who, then, will decide, among all the
religious, occupational, familial, and personal attitudes of "right," which is to
characterize government? To which view of morality would Ginsberg
entrust the state--Joseph McCarthy, pro-lifers, the Liberty Foundation, gay
liberationists, the American Civil Liberties Union? Hume was well aware
that the power that is the state can never be presumed righteous because it
exists, and no change in that status quo can be presumed righteous because
it succeeds. Righteousness is never implicit in power nor victory, be it
legally or violently achieved. Sympathy, rather than truth, is Hume's basis
for "reform."

Thomas Cook, in agreement with John Stewart, faults Hume for not
recognizing the human needs served by religion and, consequently, for
making no prescriptions. Cook pronounces the need for "an adequate
political philosophy . . . to unite reason and emotion, to conserve and to

create. It must indeed be the religion of humanity" to respond to man's search for meaning.[71] Hume seems positively insightful regarding the human needs disserved by religion and "prescribed" philosophy (skepticism), tolerance, moderation, and self-knowledge in its place. Furthermore, experience indicates that ascribing a spiritual imperative to political philosophy, as Cook proposes, leads not to a one-world humanity, but rather the spiritual state, at war with infidels, apostates, and heretics within and without its borders. Cook's is typical Enlightenment rhetoric and, as Hume demonstrated, historically, it has had destructive effects. Committed to a post-war belief in a duty for peace and therefore inclined to Kant, Carl Joachim Friedrich blatantly misreads Hume. Accusing him of "preconceived ideas of what is right," and "abstract and doctrinaire rationalization," such as the "interest of mankind and the necessities of human society," Friedrich contends that Hume would prefer England "a despotic kingdom than a democracy, because people would be happier." Actually, Hume based the preference on the practical circumstances of altering the British constitution in his day and the likely unbeneficial results. In fact, Hume wrote that if destroying the constitution is the goal, absolute monarchy would be the "easiest death."[72] Friedrich asserts Hume's assumption that the authorities are right in whatever they do and his suggestion "that we do not . . . concern ourselves with how authority arose." Hume said that men do not (or are not allowed to) concern themselves, not that they ought not. Why else would the origin and legitimacy of authority be so central to Hume's own published philosophy?[73] So enamored of Kant's assertion that might can never establish right, Friedrich completely overlooks Hume's.

By denying imperatives, Frederick Watkins thinks Hume was limited in acknowledging the ability for change over time and was wrong to generalize the uniformity he observed in his day as normative.[74] Both he and Ginsberg were wrong to assume Hume's acceptance of the status quo as normative, if they understand "normative" to mean ultimate or immutable, rather than common. For Hume normative theory is relative to time and place and is best altered by time and circumstances rather than rational evaluation and prescription.

John Plamenatz maintains that Hume believed property "rules must never be changed," and that by denouncing ideological conflicts as absurd and harmful, he missed the intimate connection between principles and interests.[75] Hume perceived that particular interests were obscured by principles, which were too general and ambiguous for meaningful defini-tion, hence the absurdity of ideological conflict and its potential danger.

Even Carl Becker, correct in his characterization of the Enlightenment, mistakenly includes Hume in it. "They [the philosophes] did not ask how society had come to be what it was, but how it could be made better than it was."[76] The evolution of society was precisely Hume's study.

The pernicious result of this enthusiasm among Enlightenment scholars for their historical creation has been the oversight or denial of the authoritarian legacy of the Enlightenment. A few historians have perceived this heritage only to receive outraged correction from fellow researchers. Becker fomented a "Counter-Revisionist" movement wherein few grasp the implications in Crane Brinton's observation that for most philosophes "the old authority . . . was bad, not the principle of authority; authority in the

hands of men trained to use enlightened reason was all right--was, in fact, necessary."[77]

Rousseau and Diderot concluded that "the cure for . . . civilization is more, and authentic, civilization." D'Alembert states that although he would not equate progress with happiness, he would not abandon civilization for making men unhappy.[78] Holbach considered the manager of "human affairs, the scientific moralists and law givers, the educators, the statesmen," to be "gardeners who can by varying systems of cultivation alter the character of men as they would alter the form of trees."[79] Helvetius proposed "the scientific application of education and legislation to society and . . . a system of rewards and penalties" in order to create his "harmony of interests."[80] Although Peter Gay acknowledges that the philosophes' low opinion of the masses was the "central weakness in [their] political thought," opening them to the charge of superficial thinking, he, nevertheless, resists the authoritarian implications of this attitude by characterizing it as only "perceptions . . . not a theory,"[81] opening himself to a similar charge. If textbook authors observe that "nowhere did the humanity and the liberalism of the Enlightenment ultimately have a more difficult time surviving and entering the mainstream of life and thought than in those states that had had 'enlightened' rulers,"[82] then they should be intrigued by the implications. If Enlightenment ideals could not take root under "enlightened" rulers, then either the ideals or the rulers require re-definition in the interests of historical clarity and meaning. Historians must either drop the concept of "enlightened despots" (seemingly an oxymoron in terms of "enlightened" ideals) or acknowledge that the Enlightenment never defined its terms or a useful process of applying them to real experience

(the alleged foundation of Enlightenment justification). They must admit that the Enlightenment bequeathed us righteous rhetoric, an inflammatory support for righteous authority no more valid than authority that appealed to revealed (Scriptural) truth. Historians must admit that many of them perpetuate the "Enlightenment lie," useless, even pernicious, in the twentieth century.

Seduced by the impassioned and noble rhetoric, many historians fail to analyze the "enlightened" process of devising a world view and applying principle to practice successfully, i.e. without compromising or losing the ideal. For example, Franklin Baumer contends that there is "no necessary correlation" between the method and the substance of political thought. He believes method tells how the philosophes thought, not what they thought. Consequently, a utilitarian or a believer in nature could apply their philosophy under labels at either end of the political spectrum. There are liberal and conservative utilitarians and autocratic and republican adherents of natural law.[83] This disclarity of substance precisely results from the Enlightenment historian's failure to evaluate the philosophe credo in light of its own boasts. How one thinks (determined by Hume and much of modern psychology to be predominantly influenced by personality-- "temperament") is more revealing, in terms of understanding, even predicting, human behavior. Therefore, it is significant for Enlightenment history that Hume did not share the reasoning of the philosophes. Hume emphasized the importance of process--in reasoning and action. The nature of the means determines the end. If means and ends oppose each other, then the end is never clear in our minds. Presumably, it will magically appear amidst the contradictory process. Certain philosophes espoused

despotism as the avenue to enlightenment and personal liberty, but by its peculiar definitions, Christianity could claim similar aims of enlightenment and personal liberty achievable through the enlightened and benevolent despotism of the church hierarchy. Hume perceived that neither such "means" are likely to arrive at their "common" end. Both endorse total submission to an authority entrusted with the "welfare" of its subjects and often a mission of higher purpose.

Blinded by the ideal, many Enlightenment historians neglect the blatant authoritarian attitudes of the philosophes. In the tradition of Luther, they humble the church and glorify the state, entrusting it with the cause of virtue, an end not necessarily related to the happiness of men. In fact, according to John Locke, it is "the pravity of mankind" that necessitates society. But for "the corruption and vitiousness of degenerate Men, there would be no need of any other" but the Law of Nature. Although Locke ascertains the social contract, the moral legitimacy of government in his mind was based on the preservation of natural rights and the upholding of natural law to which all men are subject.[84] The commitment to these ends do not necessarily reflect the "contractual" commitment of the sovereign to his subjects. In fact, Locke asserted that man was better off under government whose majority opposed him than in the state of nature. It was foolish (unreasonable?) to refuse to join political society out of fear that one's wishes would not prevail. For Locke, government provided the means of coping with moral deterioration.[85]

Voltaire's opinion of the canaille and his desire to hobnob with the highest society should alert historians to the authoritarian bent of his thought as well as his integrity as a "philosopher." He criticized "the

profusion of religious holidays, which kept men from productive labor,"[86] presumably, reflecting concern about the idleness of men, i.e. a distrust of their disposal of their leisure time. He urged Frederick the Great to "extirpate th[e] infamous superstition" of Christianity, but _not_ "among the rabble, who are not worthy of being enlightened and who are apt for every yoke."[87] This opinion decries Voltaire's claim that natural reason was accessible to all mankind, but the power he was prepared to acknowledge in Frederick for the benefit of the few and the neglect, if not detriment, of the many is obvious.

Peter Gay's defense of Voltaire clearly demonstrates the pernicious effect of the pro-Enlightenment bias on Enlightenment history. He excuses Voltaire's convenient empiricism in light of the "revolutionary situation" and any of his nonsensical political observations on the grounds of his deliberately preserved ignorance. Gay admits that "self-interest dulled [Voltaire's] judgment" with the despots of Russia and Prussia; "they had too much of what he wanted." He dismisses Voltaire's involvement with monarchs as "too self-serving to make pleasant reading," but offers Voltaire's Genevan political activity as a "welcome contrast and . . . a splendid example of his political empiricism."[88] Apparently, Gay's need for his Enlightenment has dulled his judgment also, producing an inadequate, actually a misleading Enlightenment history. "Pleasant reading" does not seem a proper foundation for assessing Voltaire's political legacy.

Rousseau is the classic example of the authoritarian Enlightenment. This attitude is so apparent in his writings that any attempt to incorporate them into an empirical or liberal Enlightenment characterization requires serious misrepresentation of his philosophy or a very superficial analysis of

it. Cassirer notes that for Rousseau everything depends on political science, "and that, no matter how one views the problem, every people is just what it's government makes it." In his "Constitution for Corsica," Rousseau stated that he would not preach so as to make people virtuous, rather he would put them in the position that they will have these virtues without knowing the word. They would be good and just without really knowing what goodness and justice were. In "A Discourse on Political Economy," he wrote, "If it is good to know how to deal with men such as they are, it is much better to make them what there is need that they should be. The most absolute authority is that which penetrates into a man's innermost being, and concerns itself no less with his will than with his actions." Charles Frankel observes that Rousseau's social contract is no contract. Rather it

> is the exchange of a situation in which there is no human morality for one in which there is. It actually creates obligations and interests which did not exist before, and obligates the individual to a social whole, or to his own mandatory general will, against which he has no reciprocal claims.[89]

The General Will was "the will of all the individuals composing [society] if they lived, thought, and behaved as they should." It was the greatest good for the greatest number, but it was not majority rule.[90]

Since it was not natural for man to be a citizen, Rousseau designated religion as the mode of transformation. With religion and politics, "l'une sert d'instrument a l'autre," and "jamais Etat ne fut fonde que la religion ne lui servit de base." True Christianity, though, was unworkable since it urged men to be meek and perish so as to enjoy Paradise in another world. Theodore Koontz perceives, however, that the real problem of Christianity

was not its other-worldliness, but rather its universalism. Rousseau's community limited its concern for others within its national borders.[91]

Rousseau's civil religion is indistinguishable from national duty. He claimed that the citizen's religion "is good in that it unites the divine cult with love of the laws, and, making country the object of the citizens' adoration, teaches them that service done to the State is service done to its tutelary god." Tolerance was extended to those religions whose "dogmas contain nothing contrary to the duties of citizenship." As Koontz points out, tolerance was defined by the "requirements of the political community." The censor had an important function not only with regard to behavior but opinion.

> La censure maintient les moeurs en empechant les opinions de se corrompre, en conservant leur droiture par de sage applications, quelquefois meme en les fixant lorsqu'elles sont encore incertaines.[92]

Although Koontz thinks the totalitarian case against Rousseau is overstated, he does assert the implicit dangers of manipulation of the people by demagogues and the hindrance of the citizen's moral autonomy.[93]

Where Rousseau is not pronouncedly authoritarian, his thought is generally confused and meaningless (or mystical) in terms of a practical understanding of its social relevance. If historians mean to ascertain a meaningful Enlightenment character and legacy, they must fathom the process of a social contract wherein "every individual could enjoy the practical and the moral advantages of society and 'still obey himself alone and remain as free as before.'" If the "natural state" before civilization was lost when first, man claimed personal ownership of property, they should

question with Crane Brinton, why innocent "natural" man would behave so unnaturally. They must question how it is that

> Les particuliers voient le bien qu'ils rejettent; le public veut le bien qu'il ne voit pas. Tous ont egalement besoin de guides. Il faut obliger les uns a conformer leurs volontes a leur raison, il faut apprendre a l'autre a connaitre ce qu'il veut.[94]

When Rousseau explains that had "my particular opinion ... prevailed [against that of the General Will after a vote], I should have done what I was not willing to do, and consequently, I should not have been in a state of freedom," historians must ask how this works. What does it imply that people must be _taught_ to know what they want? Saying that one is as free after submitting to society as before does not make it so; nor does _pronouncing_ a progressive Enlightenment turning-point in history. Why should Rousseau be credited with the distinction of attempting "to move beyond egoism to a base which prepares men to care for the welfare of others,"[95] when presumably Christianity and the church had been espousing this view for centuries. Why is Rousseau exemplary with this general will/common good that stops at national borders when Christendom propounded a much broader brotherhood?

Although certain historians vehemently deny it, Rousseau's unaccountable General Will and his civil religion establish a concept of the state that achieved fruition in the French Revolution. The Abbe Sieyes echoed Rousseau:

> The Nation exists before all things and is the origin of all things. It is sufficient that its will is manifested for all positive law to vanish before it. In whatever manner a Nation wills, it is sufficient that it does will: all forms are good, and its will is always the supreme law.[96]

If Sieyes has "abused" Rousseau, it is for historians to demonstrate how. Rousseau asserted that morality was only possible through the community and subservience to a General Will accountable only to virtue. No more specific than Sieyes in determining the process of defining virtue or purpose, Rousseau's General Will is appropriately administered by a Robespierre or Moral Majority that views the state as the means of moral regeneration. As a group the philosophes sanctioned the use of the state to "educate" citizens in the truth without clearly defining it or understanding that, in fact, men's commitments are not to the same truths. J. R. Talmon (as interpreted by Cobban) makes this point in perceiving the thought of the Enlightenment to be a "secular religion," i.e.

> the assumption that there is a sole and exclusive truth in politics; it postulates a preordained harmonious, perfect plan of society; and recognizes only one, all inclusive sphere of human action, which is the political. . . . therefore, politics is the art of applying an all-embracing philosophy to the organization of society.[97]

According to Max Beloff, *The Age of Absolutism,* the modern state was born "when loyalty to the State was given a new warmth by its identification with a community." In *Natural Law and the Theory of Society,* Otto Gierke observes the state as an end, rather than a means.

> The State was no longer derived from the divinely ordained harmony of the universal whole; it was no longer explained as a partial whole which was derived from, and preserved by, the existence of the greater: it was simply explained by itself. The starting-point of speculation ceased to be general humanity: it became the individual and self-sufficient sovereign State; and this individual State was regarded as based on a union of individuals, in obedience to the dictates of Natural Laws, to form a society armed with supreme power.[98]

The state has usurped the position of the church and what men were willing to do to defend or promulgate their theology, they are now prepared to do for their politics, which according to "enlightened" theory reflect and institute the truth of natural law.

Crane Brinton perceives "democracy, nationalism, socialism, communism, totalitarianism, and their many variant creeds and sects" as surrogates for religious faith. The nation-state represents the "actual institutional form" of the faith. He observes early indoctrination to an emotional identity "with the fate of the national group," and the attendant ritual--flag ritual, "patriotic hymns, the reverent reading of patriotic texts, the glorification of national heroes (saints), the insistence of the nation's mission, the nation's basic consonance with the scheme of the universe." Cobban characterizes democracy, "the dominant political idea in the modern world," in precisely this fashion.

> Instead of a rational theory it has become a sort of incantation. It is the open sesame of political treasure hunters everywhere. . . . The masses, at least in those countries which have no experience of democracy, are waiting in a state of mystic faith on the revelation that the word is to produce.[99]

Despite the mythical assertions of historians, the political legacy of the Enlightenment is the spiritual state, perhaps even more oppressive and illiberal than monarchy or the church. Beloff observes that only democracy and other modern "secular religions" could achieve what the "old absolutism" could not, i.e. conscription and income taxes. He sees no evidence of the historically assumed march of liberty, only limited advances. Nor does he perceive fraternity. He acknowledges great strides for equality but the accomplishment is dubious if we are all equally

subservient. Brinton contends that these impersonal faiths are too limited and inflexible to satisfy human needs. They are no consolation "to the unhappy, the maladjusted, the suffering." There is no forgiveness or repentance for treason (heresy). "These newer faiths do not have the richness and depth of awareness of what human beings are really like," therefore, they are inadequate in coping "with the problem of human relations in a time of troubles." In fact, as Beloff comments, nationalism has "proved as inimical as religion to any notion of humanizing war." The Enlightenment notion, even tenet, "that Power would be used for beneficent purposes as easily as it had hitherto been perverted for selfish ones was proved to be based on a misunderstanding either of human beings or the nature of social cohesion, or of both."[100] This hardly seems surprising, since an understanding of human beings was never part of the philosophe agenda.

It is apparent that the philosophes were not concerned with the "enlightenment" as such of human beings, but rather with behavior modification of citizens. The state was to educate its citizens, uplifting and, if need be, forcing them to be "better" than they were. The state would accomplish what ordinary men failed to perceive as their best interest. The state, then, became the instrument and thereby the enforcer of the truth, greater and more important than the individual; the eighteenth century state became the new Catholic church. Robert Anchor perceives the contradiction that in proclaiming the progress of civilization and defending virtue as its by-product, the philosophes gave "support to the very social system they opposed in virtue's name."[101]

The works of David Hume and his place in his era offer valuable insights regarding Enlightenment history's reconstruction of that time period and its explanation of modern politics. By ignoring the philosophes' pretense of empiricism, historians misrepresent the era and its heirs, who think themselves rational inhabitants of a secular state, but who actually behave as faithful citizens in the spiritual state. Enlightenment political thought, in various schemes, was as absolute and authoritarian as theology. Hume's philosophy demonstrates this new embodiment of the old cosmology.

Although historians acknowledge that Hume's writings "are remarkably free from partisan political bias," F. A. Hayek points out, that Rousseau's politics, not Hume's, have governed the political development of the last two hundred years--Rousseau's "democracy, and his still thoroughly rationalistic conceptions of the social contract and of popular sovereignty, which . . . submerge the ideals of liberty under the law and of government limited by law," a "totalitarian democracy." Hayek believes this affinity for Rousseau is because Hume's skepticism is deemed negative.[102] Historians certainly bear much of the responsibility for Hume's neglect and the exaltation of the French Enlightenment. Should this tradition change, so would the character of the Enlightenment and our understanding of the origin and nature of the modern state.

If Hume's genuinely secular politics and state were characterized as "enlightened," then we might perceive that the modern nation is not "mechanical," i.e. procedural politics, but that it reflects the development of an attitude, sense, or purpose of community that created or at least acquiesced in subjection to the absolute state.[103] If political creeds fill "the

emotional void ... created by the decline of religious certainties and ... greater social instability," if "it is easier ... to get people to die for their country than to be active participants in its corporate life," if "the hymns of a country [are] more important than its laws,"[104] then historians must acknowledge the irrational and absolute basis of the state. In contrast to Hume's writings, they must admit the irrational and absolute character of the philosophes' political opinions. Consequently, a development of the spiritual state from the Reformation and continued through the Enlightenment would be apparent. Although the terminology differed from that of Luther and Calvin, that the purpose of government was sin in the world remained the essential meaning behind Enlightenment semantics.

If "secular" politics were accurately comprehended, and as a result the state and its builders were denuded of their "mission" and glory, then history, traditionally represented in great events or "great charismatic movements," would tell a tale of factional struggle for power. "This kind of history no longer reads like the heroic tale of omnipotent kings but like the paltry rivalry of aristocratic gangsters killing one another for the spoils." As Eli Sagan, At the Dawn of Tyranny, sees them, the "greats" of history "were all of a piece: annihilators of people and builders of states."[105] Certainly, the character of Enlightenment history would change if Frederick and Catherine were no longer labelled as "Greats." A Humean Enlightenment would excise the phrase "enlightened" despots, clearly revealing the priority of political ambition and state-building among them as well as the self-delusion, naivete, or hypocrisy of the philosophes who dealt with them.

In Hume's Enlightenment, politics is "conceived in psychological rather than juridical categories. ... Justice, obligation, and authority [are]

consequences of human attitudes and expectations." He denied either liberal or conservative assertions "that the test of a political system or a particular policy was a matter of rational demonstration."[106] Hume put politics in a human context, comprehensible to the human intellect. Man need divine government's purpose no further than his own needs and welfare. He need not, he cannot, ascertain some ultimate purpose imposing its direction upon him from without. As Duncan Forbes observes, Hume's politics are "wholly and unambiguously secular." The essence of his "prescription" of political moderation was "the emergence of a new attitude to law and government due to the progress of society." For Hume, the "history of liberty is the history of civilization: the result of economic and social progress."[107]

In The March of Folly, Barbara Tuchman observes that mankind "makes a poorer performance of government than of almost any other human activity."[108] If it seems to us in the twentieth century that the state (especially the United States, the most endowed political heir of the Enlightenment) does not make us feel secure within or without our borders, if the impositions, the incompetence, the "folly" of the state has become a serious concern, the writings of David Hume offer valuable insights of explanation and direction for contemporary politics. By making human beings the focus of his study rather than formulas of historical process or idealized behavior modification, he discerned the development of social organization out of men's social nature and need for social interaction. As there is nothing ideal or ultimate in this process, he exposes our modern, allegedly secular, state for the spiritual state it is and reveals its irrational character and deleterious effects.

For instance, Hume's counsel makes interesting reading for those concerned with U.S. foreign policy in the "cold war" since World War II. In his remarkable essay "Of the Balance of Power," Hume characterized the contest between England and France not in terms of righteousness or the French threat, but England's own appetite for war. For Hume, the "balance of power" was a ploy "to justify folly: it is being used as the good reason, concealing the real reason." He wrote that these wars "have begun with justice, and even perhaps from necessity, but have always been too far pushed, from obstinacy and passion." He concluded that most of these wars

> and all our public debts, are owing more to our own imprudent vehemence, than to the ambition of our neighbours. . . . we are so declared in our opposition to French power, and so alert in defense of our allies, that they always reckon upon our force as upon their own; and expecting to carry on war at our expense, refuse all reasonable terms of accomodation.

> . . . we are such true combatants, that, when once engaged, we lose all concern for ourselves and our posterity, and consider only how we may best annoy the enemy. To mortgage our revenues at so deep a rate in wars where we are only accessories, was surely the most fatal delusion that a nation, which had pretension to politics and prudence, has ever yet been guilty of.[109]

Hume feared that the resultant debt mortgaged society's future and threatened its very structure. "Extensive conquests, when pursued, must be the ruin of every free government." In his "perfect commonwealth" the popular influence on and in the senate is such that "in foreign politics the interest of the senate can scarcely ever be divided from that of the people."[110]

Like eighteenth century England, the United States has had seemingly little control over its "allies" in the fight against communism, but

all the exorbitant debt that results from aiding them. Many analysts attribute the Vietnam "fiasco" to the United States' own arrogance and love of power. Perhaps it is because Hume was skeptical of nationalism or the mission of the state that historians neglect him. Perhaps Hume's philosophy is too introspective, too assertive of self-examination, for historians committed to the cause of progressive Western civilization and its "liberal" eighteenth century heritage. For interested readers, the bad news from Hume is that we may be the cause of our problems, but of course, the good news is that changing this situation is completely within our control.

Hume's assertion that obedience to government is a result of habit and custom, that disobedience is a choice rarely perceived by people, explains why "democracy" (as immutably "true" as we wish to believe it) is difficult to export. Furthermore, Hume's point challenges us to examine the democratic realities of states so-called. As Eli Sagan comments, "Most people, and especially those of deprived economic standing, still do not feel that they are entitled to control their own lives. Political power is something that others possess." John Stewart adds that "it never occurs to most men, born in civilized places, that society and state are artificial." Those that do understand the "game" of society look beyond the actors in the game and attend to the roles being played. The multitude, however, "accept the play at face value."[111] Stewart believes that Hume meant "to free men from unexamined belief and customs," so that "customary artifice is . . . swallowed up by deliberate artifice." Hume decried superstition (and religion) because it "keeps the citizenry suspended in a permanent twilight of rationality and civility, incapable of attaining the self-reliant independence necessary for full human virtue." In his socio-psychological

study, Sagan maintains that the anxiety of democracy (due to its lack of fundamental kinship ties) is assuaged by the idea of omnipotence in the ruler, who challenged omnipotent gods, but "as long as the gods remain omnipotent, people will never fully grow up," and the ruler remains the only adult in society.[112] Our challenge is to overcome our fear of "adulthood," accept existence without omnipotence, and create a truly secular consciousness of community.

In meeting this challenge, it would behoove us to defy Enlightenment history and assert that Hobbes and Locke were wrong, or rather biased to the negative, in their conceptions of human nature and the "body politic." In From Beirut to Jerusalem, Thomas Friedman observes that the dissolution of government has not meant the dissolution of society, i.e. a degeneration into Locke's state of war, wherein all war against all. Rather, in light of the political chaos, neighborhoods have organized their own social interactions of mutual help and protection. Rather than Locke's depraved individuals, who "had rather injuriously prey upon the fruits of other men's labors, than take pains to provide for themselves," perhaps Hume's asssertion of human nature is more balanced, i.e. more valid. He insisted that

> man, as being the creature of the universe, who has the most ardent desire of society. . . . can form no wish, which has not a reference to society. . . . Whatever other passions we may be actuated by; pride, ambition, avarice, curiosity, revenge or lust; the soul or animating principle of them all is sympathy.

> The mutual dependence of men is so great in all societies that scarce any human action is entirely complete in itself, or is performed without some reference to the actions of others, which are requisite to make it answer fully the intention of the agent.[113]

Perhaps a re-orientation of social science to Hume would suggest to us a new understanding and appreciation of ourselves and therefore society. We are not individual sinners in need of control nor are we (some of us) "Christians," who in Luther's view submit to government because of the sinners among us. Society exists because we enjoy it and "we cannot adequately provide for [our needs] except with one another's help."[114] There is no such thing as a self-made man. If, as the authors of Habits of the Heart suggest, ardent individualism is the bane of American society,[115] perhaps the potential of human nature according to Hume can orient us to a perception of community conscious of mutual needs, rather than mutual suspicion or subservience to the idol of the state.

Hume, however, was no reformer; he observed no universal "plan" and therefore could espouse no program to effect it. He saw no necessary connection in the philosophes' contention that improved political machinery would protect freedom and happiness. "Improved" how or for whom required much clarification in determining the means that would assure the intended ends. He saw the flaws in various systems of government: monarchy could be harsh and unstable, but the practice of free governments to "contract debt and mortgag[e] the public revenues" was a "source of degeneracy" resulting in intolerable taxes bringing all property into public hands. As these scenarios evolve, Hume observed the two systems being brought closer to each other.[116] Perhaps this blend of ideological extremes is observable in the strength of the "mixed economies" of Western Europe and the concessions of capitalism to social welfare and communism to private enterprise.

In "Of the Coalition of Parties," Hume did outline a "process" for human relations that he hoped would promote the cause of stable and beneficial politics. Taking issue with Pope that good government is that which is well-administered, Hume espoused "gentle government." Therefore, to prevent the destructive effect of faction,

> prevent all unreasonable insult and triumph of the one party over the other, . . . encourage moderate opinions, . . . find the proper meduim in all disputes, . . . persuade each that its antagonists may possibly be sometimes in the right, and . . . keep a balance in the praise and blame which we bestow on either side.[117]

One of the great obstacles to such secular politics is the authoritarian systems-making legacy of the Enlightenment reflected in the "-isms" of modern intellectual musings--utilitarianism, idealism, naturalism, liberalism, Marxism, Social Darwinism, etc. Modern "philosophes" are so devoted to systems they can conceive of no other medium for human existence. In The Vocabulary of Politics, T. D. Weldon observes that political philosophers keep looking for fundamentals because we "fear that if we discard political ideologies and abandon the search for foundations we will be reduced to complete political scepticism, and all possibility of distinguishing between right and wrong will disappear." Francis Fukuyama of the United States State Department believes that the apparent ideological "victory" of Western liberalism means the end of history, "the miniaturization of mankind. . . . the trivialization of man" now preoccupied with material satiation. He sees it as "a very sad time" in which politics--"great arguments about how mankind should live" will be eclipsed by economics. Fukuyama, from the twentieth century, almost precisely echoes Diderot, concerned that without posterity for which to live and work, there would

be an end to ambition, monuments, poets, historians, wars and warriors. "Everyone would cultivate his garden and plant his cabbages." Without a "higher purpose," man has no incentive for "good or great action."[118]

For these reasons, Hume has been criticized for setting "his sights too low, aiming at prudence rather than righteousness. His politics is designed for men to get along in the world rather than to set the world aright." This was precisely Hume's intent and this assessment of it is precisely the Enlightenment error. Hume aimed "low," bringing politics down to earth where men could understand them and effectively direct them for their own benefit. Divining the "higher law" may only be distracting us from our "cabbages"--ourselves, our own nature and our social expressions of it. In Justice in Everyday Life: The Way It Really Works, Howard Zinn documents the chasm between the ideal and the real. He writes that the "vision of a different [reformed] way of living . . . would be most clear if it were a vision not of some overall utopia, but of how everyday life would be different." Rather than an end to history, which may, in actuality, be essentially irrelevant to real life, Zinn's challenge sounds like serious agriculture, not incidental gardening. He states that we

> must support one another, in continuous assertion of our freedom . . .
> and start . . . to construct and endlessly reconstruct human
> relationships, institutional arrangements, ways of thinking that, done
> close to home, inside the small circles of our daily life, may be the
> beginning of justice.[119]

Perhaps Hume's notion of sympathy and "getting along in the world" are the most useful modus operandi for a way of life we ambiguously conceive as "just." In freeing ourselves from the spiritual state, we may reduce with

Hume "the scope of politics" and give "a larger scope to the enjoyment of life."120

NOTES

[1]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 181; Sheldon S. Wolin, "Hume and Conservatism" in Hume: A Re-evaluation, edited by Donald W. Livingston and James T. King (New York: Fordham University Press, 1976), p. 244; Peter Gay believes that political theorists have made small contribution to the study of the Enlightenment. "The Enlightenment in the History of Political Thought," Political Science Quarterly 69 (September 1954): 375.

[2]Brinton considers this the view of "the 'average' enlightened person," a group from which he excludes Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau. This again raises the question of a representative Enlightenment characterization. Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 121; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 130.

[3]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 126, 130; Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 459; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:450.

[4]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 98.

[5]Ibid., p. 109; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 90.

[6]Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:344; Craig, et al, Heritage of World Civilizations, p. 783; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 214.

[7]Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. xiv; Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 184; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 232.

[8]Quoted in Gay, "The Enlightenment in the History of Political Thought," pp. 387-8. Gay attempts to defend Locke against the contradiction of his "empiricist epistemology and rational political theory," claiming it to be the result of the "confusion of self-evident innate ideas, which Locke rejected, with moral norms found by reason, which Locke accepted." Ibid. Sterling Lamprecht, The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Locke (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1962), p. 148; W. H.

Greenleaf, Order, Empiricism and Politics: Two Traditions of English Political Thought, 1500-1700 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 281.

[9]Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 278; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 99-101; Becker, Heavenly City, pp. 114, 115.

[10]Becker, Heavenly City, p. 115; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:324. Despite these defects, Gay claims "Montesquieu was the most influential writer of the eighteenth century." Ibid., 2:325; Paul E. Chamley, "The Conflict Between Montesquieu and Hume: A Study of the Origins of Adam Smith's Universalism" in Essays on Adam Smith, edited by Andrew S. Skinner and Thomas Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 276, 282, 286.

[11]E. F. Carritt, Morals and Politics: Theories of Their Relation From Hobbes to Marx and Bosanquet (1935; reprint, Oxford: At the University Press, 1958), p. 56; quoted in Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 90.

[12]Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion," p. 104.

[13]Carritt, Morals and Politics, pp. 69-70; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 128, 146.

[14]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 183; Carritt, Morals and Politics, p. 67; Charles Frankel, ed., Introduction to Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract (1947; New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1951), p. ix-x.

[15]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:483, 462; Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 267; quoted by Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 221; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:439; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 103, 109.

[16]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:453; F. A. Hayek, "The Legal and Political Philosophy of David Hume" in Hume, ed. V. C. Chappell (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 344; Frederick Watkins, ed., Introduction to David Hume, Hume: Theory of Politics (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1951), pp. xii-xiii; Cobban, In

Search of Humanity, p. 173; Duncan Forbes, Hume's Philosophical Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 68, 83; Wolin, "Hume and Conservatism" in Hume: A Re-evaluation, eds. Livingston and King, p. 246; Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 610-11.

[17]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 606; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 172; Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 606, 614.

[18]Hume, "Of Some Remarkable Customs" in Essays, p. 372; "Of Civil Liberty" in Essays, p. 89.

[19]Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 223.

[20]Watkins, Introduction to Theory of Politics, by Hume, pp. x, xiv.

[21]Hume, Treatise, p. 544; Henry D. Aiken, ed., Introduction to Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy, by David Hume (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1948), p. xlii.

[22]*Hume, Treatise, p. 544; Enquiries, p. 190.

[23]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 149-50.

[24]*Hume, Enquiries, p. 190; "Of the Origin of Government" in Essays, p. 35.

[25]Aiken, Introduction to Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy, p. xl.

[26]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 170; Forbes, Philosophical Politics, pp. 105-8.

[27]Hume, "Of National Characters" in Essays, pp. 202-3. Hume notes that an extension of government spreads a national character, contiguous states can be very different, "nations" like the Jews and Armenians maintain a character though physically scattered, cultural distinctions can separate groups living in the same nation, and so on. Ibid., pp. 209-12.

[28]Ibid., pp. 219-20, 211.

[29]Chamley, "Conflict Between Montesquieu and Hume" in Essays on Adam Smith, eds. Skinner and Wilson, p. 299.

[30]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 173.

[31]Hume, "Of the Original Contract" in Essays, pp. 455-7.

[32]Ibid., pp. 457-8, 460-2.

[33]Ibid., p. 462; Treatise, pp. 599-600; "Of the Original Contract" in Essays, pp. 472-3.

[34]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. v; Anthony Flew, "Three Questions About Justice in Hume's Treatise" The Philosophical Quarterly 26 (January 1976): 13; Wolin, "Hume and Conservatism" in Hume: A Re-evaluation, eds. Livingston and King, p. 243; Hume, Enquiries, pp. 192-3. Among such Hume would include attempts to legislate equality. Aware that men are not equal, he doubted the feasibility of such schemes, but he was certain that the machinery of government necessary to interpret and enforce equality would be totalitarian.

[35]Hayek,"Legal and Political Philosophy" in Hume, ed. Chappell, p. 359. He notes a "Darwinistic" ethics in Hume, slowly evolving over time, selective of rules and codes that promote human welfare. "Laws and morals, like language and money are . . . not deliberate inventions but grown institutions or 'formations.'" Ibid., pp. 343, 347.

[36]Hume, Treatise, p. 537; Frederick Copleston, Modern Philosophy: The British Philosophers, Part II Berkeley to Hume, A History of Philosophy, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., Image Books, 1964), p. 146; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 185; Hume, Treatise, p. 592.

[37]Hume, Treatise, pp. 591, 589; "Of the Origin of Government," in Essays, pp. 37-38; Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 609. Eli Sagan notes that the demise of kinship and the institution of nonkinship political forms was not a calm or rational process. At the Dawn of Tyranny: The Origins of Individualism, Political Oppression, and the State (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. xx.

[38]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 151; Copleston, Modern Philosophy, p. 156.

[39]Hume, "Of the Original Contract," in Essays, pp. 463-4.

[40]Hume, Treatise, pp. 608-9.

[41]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 131-2; Hume, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in Essays, p. 499.

[42]Aiken, Introduction to Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy, by Hume, p. xlv.

[43]Hume, "Of the Original Contract" in Essays, pp. 468-469; Treatise, p. 606.

[44]John Plamenatz, Man and Society: Political and Social Theory, Machiavelli through Rousseau, vol. 1 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1963), p. 313; Hume wrote, "What authority any moral reasoning can have, which leads into opinions so wide of the general practice of mankind. . . . is easy to determine." "Of the Original Contract" in Essays, p. 473.

[45]Hume, "Of the Coalition of Parties" in Essays, p. 479; "Of Passive Obedience" in Essays, p. 475; Treatise, pp. 609, 603, 614.

[46]Hume, "Of the First Principles of Government" in Essays, p. 29; Plamenatz, Man and Society, p. 302.

[47]Hume, Treatise, p. 589; "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in Essays, p. 514.

[48]Forbes, Philosophical Politics, p. 227; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 220.

[49]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 608; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 315, 317.

[50]Hume, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in Essays, p. 500; "Of Commerce" in Essays, p. 266.

[51]Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 16; Hume, quoted in Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 199; Hume, "Of the Liberty of the Press" in Essays, p. 12; "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in Essays, p. 508.

[52]Robert McRae, "Hume as a Political Philosopher," Journal of the History of Ideas 12 (April 1951): 290.

[53]Aiken, Introduction to Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy, by Hume, p. xliii; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 249. An "idealistic ... believing democracy" has the difficulty of "accomodat[ing] its this-worldly and scientific heritage to an other-worldly faith" and "a cynical democracy" wherein "citizens profess in this world one set of beliefs and live another" is "wholly impossible." Ibid.; Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 611.

[54]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 192, 313, 127.

[55]Flew, "Three Questions About Justice," p. 13; Wolin, "Hume and Conservatism" in Hume: A Re-evaluation, eds. Livingston and King, p. 245; Plamenatz, Man and Society, p. 303; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 122, 191; Plamenatz, Man and Society, p. 316; Watkins, Introduction to Theory of Politics, by Hume, p. xxii; Thomas I. Cook, "Reflections on the Moral and Political Philosophy of David Hume: A Review Article," Studies on Burke and His Time 9 (Spring 1968): 952-3.

[56]Hume, "Of Passive Obedience" in Essays, pp. 474-5.

[57]Hume, "Of the Balance of Trade" in Essays, p. 333; Hume, quoted in Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 321.

[58]Hume, "Of Commerce" in Essays, pp. 267, 271.

[59]Ibid., p. 272.

[60]Ibid., p. 273.

[61]Forbes, Philosophical Politics, p. 309.

[62]Hume, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in Essays, p. 515; "Of the Origins of Government" in Essays, p. 39; "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in Essays, p. 515.

[63]Hume, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in Essays, pp. 500, 502; Plamenatz, Man and Society, p. 331; Hume, "Whether the British Government Inclines More to Absolute Monarchy or to a Republic" in Essays, p. 53; Hume, "That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science" in Essays, p. 22.

[64]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 173.

[65]Hayek, "Legal and Political Philosophy," p. 339.

[66]Walter Dorn, "Does the United States Still Need the Eighteenth Century?" in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 34; Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 134. Characterizing Burke as a realist, Bredvold recounts his acceptance of human nature as he found it, his rejection of the contract theory, and his belief that laws depend on manners without acknowledging any connection of such opinion with Hume. Ibid., pp. 134-42.

[67]Robert S. Hill, "David Hume" in History of Political History, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (1963; reprint, Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1968), p. 512; Wolin, "Hume and Conservatism" in Hume: A Re-evaluation, eds. Livingston and King, p. 240; Watkins, Introduction to Theory of Politics, by Hume, p. vii; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 177; Plamenatz, Man and Society, p. 314; Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 324.

[68]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 302; Wolin, "Hume and Conservatism" in Hume: A Re-evaluation, eds. Livingston and King, p. 254; Chamley, "Conflict Between Montesquieu and Hume" in Essays on Adam Smith, eds. Skinner and Wilson, p. 284; Hayek, "Legal and Political Philosophy," p. 340; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:455; Wolin, "Hume and Conservatism" in Hume: A Re-evaluation, eds. Livingston and King, p. 239. In American history, Jefferson was deeply hostile to Hume's thought and John Adams found but few points with which to agree. Ibid.

[69]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:453, 455; Hume, Enquiries, p. 170.

[70]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 612, 614-6; Hume, "Of Civil Liberty" in Essays, p. 96; Plamenatz, Man and Society, p. 330.

[71]Cook, "Reflections on Moral and Political Philosophy," pp. 956-7.

[72]Carl Joachim Friedrich, Inevitable Peace (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1948), pp. 152, 189, 194, 191; Hume, "Whether the British Government Inclines More to Absolute Monarchy" in Essays, pp. 52-53.

[73]Friedrich, Inevitable Peace, p. 193; Hume, "Of the Original Contract" in Essays, p. 460. See also "Of the Objects of Allegiance," "Of the Origin of Government," "Of the Source of Allegiance," "Of the Origin of Justice and Property" in Treatise.

[74]Watkins, Introduction to Theory of Politics, by Hume, pp. xxiii-xxv.

[75]Plamenatz, Man and Society, pp. 311, 321.

[76]Becker, Heavenly City, p. 97.

[77]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 125.

[78]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:96, 102.

[79]Quoted in Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 112. Bredvold is among those historians who acknowledge the authoritarian character of the Enlightenment.

[80]Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 77. This observation seems to contradict Helvetius's belief that the pursuit of self-interest would at the same time effect the natural harmony of interests among men. One can only assume that men had to be "educated" as to their self-interest.

[81]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:522.

[82]Craig, et al, _Heritage of World Civilizations_, p. 796.

[83]Baumer, _Modern European Thought_, p. 224.

[84]John Locke, "A Letter Concerning Tolerance" in _Locke on Politics, Religion, and Education_, edited by Maurice Cranston (New York: Collier Books, 1965), p. 135; John Locke, _Two Treatises on Government_, edited by Peter Laslett (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960), p. 370; Jules Steinberg, _Locke, Rousseau, and the Idea of Consent_ (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 61.

[85]Lamprecht, _Moral and Political Philosophy of John Locke_, p. 137; Martin Seliger, _The Liberal Politics of John Locke_ (London: George Allen Unwin, Ltd., 1968), p. 72.

[86]*Gay, _The Enlightenment_, 2:46.

[87]Quoted in Bronowski and Mazlish, _Western Intellectual Tradition_, p. 261.

[88]Gay, _The Enlightenment_, 2:483, 462-3.

[89]Cassirer, _Philosophy of the Enlightenment_, p. 154; quoted in Lester G. Crocker, ed., _The Age of Enlightenment_, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1969), pp. 238-9; Rousseau, "A Discourse on Political Economy," in _The Social Contract and Discourses_, translated by G. D. H. Cole, revised and augmented by J. H. Brumfitt and John C. Hall (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1973), p. 127. Rousseau continues: "It is certain that all peoples become in the long run what the government makes them. . . . Make men, therefore, if you would command men: if you would have them obedient to the laws, make them love the laws, and then they will need only to know what is their duty to do it. Ibid. Frankel, Introduction to _Social Contract_, by Rousseau, p. xxi.

[90]Leo Gershoy, "Rousseau and the Political Mind" in _Present-Day Relevance_, ed. McCutcheon, p. 13; Rousseau, _Social Contract_, ed. Frankel, pp. xxiv, 26.

[91] Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion," p. 96; Rousseau, Du Contrat Social, Grimsley, pp. 141, 225, 229; Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion," p. 109.

[92] Quoted in Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion," pp. 106-107, 100, 101; Rousseau, Contrat Social, ed. Grimsley, p. 220.

[93] Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion," pp. 113, 106.

[94] Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 223; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 121; Rousseau, Contrat Social, ed. Grimsley, p. 137.

[95] Rousseau, Social Contract, ed. Frankel, p. 96; Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion," p. 114.

[96] Quoted in Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 189.

[97] Ibid., p. 183.

[98] Max Beloff, The Age of Absolutism, 1660-1815 (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1954), p. 18; Otto Gierke, Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500 to 1800 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 40.

[99] Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 240, 146; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 23. Brinton believes, however, that unless human nature changes, it requires such ideologies and metaphysical systems to satisfy its spiritual needs. Ibid., pp. 103-4. As a personification of his skeptical philosophy, Hume suggests that human nature does not require ideals and immutable assurances. Perhaps human nature need not change, but rather histories of it.

[100] Beloff, Age of Absolutism, pp. 13-14, 18, 17; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 241-3; Beloff, Age of Absolutism, pp. 179-80.

[101] Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 79; Crocker notes that "they underestimated the amount of conditioning and coercion" necessary for their scheme and that "their hopes of what could be done with men rested partly on an assumption of rationality and good will which much of their own theory denied." Age of Crisis, p. 456; Since Hume attributed much of

man's motivation to temperament, he had to suspect reform campaigns, knowing that such programs would not have a uniform effect on human nature. Treatise, p. 169.

[102]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 9; Hayek, "Legal and Political Philosophy" in Hume, ed. Chappell, pp. 358-9.

[103]Frederick Nussbaum, The Triumph of Science and Reason, 1600-1685 (New York: Harper and Bros. Publishers, 1953), p. 71; Beloff, Age of Absolutism, p. 15.

[104]Beloff, Age of Absolutism, p. 171; Koontz, "Religion and Political Cohesion," p. 111; R.H. Murray, The Political Consequences of the Reformation (New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), p. 179.

[105]Sagan, Dawn of Tyranny, pp. 336, 338, 318. He comments that with the end of the kinship system came the possibility "for a certain kind of human trash to become leaders of society." Ibid., p. 338. Note Hume's similar comments: "Men of cool reflection [note] the infinite confusions and disorder, which [heroism or military glory] has caus'd in the world. . . . the evils which this suppos'd virtue has produced in human society; the subversion of empires, the devastation of provinces, the sack of cities." In this consideration, we hate the "ambition of heroes," but in "our view of the person himself, who is the author of all this mischief, there is something so dazzling in his character, the mere contemplation of it so elevates the mind, that we cannot refuse it our admiration. Treatise, pp. 651-2. Sagan says we admire the omnipotence of the leader, his challenge of the gods.

[106]Wolin, "Hume and Conservatism" in Hume: A Re-evaluation, eds. Livingston and King, pp. 253, 243.

[107]Forbes, Philosophical Politics, pp. 65, 299, 298.

[108]Barbara W. Tuchman, The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 4.

[109]Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 183; Hume, "Of the Balance of Power" in Essays, pp. 345-346.

[110]Stewart, <u>Moral and Political Philosophy</u>, p. 183; Hume, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in <u>Essays</u>, pp. 515, 510.

[111]Sagan, <u>Dawn of Tyranny</u>, p. 342; Stewart, <u>Moral and Political Philosophy</u>, p. 171.

[112]Stewart, <u>Moral and Political Philosophy</u>, pp. 323, 279; Sagan, <u>Dawn of Tyranny</u>, pp. 375, 330, 327.

[113]Thomas L. Friedman, <u>From Beirut to Jerusalem</u> (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1989), pp. 42-43. He writes, "I don't know if Beirut is a perfect Hobbesian state of nature, but it is probably the closest thing to it that exists in the world today. If so, Hobbes was right about life in such a world being 'nasty, brutish, and short,' but he was quite wrong about it being 'poor' and 'solitary.' Indeed, if I learned any lesson from living in Beirut it is that when authority breaks down and a society collapses into a state of nature, men will do anything to avoid being poor or solitary." Ibid., p. 30. Locke, "Letter Concerning Tolerance" in <u>Locke on Politics, Religion</u>, ed. Cranston, p. 135; Hume, <u>Treatise</u>, p. 412; <u>Enquiries</u>, p. 89; Norman Kemp Smith understands Hume's concept of sympathy to be "a <u>universal</u> influence. . . . [T]he influence that renders man the specific type of creature that he is, namely, a creature so essentially social that even in his most self-regarding passions sympathy keeps others no less than the self constantly before the mind." <u>Philosophy of David Hume</u>, pp. 174-5.

[114]Plamenatz, <u>Man and Society</u>, p. 308.

[115]In <u>Habits of the Heart</u>, the authors note that Americans withdraw from public concern "by associating with people who share one's own standards of decency, familiar others uncorrupted by the public world. One gets involved in public life only to protect one's hearth and home and one's decent friends and neighbors from the evils of a mysterious, threatening, complicated society composed of shadowy, sinister, immoral strangers." Bellah, et al, <u>Habits of the Heart</u>, p. 185.

[116]Hume, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth" in <u>Essays</u>, pp. 514-5; "Of the Balance of Power" in <u>Essays</u>, p. 347; "Of Civil Liberty" in <u>Essays</u>, pp. 96-97.

[117] Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:335-6; Hume, "Of the Coalition of Parties" in Essays, pp. 478-9.

[118] Weldon, quoted in Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 231; George Will, "History's Last Word," Newsweek 14 August 1989, p. 66; Diderot, quoted in Becker, Heavenly City, p. 147.

[119] Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 614; Howard Zinn, Justice in Everyday Life: The Way It Really Works (New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1974), pp. 356, xvi.

[120] Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 617.

CHAPTER VIII

HISTORY AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT LEGACY

In Peter Gay's opinion, there is "no area of historical study in which the gap between the scholar and the general public is as wide, and as fateful, as it is with the Enlightenment." Although he blames the consumers and producers of textbooks,[1] the fault more likely lies with the confusing and meaningless studies produced by the academic community. The narrow focus and defensive character of Enlightenment study is apparent in the "scholarly" furor caused by Carl Becker's "scandalous" interpretation of the Age of Reason. The outraged "defense" against Becker's "assault" on the established Enlightenment characterization clearly reveals that many historians continue, like Voltaire, to write for their monastery rather than use the challenge to assess their own biases and promote the free presentation and communication of historical interpretation.

Some "scholars" actually consider Becker's book dangerous. Edward Whiting Fox, in "Reflections on the Trial of Carl Lotus Becker," contends that Becker's Heavenly City has been "recognized not only as history, but what is worse, history that has set a standard of elegant urbanity for an entire generation while insidiously disseminating heretical and offensive views about a great century of our tradition." He accuses Becker of "consistently provid[ing] the wrong answer" and proclaims that because Becker handled the facts irresponsibly (questioning the possibility of

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certainty), he cannot be trusted with Truth. Becker's hesitance to join the contest against evil leads Fox to lambast him for his "tolerance."

> Tolerance of human weakness has always been accounted a private virtue; but it is not the sort of doctrine that should be elevated to public use, and to balance it with a morbid intolerance of Virtue is perilously close to taking sides, the wrong side, in the struggle between Right and Wrong.[2]

Gay maintains that Becker's "witty and perverse little book . . . has probably prevented more students from thinking about the Enlightenment than any other."[3] In truth, an opinion that strays from the fold precipitates much reflection and re-evaluation. Historians would do well to attend to Hume's assertion that it is unphilosophical to dismiss or refute ideas as invalid because they are "dangerous" to religion and morality, i.e. values. Academia's inclination to do this reveals more about its sense of purpose or mission than its scholarship.

That the spirit of inquiry is subservient to presupposed values is evident in the comments of Edward Fox and Peter Gay. Confident that "our duty is clear and our cause is just," Fox urges that the history in college textbooks should provide "a coherent analysis of the development of western civilization and its basic values. It must, in short, constitute a systematic introduction to the collective memory of that tradition we are being asked to defend." He cautions writers, however, "to maintain a decent outward objectivity."[4] The veneer of objectivity bespeaks shallow analysis.

Peter Gay's ardent defense of an "Enlightenment" against "ideas it did not hold and . . . consequences it did not intend [or] produce,"[5] precludes a meaningful history of the era. On the one hand, he asserts a very wide spectrum of "enlightened" ideas, making his own selective exclusion of

particular ones extrememy dubious; and on the other, by limiting his analysis of the "enlightened" legacy to good intentions, he overlooks (or ignores) very real, if unpleasant, possibilities. For example, Gay assumes that capitalism because it "questioned customary ways, [and] despised tradition . . . helped to change the general way of thinking and . . . point it, if not directly toward humanitarianism, at least towards the rationalization of life."[6] The presumption that "rational" is "humanitarian" suggests a particular definition of reason too particular, and arbitrary, to substantiate a meaningful characterization of a historical process. Surely experience demonstrates an "inhumane" aspect of capitalism that must be acknowledged. Also, while most analysts perceive Candide to be a rejection of the optimist school, Gay works hard to devise an interpretation of Candide's garden as the world and Voltaire's message as a call for moral action, specifically a war against Christianity.[7] The "good intention" legacy is too narrow a basis for useful explanations of the modern world; it is especially untenable in light of Hume's assertion that the means creates the end.

Gay's predisposed history is blatantly apparent in his denunciation of the temptation for many historians to give up "the search for a single Enlightenment" because of all the disputes and diversity within the age. Yielding to this temptation means "fall[ing] into a despairing nominalism, reduc[ing] history to biography, and thus . . . sacrific[ing] unity to variety."[8] Traditional interpretations, however, that assert an Enlightenment unified by its empirical method, reasonable secular philosophy, and humanitarian reform theories, subvert this "unity" with their own data. The question of who or what is clearly representative of the era is undecided. The

existence of the eighteenth century "attitude" is not clear. The examples of contradiction, inconsistency, obscurity, and narrowly subjective evaluation are too widespread to allow the historical acknowledgement of an Age of Reason. As Hume pointed out in his Dialogues, the grounds on which the theist and atheist can agree (i.e., a principle of order) are so general and imprecise as to be insignificant.[9] Daniel Boorstin's point that a general belief does not reveal the individual and importantly distinct routes of arriving at such belief is well made. If, as Hayden White contends, it was the French application of Newton and Locke to European society that "gave the distinctive form to the Enlightenment tradition as we know it," then it may be that historians have generalized the French Enlightenment, to the neglect of other attitudes.[10] If diversity is apparent, perhaps historians should represent a diverse eighteenth century and resist the temptation to create a tidy, unified, and misleading picture which can only confuse the reader, who is urged by scholars to understand that diversity is similarity. Hume's admonition that the "love of simplicity has been the source of much false reasoning in philosophy"[11] applies to history as well.

This insistence on unity, and the contradictions and inconsistencies that it precipitates, influences another serious failure of Enlightenment history, that is, the questions that are not asked, the analyses and explanations historians have not demanded from their subject. By accepting the superficial (rhetorical) picture without critical evaluation of it, historians have essentially accepted and provided answers without meaning. Historians have accepted the philosophes' proclamations of their standards, goals, and achievements, and bemoan modernity's failure of

them, while,for the most part, neglecting to observe how the philosophes failed their own program.

Bredvold errs in taking the philosophes at their word regarding the application of the scientific method to all fields of inquiry and subjecting such to mathematical formula. Although wielding the "systematic spirit" righteously and definitively as the key to understanding and happiness, they seldom actually indulged their fancy and firmly adhered to the Law of Nature Bredvold believes they abandoned.

Rousseau should at long last be ejected from any traditional Enlightenment picture. Ostracized by his own era and widely acknowledged as "fringe" by historians, his only indisputable connection with the Enlightenment seems to be that he lived in the eighteenth century. Those who insist on claiming him (and Hume, in some cases) for the Enlightenment do so on the grounds of "common goals or vision." Since practically every philosophical or political ideology from time immemorial, however, has held out promise of peace, happiness, progress, and virtue in individual and social existence, "common goals" are minimally informative. Actually, goals are not the revealing study; the analysis of means is much more informative. If Rousseau can remain "a true son of the Enlightenment, even when he attacks and triumphs over it," then surely the character of the Enlightenment must be diverse and complex rather than unified. When Cassirer writes that "Rousseau did not overthrow the world of the Enlightenment; he only transferred its center of gravity to another position,"[12] he is obscuring the question (presumably to keep Rousseau for the Enlightenment). In a scientific sense, a shift in a center of gravity can pull planets from their orbits. Worlds are "overthrown." Why is Rousseau

selected by historians as a major contributor "to modernity [because he] exemplif[ied] for later generations the critic who dared to call into question the very foundations of social thought and action?"[13] Why not Hume? If it is true that "whatever our opinions of Rousseau, we have not yet escaped him,"[14] it is historians who keep us bound to him. In the interests of meaningful history, we cannot have Rousseau and a "unified" Enlightenment.

More important is the tendency of historians to accept the philosophes' prescriptions without acknowledging or explaining the philosophes' inability to live up to them. If the philosophes "lied in order to tell the truth," "preached peace" without believing it could happen, or "advocated . . . relativism, [while] generally neglect[ing] it,"[15] the validity of their creed must be suspect, and the historian should evaluate such inconsistency and judge the effectiveness of ideals that cannot be realized or the reputations of those espousing yet contradicting them.

Voltaire is a good example. Historians note Voltaire's criticism of Holbach for "set[ting] up his own thesis as dogma and defend[ing] it with fanatical zeal."[16] Yet the fact that Voltaire did precisely the same thing, often defending his system by ridiculing rather than refuting the opposition seems to evoke little historical interest and essentially no criticism. Voltaire's history and his belief in natural law preclude a description of empiricist and his conviction that because Newton was right the Enlightenment (based on his method) was also right denies him characterization as a skeptic. Historians, however, persist in granting him both. Readers are further consternated by Voltaire as "a humanitarian who knew how to hate," as a collaborator in the Encyclopedie "in which he never

really believed," and as an anti-Semitic preacher of tolerance who was never interested in overcoming his prejudice.[17]

Other philosophes resemble this portrait. Gay comments that while battling for humanitarian ideals publicly, the philosophes "were often intolerant and inhumane" in their private lives. He observes D'Alembert opposing censorship yet petitioning censors to stifle his critics.[18] Historians have failed to get beneath the surface of these contradictions. What does it say of a man that cannot (or will not) submit to his own ideals? What does it say of a system that demands more than its own formulators can give? What if the formulators do not really believe what they espouse? Why should modern society bemoan its failure to live up to Enlightenment ideals when the philosophes failed themselves? These are the questions historians should propose to answer for modern society. Such answers might very well explain why these ideals remain elusive and why a return to Enlightenment "openness and experimentation" is unlikely to achieve them. Rather than pose such questions, historians generally prefer to excuse philosophe failings (probably out of sympathy for their rhetoric) thus remaining at the surface and failing to perceive deeper, more pertinent, ramifications.[19]

As discussed in Chapter III, a fundamental misconception of Enlightenment historians is their characterization of the age as empirical. F. C. S. Schiller in his article "Must Empiricism Be Limited?" points out that the

> true empiricist would be content to wait and see, whereas the apriorist and the weak-kneed empiricist crave for some further assurance of some sort. The former . . . claims the right to formulate

any hypothesis that his past experience suggests to him, and is willing to let the course of events determine his estimate of its value. . . . He will also realize that he need not conceive his hypotheses as ultimate facts, but is entitled to assume any priniciple provisionally, experimentally, or methodologically. . . .

The true empiricist, then, is one who is willing to test his beliefs by their consequences, and to abide by their results.[20]

It is apparent that the philosophes did not follow the method essential to the justification of their philosophy. Some even dared to criticize others for what they themselves failed to do.[21] If the philosophes had been true empiricists, they should have been extremely interested in epistemology, but Hume's was the study of greatest import and they failed to understand (in some cases, even read) it. Historians should question this failure and probe the implications of a philosophy claiming validity through its "demonstrability" when in actuality demonstration is impossible. Nevertheless, the era is generally acknowledged as empirical and few writers point out as Herbert Dieckmann does that "the essence of this method . . . was not [generally] understood," and that it was misleading of Cassirer to "speak of the method of the exact natural sciences as the very mode and structure of thinking in the eighteenth century."[22] With the exception of Hume, method ws rhetoric among the philosophes, merely attractive packaging for a creed so as to make it more marketable.

Peter Gay's two volume study, The Enlightenment, widely acknowledged as an authoritative, even the best, treatment of the subject, demonstrates all the problems of Enlightenment history. The "common demoninator," whereby he includes Diderot, Rousseau, Hume, all shades of political opinion, etc. in his "unified" Enlightenment, is so general as to be

meaningless. He characterizes the era's spirit to include "openness to
experiment. . . . [and] respect for the past . . . [by] its disdain for authority . . .
reliance on autonomous reason . . . good sense . . . [and] experience for the
sake of freedom and happiness."[23] His own report, however, undermines
this picture.

Supposedly open to experiment, Gay describes the philosophes as
"usually empiricists," who were disinclined to the "dreary conclusions" their
method suggested. Nevertheless, it was their "single style of thinking"
(apparently not empirical) that united them into a "family of
intellectuals."[24] Although they respected the past, Gay asserts their
aversion to nostalgia, which was "the most sophistic, most deceptive form
regression can take."[25] Yet he apparently misses the nostalgic nature of
the social contract, the noble savage, and the state of nature as well as his
own acknowledgement that Rousseau "idealized simplicity, affection, family
life, bucolic feasts"[26]--all aspects of primitivism he wished to introduce into
civilization. Allegedly disdainful of authority, Gay reports Voltaire's
simplistic assertion that "Newton was right" and, therefore, the Enlighten-
ment that was based on Newton's method. Reliant on reason, good sense,
and experience, Gay, nevertheless acknowledges (in light of Hume's
example) that the "philosophic flock" supported illusion and
"needed . . . fictions."[27] Gay asserts the philosophes' admiration for the
Renaissance philosopher, Montaigne. His writings "embodied the manner of
a man whose doctrine it was to have no doctrine, but to take the best from
all the thought of the past and present and to test ideas in and by life."
They liked his

preoccupation with himself, his unashamed pleasure in sensuality, his refusal to repent of his worldliness, his contempt for fanaticism, his humane views on education, and above all, his Pyrrhonist pronouncements derived so unmistakably from pagan authorities.[28]

On the basis of this description, Hume's resemblance to Montaigne is unmistakable. If it is apparent that Hume was not fully or properly appreciated by his colleagues, it should occur to Gay that Montaigne was but superficially appreciated also, or rather, rendered safely innocuous by the chasm of time. "Que scai-je" was never the motto of the philosophes who stood aloof from the genuine skeptic of their day.

Gay's history is flawed with characterizations and definitions that are essentially meaningless. He contends that the philosophes were modern pagans and that the Enlightenment attempted to assimilate two pasts: Christian and pagan. A movement of paganism against the Christian inheritance, the Enlightenment was, nevertheless, "emancipated from classical thought as much as from Christian dogma"[29]--the philosophical revolution that announced a new age. Although they may have been anti-church, the philosophes were certainly monotheistic evangelists of traditional Christian virtues, who merely transferred (as did Luther) the responsibility for inculcating, rewarding, and punishing virtue from the church to the state. They were too much concerned with behavior modification to undertake the introspective journey of self-knowledge characteristic of much classical philosophy.

Gay writes of the philosophes' "devotion to the critical spirit that treats all positions as tentative--including their own." He observes the "drying up of religious fervor" and "the campaign against 'enthusiasm.'" Yet at the same time he refers to the philosophes' "missionary zeal for making

converts."[30] He repeatedly outlines their mission and their indefatigable dedication to it: Voltaire was "a pagan bent on propagating his cause at all costs." He states that the philosophes' "relativism was not disinterested but in the service of absolutes."[31] This use of contradictory terms and contradictory characterizations is confusing. How can a missionary who is prepared to convert followers consider his position tentative? How can Gay claim that "religious fervor" was on the wane while his depiction of the philosophes' attitude and activities precisely reflects such a fervor? Gay's analysis offers no meaningful interpretation to the reader.

Furthermore, in The Party of Humanity, Gay employs paradox "because it is precisely the vision of ambiguity that has been denied the philosophes." The age was one of "aristocratic liberalism," "Epicurian Stoicism," and "passionate rationalism."[32] Such all-inclusive, literary terminology makes the unity, upon which Gay is insistent, difficult to grasp. Apparently, in his search for unity, Gay has missed all the really interesting questions and the secularism, empiricism, and skepticism, by which he characterizes the age are revealed as essentially philosophe rhetoric.

In his Treatise, Hume asked how we could call ourselves philosophers "when we . . . knowingly embrace a manifest contradiction?"[33] The fact that historians can and do embrace contradiction reflects an insidious characteristic of Enlightenment history as well as an insidious legacy of the eighteenth century. Failing their method, the philosophes failed to communicate in language and concepts clearly understandable to all men. The result, as Hume pointed out, was answers without meaning. Through Enlightenment history, the twentieth century is encouraged to accept diversity as similarity/unity, lying as an avenue to truth (Voltaire's

admonition), humanitarians who hate, hypocrisy as insignificant, and so on. Consequently, modern man is quite accustomed to the Orwellian concept of "doublethink"--"the power to hold two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them."[34] Because historians do not observe what Goethe did about Voltaire ("Rarely has anyone made himself so dependent for the sake of independence."[35]), or hold the philosophes to their lofty claims, modern readers are well schooled in the adage: Saying it makes it so (even if living it demonstrates blatant contradictions). Consequently, Americans accept dubious distinctions between "terrorists" and "freedom fighters," "friendly dictators" as defenders of freedom, and constraints on their freedom in the name of freedom, e.g. books banned to keep society free. Certainly, the Heritage Foundation recommendation "that Reagan [should] rule by executive decree 'to halt the centralization of power in the federal government,'"[36] reveals the president as enlightened despot, authorized to pursue glorious ends through contradictory means. Biased interpretation and shallow analysis have obscured, rather than revealed, the history of the eighteenth century. This probably results from the search for and defense of a proud heritage for the twentieth century West or the ardent hope that certain values, if "discovered" in history must exert an influence on the present. Surely the eighteenth century has influenced the twentieth, but the prevalent characterization "pronounced" by many historians does not make it so.

As a result of their misinterpretation of the empiricism of the age, historians have not adequately questioned the philosophe claim to a freer, more demonstrable, and truer philosophy. Therefore, historians have missed a critical point regarding the nature of Enlightenment philosophy

and its legacy, that is, the question of secularity. Among historians, the secularization of human existence during the Enlightenment is a theme that provokes virutally no disagreement. Krieger considers the "common task of turning the philosophies of secular reason and natural science into a real cultural force," as a basis of unity among the philosophes. Collingwood describes the Enlightenment as "that endeavour, so characteristic of the early eighteenth century, to secularize every department of human life and thought." Anchor includes "the secularization of knowledge and thought" among the aims of Diderot's Encyclopedie. According to Bronowski and Mazlish, thought became secularized, i.e. emancipated "from absolute edicts which are not open to inquiry." Hayden White recognizes the Enlightenment as having "offered the first program in the history of mankind for the construction of a human community out of natural materials alone"-- including morals. In his estimate, "ultimately the Enlightenment was nothing if not secular in its orientation."37

Almost alone, Carl Becker denies the era a secular philosophy. He proposes rather that in the eighteenth century men had not been emancipated from absolute unquestionable edicts. Becker observes that the laws of nature were as immutable and eternal as any laws of God, and that the philosophes expected mankind to submit themselves to the natural order as completely as the Israelites submitted to Jehovah. He asserts that the philosophes may have relinquished the Church but they clung to ideas as spiritual and undemonstrable as was the Trinity. They substituted one truth for another and as Becker points out, their ideal (paradise) was largely reminiscent of Christian morals--peace, compassion, dignity.

By using a very superficial and narrow definition of "secular," most Enlightenment historians have missed Becker's point. They use the term to mean "non-church," "non-Christian," or "state-oriented." Gay sees secularization as a "subtle shift of attention" such that religious institutions and religious explanations were moved from the center of life to the periphery, a re-focus that is not insignificant regarding its historical impact. Ralph Bowen in "The Heavenly City: A Too-Ingenious Paradox" concedes that the philosophes were "religious in some senses of the word" but points out that it is possible to be religious without being Christian.[38] This is true, but it is irrelevant with regard to the essence of the secular theme. It does not matter whether the philosophes were Christians or not. Being anti-Christian did not mean that the philosophes were not spiritual in their outlook. A truly secular philosophy should be grounded on and concerned with the world as evidenced empirically. A truly secular philosophy cannot be constituted of spiritual concepts, church related or not, requiring faith rather than demonstration for acceptance. If the term "secular" is interpreted as "non-spiritual," or "of this world,"--"empirical," a wholly different philosophe character is revealed and consequently, a different modern man. It would make the phrase "secular faith," used by Crane Brinton, meaningless. It should be remembered that the philosophes not only decried Christianity but all forms of enthusiasm and fanaticism. A truly secular philosophy would preclude such zealousness by restricting men to empirical "truths," thus necessitating a skeptical attitude towards "ultimate" ones. As most historians employ terms such as "faith," "zeal," and "mission" in describing philosophe attitudes, it is likely that clarity would best be served if the term "secular" were withheld.

Historians observe that "philosophical idealism was itself a kind of faith in metaphysical clothes," or acknowledge "the secular faith of nationalism,"[39] missing the point that faith can evoke a certain attitude (enthusiasm, self-righteousness, arrogance), be it religious or not. This religious/spiritual bent among philosophes is widely recognized by historians. Collingwood refers to the crusade for reason as a "holy war." While proclaiming the liberation of philosophy from systems-making during the Enlightenment, Cassirer repeatedly refers to the new philosophy as "doctrine" and "system." Gay calls the philosophes a "respectable clan of revolutionaries, with their mission continually before them" and quotes Walpole: "The philosophes are insupportable, superficial, overbearing, and fanatic; they preach incessantly." He describes the philosophes as "enthusiastic projectors, reformers, moralists." Nevertheless, he characterizes Diderot's "posterity myth" as secular because "it demanded no supernatural mysteries, claimed no religious sanctions" even though Diderot encouraged men to pursue the esteem of posterity "for it would lift up their souls and strengthen them against the sense of loss and impermanence."[40] The obvious question here is how is Diderot's prescription for mankind different from the promise of life-everlasting in heaven? The "secular" distinction for the posterity myth has little meaning in view of the fact that Diderot is pursuing ends similar to those of religion through similar means. Gay depicts Voltaire as the standard-bearer in the battle against the Church, urging his army "to conceal their hand, to write simply, to repeat the truth often, to lie if necessary"; his distaste for Christianity practically an obsession. Frank Manuel describes Voltaire reporting on the advances of philosophy over the Church "with the exultation of a commander winning

battles." Margaret Libby observes in Voltaire, the advocate of doubt, a "choirleader of those proclaiming the complete independence of science and religion, this apostle of rationalism, . . . [a man who] indulged in his own metaphysical essays, less complete than those he scorned." In 1855 the Abbe Bergier made an important observation regarding the philosophes that most contemporary historians still fail to see or continue to resist.

> Ces messieurs avouent donc que Dieu peut nous decouvrir, par la lumiere naturelle, des verites qui choquent le sens commun, qui sont demontrees par les geometres, et qu'il serait ridicule de revoquer en doute; et ils nous disent, ils nous repetent avec emphase, ils supposent partout que Dieu ne peut pas nous reveler, par une lumiere surnaturelle, le mystere de la sainte Trinite, parce que selon eux, il choquent le sens commun, et qu'il nous est impossible de le croire.[41]

Apparently, the philosophes could accept the mysteries of philosophy but not those of religion.

Crane Brinton, one of the few who follow Becker, clearly delineates the similarities between "enlightened" philosophy and Christianity: "both are efforts, . . . to give some sort of systematized set of answers to the Big Questions; both are systems of moral values, of ends and means, or, if you prefer, both are religions." He points out that among philosophes

> the doctrine of progress is no more than a modern escha-tology. . . . [Progress was considered] in terms close to those of Christian, Greek, and later Hebraic ethics, of peace on earth to men of good will, of the absence of all the traditional vices, of the presence of the traditional virtues.[42]

Brinton comments that "the temper of the eighteenth century is not skeptical. It is anticlerical, positivist, at its extremes materialist. But the philosophes, if they disbelieved in traditional Christianity, believed in their own brave new world." He offers a comparison of Adam Smith and Thomas

Aquinas: both believed in a just price, a natural order that stood behind the apparent chaos of existence, and "a healing force in nature." Both considered monopoly unnatural. Brinton concludes that where the Christian saw original sin, the enlightened thinker of the eighteenth century saw "ignorance, faulty education, poverty, privilege, [and] bad social environment," yet "a serious moral and intellectual effort" could bring man to the good available in the universal design. Both are reforming faiths with essentially the same ends.[43]

Because historians have failed to recognize that calling a philosophy "secular" does not necessarily differentiate it from a religious/spirital orientation, they have overlooked or ignored important historical implications of the Enlightenment for the modern world. Cobban misses Becker's (and others') point that the supreme authority of the nation-state is a direct outgrowth of Enlightenment enthusiasm for "truth," social reform, and commitment. The philosophe program could not have been implemented through any other institution. Baumer errs in his description of the movement from medieval to enlightened times as from a "supernaturalistic-mythical-authoritative to a naturalistic-scientific-individualistic type of thinking." The Enlightenment fits the medieval characterization not the latter. Gay labels Smith's Wealth of Nations as secular, failing to explain the effects and implications of the "invisible hand" concept that is spiritual, undemonstrable, actually providential in nature. In similar fashion, describing "modern natural law" as secular, he fails to perceive that natural law is not a "worldly" concept; it is spiritual, undemonstrable, not subject to empirical validation. Generally, Enlightenment historians have failed to realize that what they call "secular"

faith is essentially indistinguishable from religious faith. It may be that, idealists themselves (and products of the Enlightenment), these historians cannot see the forest for the trees. They are so submerged in their own world view that they are not only incapable of another perspective, they are entrenched defenders of their own. Herbert Dieckmann points this out in Cassirer's study. He accuses Cassirer of contradicting his own principle, that "one cannot think of the eighteenth century in terms of philosophic systems" because of his own dialectical approach to studying the era. "There is not plurality of intellectual worlds [in Cassirer's interpretation], but either a contrast in view of a synthesis or a passage from a lower stage to the next higher."[44]

Unable to accept the implications of empirical analysis, the philosophes fell back upon spiritual truths and justifications as unreasonable as those of the Church. Guilty of "metaphysical enthusiasm," they succumbed to vices they allegedly abhorred and in dedication to their cause behaved like the religious "morons" they despised, the only difference being that the philosophes were not simply promoting an alternative truth but the right truth.

Because historians have failed to perceive the importance of the spiritual, i.e., "non-secular," essence of the philosophe creed, they have missed an essential element of its legacy. For this reason they cannot explain the modern malaise, which desperately needs explanation. Many historians do not fully comprehend the contradictions of modern society. What is apparent is that the great liberal ideal of the Enlightenment has gone wrong. The "perfectibility of man and the progress of the human race [is] the Great Illusion of modern times."[45] The liberal dream of a better

lifestyle and standard of living, more freedom, and the promise of science has delivered a "new rootless poverty and new excessive wealth equally rootless; new forms of inner and outer want; new envy, new doubt, and an entirely new furious bewilderment."[46] Satirists, social commentators, and religious historians observe these contradictions more clearly than most Enlightenment historians, who are neglecting their responsibility to explain the present. The reason for this is that many Enlightenment historians are more concerned with defending a beloved philosohpy[47] than with acknowledging that the Enlightenment is actually the root of modern society's confusion.

These failures of Enlightenment historians are more disturbing and less excusable in light of the obvious and opposite example of David Hume. "The main difference between those earlier philosophers [who employed the experimental method] and Hume himself is that Hume is utterly fearless as a thinker and applies the method systematically and relentlessly, let the consequences be what they may."[48] Perhaps the "Enlightenment blinders" could be removed through a re-analysis of Hume and his relation to the eighteenth century. Historians might learn to particularize instead of adhering to generalities that are presumed but not necessarily apparent. As a result, we might produce meaningful "Enlightenment" histories with useful explanations of the seeming contradictions of modern times and men. Observing the failure of reason and progress in our times, Carl Becker thought it worthwhile to look at the roots of the illusion.[49] It would behoove more historians to cope with their biases and do the same, clarifying rather than obscuring Enlightenment studies.

Despite all the wishful speculation of historians, an authoritarian character and legacy is glaringly apparent in any rendition of the "enlightened" era. Neither the _philosophes_ in their ideas nor the despots in their politics were skeptical, tentative, empirical, or relative. If this was the lesson of Newton and his method, the _philosophes_ did not learn it.

They were authoritarian in their method. Margaret Libby's critique of Voltaire reveals his method to be haphazard and selective in its accumulation and evaluation of data and dependent on satire and ridicule in its self-defense. Montesquieu found himself "unable to grasp either the rules or the exceptions." Truth became apparent only _after_ he discovered his principles, then "everything I sought came to me." Diderot found it "more useful and expedient to possess the idea of the just and the unjust before possessing a knowledge of the actions and the men [history] to whom one ought to apply it." G. P. Gooch describes Voltaire as "a born fighter and a good hater. . . . No eighteenth-century thinker was less of a sceptic, for there was no place in his brain for the penumbra of doubt which is the essence of scepticism."[50] If, as seems likely, there was no clear break with Cartesianism in the eighteenth century, then the Enlightenment has simply "conducted" it to the twentieth century.

Historians assure us that "the procedure of empirical enquiry, which the eighteenth century applied to the entire area of human experience, 'still constitutes a source of confidence that mankind is master of its destiny.'" Bronowski and Mazlish list "the empirical way to truth, the insistence on reasoned explanations, the conviction that men have a claim to liberty and justice" as persistent Enlightenment ideas. In _The Mind in the Making_ (1921), James Harvey Robinson urges the application of the scientific

method, so successful in the physical sciences, to the sciences of society and morality. Only science can overcome the two thousand years of static knowledge regarding human nature. According to Emile Durkheim, the "laws of society are no different from those governing the rest of nature and the method by which they are discovered is identical with that of the other sciences." Observing our continued expectation that science would provide "the final and complete explanation of our human nature and destiny," Bredvold remarks that

> this faith in a scientific regulation of human affairs, in a science of human nature which can be genuinely predictive, has become one of the commonplaces of our time. . . . In spite of repeated failures and futilities, this hope seems to be inextinguishable.[51]

Likewise, our faith in reason remains undiminished. Cobban explains the "ethical recession from the standards of the Enlightenment" of the twentieth century by the rejection of reason as the "means of arriving at valid conclusions about man and society." Walter Dorn observes that

> despite all the anti-rationalists and irrationalists from Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky to the nihilism of Nietzsche, we are still committed to reason. But when we assert our faith in reason, we no longer believe that the appeal to reason will always be the decisive force in religious, political, or social action.[52]

That modern man adheres to these ideas despite serious objections and contradictions reflects the philosophes' own dilemma and the power and responsibility of the historian. Although the philosophes did not employ the scientific method in reaching their conclusions, we continue to connect their conclusions with the scientific method and laud their resultant deductions. If short-comings are observed regarding the development of

human science, the possibility of revealing the laws of this science is not disputed, rather revision in the method are suggested. Maintaining our faith in reason, we despair that man will choose to follow it, although certainly our failure is no worse or unlikely than that of the philosophes. The fact that reason has failed over time to set things right might suggest that reason is an inadequate tool for this undertaking and that its place in man's psyche requires a revision of our assumptions. Nevertheless, we persist in the belief that reason is man's most elevated talent. Modern man considers himself an objective observer, deducing rather than imposing what is true. But no manner or amount of "scientific data" demonstrating the benefit or ineffectiveness of sex and drug education in schools, capital punishment, or legalized pornography overcomes our emotional convictions on the subjects. In intellectual circles, it has been observed as "curious how often men are still found to argue, in the manner of Bentham, that if certain things are admitted to be true, sociology could not be an exact science, and therefore the admissions must not be made."[53] Although we seem not to realize it (perhaps due to historians), modern man is a believer, not an observer or skeptic. We maintain our views righteously and completely, while convinced of our objective procedure, our open-mindedness, and our reasonable conclusions--just like the philosophes of old.

The philosopes were authoritarian in their cosmology. Convinced of the existence of absolute truth and their ability to reveal it, the philosophes constructed rationalist schemes in the interest of protecting and promulgating this revelation. As Cassirer comments, "The strongest intellectual forces of the Enlightenment do not lie in its rejection of belief but rather in the new form of faith which it proclaims, and in the new form

of religion which it embodies." Becker clearly details the Enlightenment's substitution of divine Nature for God. Condorcet depicted the Tenth Epoch, wherein men are devoted only to rational knowledge and science. Rousseau and Voltaire asserted the supremacy of Natural Law, although Rousseau saw it revealed through conscience, Voltaire through reason. In Profession de foi, Rousseau maintained that "one must know what ought to be in order to know what is."[54] Adam Smith and the Physiocrats concocted mysterious schemes of economics beneficially regulated by an "invisible hand." And those who subscribed, viewed progress as an inevitable tenet of a universal plan.

In the twentieth century, natural law continues to dominate our conception of the universe both in science and society.

> The fundamental movement of the Western mind since the Renaissance toward a vision of nature governed by consistent laws has also been felt in the human sciences. Human nature has been believed to follow intelligible laws, just as physical nature has. . . . Somehow, the laws of society cannot be arbitrary.[55]

G. R. Cragg contends that deism continues to shape "the unexamined presuppositions which govern men's outlook" such that an understanding of the modern mind requires the evaluation of the deist influence.[56]

Progress is also an important element in the Enlightenment legacy. Crane Brinton observes that "belief in progress, . . . is still so much a part of the way young Americans are brought up that very few Americans realize how unprecedented that belief is. . . . This positive belief in a knowable universe ultimately composed of particles of matter has remained . . . an element in Western Culture." Robert Heilbroner, however, warns of

threatening consequences of our faith in the march of progress and the optimism is evokes.

> The essential nature of the American encounter with history is changing, and . . . our optimism is a handicap in appreciating that change and in assessing its implications. For our optimism blinds us to a central reality of our historic situation: that, after a long voyage in which the favoring currents of history bore us in the direction in which we sought to navigate, we have emerged into an open sea where powerful contrary winds come directly into conflict with our passage.[57]

This belief in the "natural," "inevitable" march of progress has resulted in man abandoning himself to a progress run amok. Heilbroner notes the betrayal of science in the atomic bomb, the militarization of American society, and the production machine whose "psychological demands" on the assembly line and at the office "are as great as the physiological demands of the natural environment . . . they have displaced."[58] The most dire consequences of American optimism according to Heilbroner are those pertaining to the U.S. self-image especially in terms of what can be accomplished.

> Optimism misleads us with respect to the possibilities of "progress" because it tends to underestimate the difficulty and to overestimate the consequences of historic change. . . . It [fails] to confront truthfully and unflinchingly the condition of the human being as it now exists. . . . [that is] the level at which life is lived, rather than the level at which it is abstractly conceived.[59]

He recommends that we question ourselves in terms of what is possible at this time and assess our limitations.[60]

Most certainly, Enlightenment beliefs are apparent in modern economic theory. Heilbroner describes the enlightened concept of the science of economics.

> As mysteriously, and yet as ineluctably as the forces of magnetism aligned iron filings, so the forces of competition, of ever-opening opportunities for money-making, of the pressure of population upon the labor market all operated to guide the human particles to predictable patterns of behavior. . . . economics could deduce the adjustments which the human particles were continually forced to make, and could foresee in advance the relationships that would inevitably take place.[61]

In the twentieth century, economists like Milton Friedman perpetuate the tenets of Helvetius and Adam Smith regarding the ""natural harmony of interests"[62] between the individual and general society and the natural regulation of the marketplace. Friedman talks of "impersonal forces of the marketplace" and contends that it is the system that requires reform, for a proper system will work regardless of who is in charge. Critics, like Lester Thurow, however, propose that theories such as monetarism should be abandoned "when they cannot explain major facts and when they lead to disastrous results" (i.e., the high interest rates, which Friedman concedes that monetarism cannot explain).[63] The fact that we do not easily dispose of such theories suggests that we are as unimpressed by the facts as our philosophe forefathers and therefore, as unreasonable in our devotion to what we "know" is true. A test may be in the making in the world arena where state-subsidized industries in various socialist nations seem to present "unfair" competition to rival industries in capitalist societies. Capitalism is the foundation of the American belief system and generally equated with democratic politics. How, or if, the American system adapts to

meet the challenge, whether through government subsidies or tolerance of large business consortiums, will certainly be affected by the public's ability to relinquish its cosmology or to "doublethink" the supposition of free enterprise with the reality of government planning or huge business consolidation.[64]

Despite their dubious benefits, modern man continues to search for, construct, or improve systems. Bronowski and Mazlish state that the inadequacy of method in human sciences compared to natural science results from the failure to fuse "together the two modes of inquiry, the empirical and the rational." They suggest that the major short-coming of the human sciences is that the effort "to construct a reasoned analysis of society from the motives of individuals is divorced from the practical study of the large-scale functioning of states and communities." They perceive the remedy in statistics that will "involve nothing more radical that the application of large computing machines to social and economic problems"[65]--a modern adaptation of reform from the top. Milton Friedman seeks a system whereby an economy can operate efficiently and beneficially, independent of human direction, i.e., unneedful of a right person in charge.[66] In true "enlightened" fashion, modern systems-makers retreat from acknowledging, let alone encouraging, individual responsibility. Humanity is best guided by formula.

The philosophes were authoritarian in their mission. Gay points out that the philosophes saw themselves as involved in warfare between the forces of good and evil, philosophers versus the "enemies of philosophy." "Polemical victories turned out to be not a reason for accomodation but for war to the end."[67] Their authoritarian bent is revealed in their attitude of

disdain towards those who would not read "the right" works--those of the philosophes themselves. They were especially irked by the popularity of religious literature. They lied in pursuit of their cause (which was Truth) and never doubted they were doing the right thing with their lying.[68] Truth, rather easily ascertained, required application, not questioning.[69] Skepticism was not part of the creed and although personal conviction does not necessarily reflect an authoritarian outlook, the philosophes' belief coupled with their impatience (usually intolerance) of those in disagreement and their missionary dedication to imposing their program on mankind can really be characterized no other way. Doubt is not a lesson learned by modern man from the Enlightenment where "doubt [was] permissible in other matters," but "one [did] not doubt the reform programme of a Lockian philosophe." As a militant group the philosophes "needed faith and certainty, not sceptical or critical negations."[70]

Crocker notes that the philosophes rejected relativism because people would not accept their rules as opposed to others. Bredvold recounts the parable of a fire where one had the choice of saving the chambermaid or the author Fenelon writing his book, which brought good to many. The instruction was to save Fenelon even if the chambermaid were one's wife, mother, or sister.[71] This submission of self to some purpose more important than one's own feelings or personal duty is typical Enlightenment doctrine. In the twentieth century, ardent patriots have abandoned, even betrayed, family and friends to the greater purpose of the state. The canaille, depending on the definition of "enlightenment," can be any of us.

The philosophes were authoritarian in their morality. As A. Sorel points out, every crime attributed to the French Revolution was practiced

by the ancien regime, "only the Revolution did on principle what the ancien regime had done from lack of principle."[72] Supposedly preoccupied with morality, the philosophes did not notice that their actions precisely reflected the deplorable behavior of those persons or institutions they condemned. They merely justified their actions in terms of the truth, a truth, however, as arbitrary and as undemonstrable as that of their enemies. Their professed truth was certainly undemonstrable through their actions.

In the modern world, the end continues to justify, if not reflect, the means. An American air-traffic controllers' strike is illegal, but the Polish government's suppression of Solidarity is dictatorial. Extremism in the name of freedom is not extremism. And Israelis and Contras are freedom fighters while Palestinians and Sandinistas are terrorists.

The philosophes were authoritarian in their reform. Bredvold observes that "all the psychological discussions of the philosophes were preambles to their programs for the improvement of morals, society, and government." Gay notes the philosophes' realization that "perhaps the most important way to improve the world was to improve political institutions." Helvetius proposed that government would regenerate mankind through "the science of education," which involved "placing a man in that situation which will force him to attain the talents and virtues required of him."[73]

Modern man carries on this reform tradition. As Crane Brinton observes, "we continue, . . . to pin much of our hopes on insitutional changes planned from above." Cobban urges that if we would again associate purpose with politics, "we may take up again the tradition of Western political thought, and in doing so resume that 'continuous transformation of morals into politics,' . . . in which, according to Croce, lies 'the real ethical

progress of mankind." In the 1936 translation of his book on Diderot, Moscow philosopher I. K. Luppol states that if the morals of a nation are bad, "the cause is bad laws, a deplorable form of government. To improve the manners and morals it is therefore necessary to change the structure of the state."[74]

Historically, Americans have been especially committed to the reform of society through politics (perhaps this results from the combination of the Calvinist and Enlightenment legacy). Despite the alleged separation of church and state, Americans consider morality a legislative function. In 1982, the United States vice-president, George Bush, announced to a conservative Christian audience "that the political activity of the religious right wing is 'as American as apple pie. . . . there is nothing un-American or unprecedented about political activity in support of principles and policies of a particular religious viewpoint.'"[75] Truly, the Religious Right in America seems only to be pursuing the rule of the General Will, as outlined by Rousseau. In modern Europe, Nazi Germany, at least before the war, represents an "enlightened" state, politicizing and implementing a General Will that codified virtue by employing the state in the achievement of truth (German/Aryan superiority), pursued a greatest good for the greatest number, and reflected the "enlightened" disregard for the rabble.

As discussed above, the philosophes were authoritarian in their state. In modern nationalism, the state is recognized not just as a legal and geographic entity, but primarily as an embodiment of virtues and spiritual ideals. Citizens are molded in the image of such ideals through education and socialization, such that their personal identity is essentially determined through their nationality. The spiritual state, embodying the authoritarian

mission and righteousness of eighteenth century morality via politics, is a devastating "enlightened" legacy. Historians do not necessarily grasp the implications. Questioned as to the relevance of the eighteenth century to Soviet-American relations, Peter Gay responded that nothing could be "directly . . . learned from studying Voltaire about what Bulgaria is or is not going to do."[76] Biased to the liberal legacy of the Enlightenment, he understandably misses a crucial point. It is instructive to observe in Voltaire the authoritarian conviction in a system which gives no quarter to the enemy that Americans have inherited from his age. Such a recognition might be the first step toward correcting or modifying an increasingly ineffective stance towards the world.

Robert Heilbroner points out that our authoritarian righteousness, virtually perceiving only one road to virtue--ours, is blinding us to similar values and institutions in other nations. He writes that many of the welfare arrangements that

> bear the socialist label abroad can be duplicated here under the label of capitalism. . . . Yet between the ideals of "socialism" abroad and "capitalism" at home there is a deep mutual distrust and anti-pathy. . . . We must be careful that an aversion to the idea of socialism does not blind us to a similar identity of values and institutions between ourselves and the European "socialist" nations.[77]

He further cautions that our denunciations of the offensive "-isms," "far from arming us against or clarifying our understanding of socialism and communism, only serve to muddy our minds. . . . To dismiss that literature [socialist or communist] unread, to vilify it without the faintest conception of what it represents, is not only shocking but dangerously stupid." The philosophes never attempted to understand their enemies, often attacking

them with ridicule rather than reasoned refutation. As Gay notes, subscribing to Locke's repudiation of Scholasticism, "allowed the philosophes to malign them ... without troubling to study them." Heilbroner foresees "the grave threat of an ideological isolation of the American system" because Americans are so persuaded of their self-image as the "beacon of light" entrusted with the truth that we cannot "believe that much of the world sees us as a malign and threatening influence."[78]

The implications of the authoritarian Enlightenment go much deeper than the opposition merely being different or simply a competitor. As with the philosophes, modern-day superpowers perceive the struggle of good against evil: an American president identifies the Soviet Union as "the focus of evil in the modern world"; a Soviet premier identifies the true root of evil perpetrated in the world as the United States' desire "to gain world domination." As discussed by Harold J. Berman in "The Devil and Soviet Russia," the empirical basis for President Reagan's assessment is the issue. He questions whether Reagan's knowledge of the Soviet system leads him to consider it evil or "is it his characterization of the system as evil that leads him to imagine how it operates?" Presenting information refuting Reagan's view, Berman assumes Reagan would resist changing his opinion, because despite new data, "we know that it is evil." Berman contends that the result of "such self-righteousness" is that it "cuts off virtually all possibility of negotiation and conciliation." There can be no compromise with evil. Similarly, William Safire, observing the "lobbying power" of two women eye-witnesses to the Nicaraguan situation, lamented "why 'Our Side' cannot come up with 'articulate, dedicated, spokeswomen for the anti-

communist point of view."[79] It is not that such data is necessarily accurate; it is that this data is ignored out of conviction.

As readers of Enlightenment history, we are familiar with the traditional picture; we believe we represent it. The fact is we _are_ the product of the Enlightenment, but the era was actually quite different from what historians tell us. Consequently, we think we are something we are not. Crocker points out that in the Enlightenment, "a new positivistic outlook denounces hypotheses and mathematical a prioris; yet, unable to find explanations and solutions according to its own methodology, this positivism supposes and imagines what it cannot observe, and uses the very rationalistic approach it condemns."[80] The philosophes believed they were something they were not. They were not open-minded, reasonable, tolerant, nor were they relativists, skeptics, or empiricists. Historians gloss over this contradiction, neglecting important explanations; therefore, we perpetuate the same misconception about ourselves. Because we do not really understand ourselves as men and therefore the institutions men build, we are bewildered and frustrated that the revered Enlightenment ideals have yet to come to pass. Russell Davenport believes that the United States has held on long after other societies have confronted the illusion.

> The ideals America insists on preaching to the rest of the world simply do not carry. They do not carry even in the countries of Western Europe from which these ideas were imported in the eighteenth century. Our statesmen still go on proclaiming their devotion to the inevitability of progress, the inalienable nature of human rights, the sacredness of the human person, and so forth. It is the same language in which the Declaration of Independence was written. But to most civilized and still friendly men in foreign countries, these formulae sound archaic and quaint.[81]

It is critical that we confront the actual legacy of the Enlightenment in order to stop our self-delusion and cope with the crises of the modern world. Because of the rationalistic and authoritarian Enlightenment concept of truth, we believe in truth with no understanding of how it relates to real life on this planet. And the reason for this is that despite all their talk about humanity, the _philosophes_ never tried to understand human beings.

Referring to Burke, Louis Bredvold suggests the greatest failure of the Enlightenment's concept of and program for mankind: "No _philosophe_ ever meditated on the needs of our naked and shivering human nature." That Bredvold overlooked David Hume is a major flaw in his work, but, with that exception, the point is well made. Crane Brinton elaborates on this failure of the "secular" faiths. The "impersonal faiths"--"democracy, nationalism, socialism, communism, totalitarianism," etc.--are all grounded in the "cosmology of the Enlightenment" institutionalized in the nation-state. He considers them inadequate (compared to Christianity) regarding "the problems of the individual in trouble"; once established and routine they "have little to offer the unhappy, the maladjusted, the suffering." The ideals of these faiths are too far removed from the reality of human existence. "Those who hold these ideals desire so passionately that man be perfect that they cannot forgive him the slightest imperfection." In treason (heresy) trials there is no confessing and coming back; in America "once a Communist, always a Communist." There is no repentance. Brinton further observes a danger for the modern intellectual (like the _philosophe_) to promote his assumption that he knows exactly what is wrong and how to fix it. "Already separated from the mass of his fellows ... [the modern intellectual] needed rather to be called back to the close and realistic study

of the whole range of human behavior than to be allowed to develop in fine moral indignation his notion of 'ought to be.'"[82] That is, he or she needs empirical grounds for their "dictums." In the rationalist forum of _philosophe_ musings, the system has received too much attention; the individual too little--in an era that historically glorified the individual. For this reason, it is highly doubtful that any of the "-isms" can succeed in their professed objectives. In the realm of abstract generalizations, "justice," "progress," "tolerance," "truth," etc. are meaningless terms subject to various applications. Beginning with human beings and the lives they lead, however, poses the questions: "progress" for what? "justice" and "tolerance" for whom?--a much more complex, but more meaningful inquiry. The philosopher who seriously attended to human nature around him and in history provided an _authentic_ "enlightened" philosophy with useful information regarding who we are. But his is not the legacy of the Enlightenment.

NOTES

[1]Gay, <u>Party of Humanity</u>, 262; In their Enlightenment bibliography, the authors of <u>Heritage of World Civilizations</u> describe Gay's two volume study of the era as "the most important and far-reaching treatment" and Cassirer's <u>Philosophy of the Enlightenment</u> as "a brilliant but difficult work by one of the great philosophers of the twentieth century." Carl Becker's book is acknowledged to be "an influential, but very controversial discussion" and readers are referred to Rockwood's collection of "important essays qualifying Becker's thesis." Craig, et al, <u>Heritage of World Civilizations</u>, 796.

[2]Edward Whiting Fox, "Reflections of the Trial of Carl Lotus Becker," in <u>Heavenly City Revisited</u>, ed. Rockwood, pp. 175, 177, 183, 187.

[3]Gay, "Enlightenment in History of Political Thought," 376. An admirer of Becker, John Hall Stewart, nevertheless, welcomes the "iconoclasm" of Becker's critics in the interests of scholarship. Interestingly, he observes that this critique "may make us aware of the danger of putting thoughts into print for all to read." "Thoughts and Afterthoughts," in <u>Heavenly City Revisited</u>, ed. Rockwood, 172; See Edward Whiting Fox's essay "Reflections on the Trial of Carl Becker," in <u>Heavenly City Revisited</u>, ed. Rockwood, 174-88, for a discussion of the harmful effects of Becker's view.

[4]Fox, "Reflections on the Trial," in <u>Heavenly City Revisited</u>, ed. Rockwood, p. 188; Fox, Introduction to Manuel, <u>Age of Reason</u>, p. v; Fox, "Reflections on the Trial," in <u>Heavenly City Revisited</u>, ed. Rockwood, p. 186.

[5]Gay, <u>Party of Humanity</u>, p. 262.

[6]Gay, <u>The Enlightenment</u>, 2:45.

[7]Ibid., 1:202-3. Most historians consider <u>Candide</u> a sign of Voltaire's despair and acknowledgment of limitations. Crocker contends that within these limitations, Voltaire asserted man's true dignity to be self-awareness. <u>Age of Crisis</u>, pp. 66-67.

[8]Gay, <u>The Enlightenment</u>, 1:x.

[9]Gaskin, <u>Hume's Philosophy of Religion</u>, pp. 139-40.

[10]Boorstin, "History Through Bifocal Glasses," in <u>Present-Day Relevance</u>, ed. McCutcheon, p. 35; Hayden V. White, Introduction to Anchor, <u>Enlightenment Tradition</u>, pp. xiv-xv.

[11]Hume, <u>Treatise</u>, p. 313; <u>Enquiries</u>, p. 298.

[12]Cassirer, <u>Philosopy of the Enlightenment</u>, pp. 273-4.

[13]Craig, et al, <u>Heritage of World Civilizations</u>, pp. 788-9.

[14]Ibid., p. 789.

[15]Gay, <u>The Enlightenment</u>, 2:79, 404, 383.

[16]Cassirer, <u>Philosophy of the Enlightenment</u>, p. 72.

[17]Gay, <u>Party of Humanity</u>, pp. 6, 116; <u>The Enlightenment</u>, 2:38.

[18]Gay, <u>Party of Humanity</u>, p. 115.

[19]Gay, for instance, excuses the substantial flaws in <u>philosophe</u> history because they could not do anything else--they were engaged in battle, or their artistic interests inhibited their methodology and its "dreary conclusions." <u>The Enlightenment</u>, 2:385.

[20]F. C. S. Schiller, "Must Empiricism Be Limited?" <u>Mind</u> 45(July 1936): 307-8.

[21]It is interesting that Peter Gay notes that the philosophes "sought clues to the universals in the unique, the typical in the extraordinary" which is much what he has done in his own work. Yet he criticizes Talmon for "tak[ing] the unrepresentative man as representative of a movement, and unrepresentative quotations out of context as representative of a man's ideas." The Enlightenment, 2:175; Party of Humanity, p. 281; Like the philosophes Gay criticizes in others that of which he himself is guilty.

[22]Dieckmann, "Interpretation of the Eighteenth Century," p. 298.

[23]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:567.

[24]Gay, Party of Humanity, p. 263; The Enlightenment, 1:181, x.

[25]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:174.

[26]Ibid., p. 95.

[27]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:137, 453. Gay is well aware of Hume's example regarding the consistent use of the empirical method and a happy and contented life as a skeptic. "a cheerful Stoic." The Enlightenment, 1:418-9. Gay evades the implications of Hume's example (regarding the failure of the philosophes) by emphasizing his religious writings, slighting Hume's epistemological and moral works.

[28]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:288-89.

[29]Ibid., 1:xi.

[30]Gay, Party of Humanity, p. 289; The Enlightenment, 2:27, 79.

[31]Ibid., 1:364, 2:392.

[32]Gay, Party of Humanity, pp. 288-9.

[33]Hume, Treatise, p. 313.

[34]Jennifer Boeth, "1984: Was Orwell Right?" Dallas Times Herald, 23 January 1983, sec. G, p. 2.

[35]Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:69.

[36]Boeth, "Was Orwell Right?" p. 2.

[37]Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, pp. 153, 155; Collingwood, Idea of History, p. 76; Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 70; Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 495; White, Introduction to Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. ix.

[38]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:338, 535; Ralph H. Bowen, "The Heavenly City: A Too-Ingenious Paradox," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 151.

[39]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 221.

[40]Collingwood, Idea of History, p. 81; Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:9; quoted in Gay, Party of Humanity, p. 263; Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwod, p. 38; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:91.

[41]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:391; Certainly, this tone echoes Becker, who described Voltaire as "the defender of causes, . . . a crusader . . . , an apostle who fought the good fight, tireless to the end." Becker, Heavenly City, p. 37; Manuel, Age of Reason, p. 34; Libby, Attitude of Voltaire to Magic, p. 86; quoted in Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 224.

[42]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 136, 116.

[43]Ibid., pp. 133, 135-7.

[44]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 189-190; Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 141; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:368; Dieckmann, "Interpretation of the Eighteenth Century," p. 299.

[45]Leo Gershoy, "The Heavenly City of Carl Becker," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 197.

[46]Frederic Morton, A Nervous Splendor: Vienna 1888-1889 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 314.

[47]Gay, for instance, insists that arguing that the movement fighting "censorship, nonsense, slavery, torture, intolerance, cruelty, and war" was responsible for the horrors of our times is not logical. Party of Humanity, p. 286. But a close study of this movement's understanding and pursuit of its own pronouncements might reveal that their "failure" is the basis of modern society.

[48]Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 74.

[49]Gershoy, "Heavenly City of Carl Becker," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 197.

[50]Quoted in Becker, Heavenly City, p. 104; Gooch, "Voltaire as HIstorian," pp. 266, 267.

[51]Walter Dorn, quoted in McCutcheon, Present-Day Relevance, p. 81; Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 491; Bredvold, Brave New World, pp. 102-3; quoted in Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, pp. 43-44; Bredvold, Brave New World, pp. 150, 103.

[52]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 229; Dorn, "Does the United States Still Need the Eighteenth Century?" in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 34.

[53]Attributed to A. D. Lindsay, master of Balliol College at Oxford in Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 113.

[54]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, pp. 135-6; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:119-21. Condorcet criticized the Greek philosophers as systems forgers who gave themselves over to their imaginations. Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 249-50. He himself, however, constructed a history of four eras demonstrating the advance of reason over ignorance. Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:34; quoted in Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 222.

[55]Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 493.

[56]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 92.

[57]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 114, 120; Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 58.

[58]Heilbroner, Future as History, pp. 61, 65, 72. He quotes Suzanne K. Langer's fear that "Technical progress is putting man's freedom of mind into jeopardy." Ibid., p. 73.

[59]Ibid., p. 197, 196.

[60]Ibid., p. 181. Certainly, limitations were not in Lyndon Johnson's mind in his attempt to bring democracy to the agricultural society of Vietnam and implement the Great Society at the same time in the United States.

[61]Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 32.

[62]Anchor, Enlightenment Traditon, p. 75.

[63]PBS, "Free To Choose" with Milton Friedman, Series #3, 8 July 1982. Lester C. Thurow, "How To Bring Rates Down," Newsweek, 5 July 1982, p. 56. Thurow quips that "Adam Smith's invisible hand is all thumbs when it comes to working economics" and contends that "supply and demand" is an anachronistic concept to which we have held too long. NBC, "Donahue," 16 June 1983.

[64]Hume dismissed the "invisible hand" theory. His philosophy could not sustain or justify such undemonstrable systems, proposing instead a more flexible and practical direction of policy.

[65]Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, pp. 494-5. Apparently, unfamiliar with Hume's work, Bronowski and Mazlish miss his exercise of method, which blended empiricism and reason and his study of large-scale social organizations that yielded amazingly astute conclusions about human existence without the benefits of statistics.

[66]Friedman, "Free To Choose." Panelist Nicholas Hoffman questioned the existence of an "unseen hand" and a mechanism that would

operate regardless of who the captain is. He suggests that this is really a religious question.

[67]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:23, 371.

[68]Ibid., 2:61, 78.

[69]Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 221.

[70]Ibid., pp. 219, 225.

[71]Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 120.

[72]Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 188.

[73]Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 47; Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:452; quoted in Bredvold, Brave New World, pp. 108-7.

[74]Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 126; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, pp. 241-2; quoted in Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 114. Hume also acknowledged the high station/import of the law-maker, but he repeatedly cautioned them to be mindful of the capacities of their citizens and urged them to gentleness. Hume, "Of Parties in General," in Essays, p. 54.

[75]Molly Ivins, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," Dallas Times Herald, 17 June 1982, sec. D, p. 1.

[77]Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 113.

[78]Ibid., pp. 113-4; Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:321; Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 169.

[79]"Causes of World Evil Debated," Dallas Times Herald, 4 May 1983, sec. A, p. 24; Harold J. Berman, "The Devil and Soviet Russia," Newsweek, 9 May 1983, p. 8; Phillip Geyelin, "Nicaraguan Vantage," Dallas Times Herald, 1 July 1983, Sec. A, p. 22.

[80]Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 449.

[81]Quoted by Frederick Burkhardt in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 28.

[82]Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 130; Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 240-3.

CHAPTER IX

HUME'S LEGACY

Although Hume's _Treatise_ "fell dead-born from the press," he could not have been surprised. He was well aware of the radical nature of his philosophy. "My Principles are . . . so remote from all the vulgar Sentiments on this Subject, that were they to take place, they wou'd produce almost a total Alteration in Philosophy; & . . . Revolutions of this kind are not easily brought about."[1] Some modern historians are likewise aware of the "time bomb" Hume placed "under Western philosophy,"[2] but so far the bomb still ticks. This particular revolution is so difficult that two hundred years later Hume's philosophy is still largely misunderstood or ignored despite pointed insights regarding modern man and his society as well as Enlightenment history. Historians err when they assert that the

> _philosophes_ . . . determined human nature empirically. They emphasized the facts of human behavior. What they perceived clearly in men was not their relationship to an objective world of absolute ends and values, but their actual needs, wants, feelings, inclinations, and ideas.[3]

The _philosophes_ did not do this. Hume did. And formulated conclusions generally neglected by historians, despite their validity and value.

One of the major failures of Enlightenment historians is their inability to incorporate Hume satisfactorily into their particular interpretations. Ginsberg criticizes Hume for not "pushing beyond experience," that "his

skepticism [suggests] a lack of intellectual vigour." His work and personality seem too lackluster for Enlightenment enthusiasts then and now. Grimm observed that Hume did not have the depth of genius of Diderot and characterizes them thus: "M. Hume est comparable a un ruisseau clair et limpide que coule toujours egalement et paisiblement et M. Diderot a un torrent dont l'effort impetueux et rapide renverse tout ce qu'on voudrait opposer a son passage." Similarly, Ginsberg misses in Hume "that high-spirited rhetoric that makes the Enlightenment so delightful to us."

> We miss in Hume that spark of aberration, of excess, of genius, of despair, of suffering, of faith. We miss that unquenchable thirst for answers to first questions, that irresistible drive towards ultimate commitments, that passionate insistence on knowing what lies just beyond knowledge. In a word, we find him too rational.[4]

It is interesting that what some historians find unappealing in Hume are the virtues they claim to observe in the Enlightenment. Hume was faithful to empiricism--the method of his age. Criticism of his failure to deny his method is unphilosophical and illogical. He did not lack "intellectual vigour," rather he restrained intellectual fancy for the same reason he disdained passionate rhetoric. Surely at the end of the twentieth century, we are finding rhetoric to be hollow and only momentarily reassuring and satisfying. We are perceiving the irrelevance of "high-spirited rhetoric" regarding our real problems.

What Enlightenment historians cannot ignore is "that Hume's contrary positions emerge out of his critical assessment of the prevalent Enlightenment theories. . . . [His] contribution may . . . be viewed as a logical outcome of the Enlightenment thought. Hume might deserve the title of final thinker of the Enlightenment."[5] Immersed in the method and

issues of his day, Hume is no Enlightenment "sideshow." The depth, thoroughness, and significance of his thought, especially as it contrasts that of his "colleagues," demands competent and fair treatment by historians. "No one has refuted his contention that.... the connection between cause and effect is empirical and not necessary."[6] According to Sir Isaiah Berlin, "no man has influenced the history of philosophy to a deeper and more disturbing degree."[7] Hume's philosophy is not insignigicant or irrelevant. Therefore, if Hume "was the quintessential philosopher of the eighteenth century" and he dramatically disagreed with the prevailing views, historians must address the question, "Was it Hume or the Enlightenment that was out of joint?"[8] In view of the observation of twentieth century physics that Newtonian physics is not applicable to cosmic or subatomic physics, that universal laws may not govern nature, and "that what holds for one corner of the universe might not hold for the rest of it,"[9] it seems it may well be the Enlightenment that is "out of joint." Consequently, historians must revise the accepted Enlightenment interpretation to incorporate Hume and the implications of his philosophy more satisfactorily into their historical renditions. The twentieth century has finally "caught up" to Hume, revealing in our experience what historians have long kept from us. The validity of his thought and, more importantly, its useful insights and directives for the present, strongly behoove us to attend to Hume's legacy.

The essence of Hume's philosophy, the entire rationale for the "breakthrough" of modern philosophy in the eighteenth century, was empiricism. Hume "believed that his predecessors and even his contemporaries had been content with answers which had no meaning."[10]

In order to pursue his inquiry in a meaningful way, he strictly adhered to the empirical method. In his view, as long as "warm imagination is allow'd to enter into philosophy, and hypotheses embrac'd merely for being specious and agreeable, we can never have any steady principles, nor any sentiments, which will suit with common practice and experience." If, however, "fancy" could be restrained, it might be possible to establish "a system or set of opinions, which if not true . . . may at least be satisfactory to the human mind."[11]

Through this process of inquiry, Hume concluded "that no possible experience would <u>constitute</u> knowledge of ultimate reasons," and as a consequence "no sciences concerning matters of fact [could] . . . be absolute; . . . only highly probable."[12] D. G. C. MacNabb observes that Hume was mainly concerned with Rationalists claiming deductive reasoning as a tool for speculative and practical philosophy. Dismissing the claim as false, Hume maintained "that pure deductive logic [could] never establish any proposition asserting a matter of fact and existence, or decide a moral question." Questions of fact could be decided only through experience, moral questions through feeling.[13] Hume's objective was "establishing a skeptical theory of knowledge," not "ascertaining the nature of things."[14] Nevertheless, Hume did not reject natural beliefs. Beliefs must prevail over critical reason. They should not be abandoned; they cannot be. He was not suggesting that man knows nothing, rather he was challenging "the foundation of that knowledge as truth about reality." He maintained that there is no <u>necessary</u> relationship between our experience of the world and the world's true nature.[15] He therefore rejected all the Enlightenment absolutes from natural law and rights to the question of taste.

As Hume's thought demonstrates, it is not simply that the Enlightenment was not empirical, and that in acknowledging this we have sufficiently corrected our Enlightenment view. This allows us to assume that empiricism may be "too much" for us, as it was "too much" for the philosophes, that is, we might dismiss its value on the grounds that human beings are incapable of looking at existence empirically or that empiricism is insufficient for our psychological needs. That Enlightenment history has failed to establish the validity and utility of empiricism as a basis for knowledge is one of its many flaws, evidenced in such oversights as Hume's place in the Enlightenment. Hume demonstrated in his work and in his life that empiricism is a feasible and valuable approach to studying human beings and living as one.

For instance, empiricism establishes philosophy as a perpetual inquiry rather than the revelation of a systematized cosmic scheme. In the twentieth century, the school of Analytic Philosophy, conceiving philosophy as "an attitude of mind, a philosophical spirit or temper," rather than "a set of doctrines," exemplifies this approach.[16] Such inquiry nurtures a tolerance and intellectual modesty that stimulates more inquiry as opposed to "war games," i.e., attack and defense, of opposing views. Hume "had no desire to disguise his errors"[17] (or lie, if necessary) and repeatedly acknowledged the possibility that he could be wrong, inviting others to propose alternatives he might have overlooked. He frankly admitted the limitations of his philosophy, taking comfort in the fact that no other "system" accomodated such "flaws" any better. So far from being a defender of truth, Hume rarely responded to his critics even when pettily or viciously attacked in his work or person. He actually examined and

approved for his publisher a refutation of his essay "Of Miracles."[18] It is difficult to see in Hume the authoritarian attitudes of modern man.

Furthermore, knowledge constantly adjusted to experience and observation might promote flexibility in our responses to our changeable environment and reduce our fears of abandoning or failing "Truth." Perhaps life would be viewed more as the learning experience than the test. Certainly, in the twentieth century, we are becoming accustomed to constantly re-defining our values in light of our circumstances. Empiricism, as it observes the ways of human beings, better accomodates the modern world than the rationalist idealism of the philosophes. As F. C. S. Schiller remarks, since there are

> no means of guaranteeing that the future we desire will be made secure by any scientific reasoning. [and] All our "knowledge" is but conditional and more or less probable. . . . Is not the proper attitude, alike of the true man and of the true empiricist, to make every preparation he can, undauntedly to meet the dangers and uncertainties of the future, and to keep on readjusting his actions while the items of experience gradually accrue?[19]

With such an attitude we might cope better in a changing world unencumbered by the fixed views of historical purpose (or process) or moral destiny of which Heilbroner warns.

Hume meant to bring philosophy down to earth and make it relevant, i.e. useful, to actual living. It was his distinction that "he never lost sight of the understanding of the general public," although he was trying "to revolutionise the study of human nature." Norman Kemp Smith contends that Hume "is . . . emphatic that it is the attitude of ordinary consciousness, as expressed in the vulgar system, which is in fact held to and has to be

accounted for." For Hume, "nothing . . . could be more harmful to philosophy than that it should become detached from the general life. It should be . . . a department of literature, accessible to all intelligent readers, and in living contact with contemporary thought." John Stewart notes Hume's concern that the vulgar saw science "as useless and contemptible." Believing "he had discovered how men understand the subject matter of all the sciences," he hoped to bridge the gap between the learned and the mundane and declared himself the "Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation." An Everyman philosopher, Hume asserted that all of us at one time or another comprise "the unthinking and unphilosophical part of mankind."[20] On the basis of his epistemology, he constructed and personally demonstrated a secular philosophical guide to life, as valuable and useful in the twentieth century as when it was first published.

In his epistemology, Hume described a psychology of belief. Although analysts confuse his empiricism with egoism,[21] he began, like Montaigne, observing his personal sense perception and sentiments, attending to and distinguishing the roles of reason and passion. His interest lay in trying to discover the theoretical reasons supporting beliefs, which could be accounted for psychologically but never philosophically explained.[22] As discussed in Chapter IV, the "how" of thought processes is much more revealing than "what" is thought. For example, Cassirer smooths over the rift between Rousseau and his colleagues on the basis that the content of his thought (his ideals), was similar to those of the other philosophes. Rousseau merely differed in his "method of reasoning,"--"the deduction of his ideals, . . . their derivation and justification."[23] In missing

the significant distinction of "how" Rousseau thought, Cassirer overlooks important implications in Rousseau's philosophy and distorts eighteenth century history with the "unified" Enlightenment. By emphasizing the psychological basis of knowing, Hume seems to anticipate the modern theory of structuralism.

Modifying both materialism (reality is mirrored in the mind) and idealism (reality is constructed in the mind), which presume that information gathered by the senses reaches the mind, structuralism maintains that "knowledge enters the mind not as raw data but in already highly abstracted form, namely structures." In the process of receiving and sorting data, there is loss and selection of data.

> [S]ince the mind does not gain access to the full set of data about the world, it can neither mirror nor construct reality. Instead for the mind reality is a set of structural tranforms of primary data taken from the world. This transformation process is hierarchical, in that "stronger" structures are formed from "weaker" structures through selective destruction of information. Any set of primary data becomes meaningful only after a series of such operations has so transformed it that it has become congruent with a stronger structure pre-existing in the mind.[24]

The structure "hierarchy" seems to correspond with Hume's theory of belief, arising from "strong" and "weak" impressions and the repetition thereof. Hume would assert the roles of temperament and experience (individual psychology) in the processes of data selection and destruction, establishing "reality" as a uniquely individual perception.

Because man cannot know an ultimate reality, philosophy is incapable of answering ultimate questions. Insisting that we "fac[e] the actual facts of

experience, and not just what we _think_ they are,"[25] Hume constructed a genuinely secular philosophy.

Fundamental to a secular philosophy is its communicability. Aware of the importance of language in the communication of ideas, Hume observed "the obscurity of . . . ideas, and the ambiguity of . . . terms . . . [to be the] chief obstacle . . . to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences." He insisted that all terms and concepts be experientially grounded and therefore comprehensible to the vast majority of mankind. As John Price comments, "for Hume, meaning is the most important component of any writing." If Hume's style is less entertaining than Voltaire's, it was because he was "more interested in accurate representation or analysis than in the glib phrase."[26] A commitment to such precision and clarity in language would certainly enhance under-standing and minimize the Orwellian threats of "doublethink" and "newspeak."

Hume clearly perceived that disputes among men "pertinaciously obstinate in their principles" produced in them "blind adherence to their own arguments . . . [and] contempt of their antagonists." Whereas for us, principle justifies an action we consider atrocious in "unprincipled" others, Hume clearly observed the human sacrifices of primitive societies to be no worse than the "inquisition and persecution of Rome and Madrid."[27] He teaches that systems, even "perfect" ones, ignore (or despise) human nature and therefore cannot realize goals commensurate with human needs. These systems demand that which our nature cannot give. History suggests that the search for systematized "truth," especially by intellectuals, yields diverse, even perverse, conclusions. Intellectuals (allegedly informed and

skilled reasoners) seem no more adept at describing or implementing ideals than churchmen or demagogues. In fact, they are just as dangerous in that they concur, often with the full weight of their "science," with the clerics and the fanatics that ultimately true systems do exist and are discoverable.[28] Hume <u>accepted</u> human nature and was willing to live with its limitations concerning knowledge of ultimate truth. His example demonstrated that life can be lived without the assurances of ultimate knowledge. Peter Gay observes, "He was willing to live with uncertainty, with no supernatural justification, no complete explanations, no promise of permanent stability, with guides of merely probable validity, and what is more, he lived in his world without complaining."[29] The measure of a philosophy is starkly revealed in the lives of its subscribers. Whereas the <u>philosophes</u> failed their prescriptions, offering no example of how these tenets "translated" into daily living, Hume's philosophy is appealingly apparent in his own contented, peaceful, dignified, and honest life.

Believing it more important to live life than extrapolate on its ultimate rationale, Hume contended that "human life is more governed by fortune than by reason; is to be regarded more as a dull pastime than a serious occupation; and is more influenced by particular humour, than by general principles. . . . While we are reasoning concerning life, life is gone." Mindful of man's urge to question and speculate, Hume did not propose ending such inquiry, but his strictures would prevent the formulation of systems that became more important than the men who devised them. "Indulge your passion for science, . . . but let your science be human. . . . Be a philosopher; but amidst all your philosophy, be still a man."[30]

As a result of his epistemology and his strict empiricism, Hume concluded that skepticism was the only reasonable response to the world. For this reason, scholars seem somewhat embarrassed of him and apolegetic that such a great mind foundered on these shores. But as Constance Maund points out this is "an emotional rather than an intellectual response. Scepticism theatens our assurance and so is distasteful to us." Nevertheless, Hume's argument regarding knowledge seems irresistible: "our minds cannot achieve rational certitude of God's existence, our understanding cannot be assured that its regular experience necessarily fits the real world."[31]

Hume proposed two useful aspects of what he called "mitigated skepticism." One was to limit "our enquiries to such subjects as are best adapted to the narrow capacity of human understanding." Philosophers should never pontificate beyond the realm of common life. Hume's skepticism worked to preserve impartiality in judgment and minimal (or an acknowledged) bias in reviewing conclusions and "examin[ing] accurately all their conclusions." As Constance Maund notes, Hume did not expect to change man's "habits of expectation." His hope was "to make us see things in a new light and to throw open new ways of banishing illusion and error."[32]

The other use of a skeptical attitude was to combat dogmatism, to encourage "modesty and reserve" among dogmatists in the interests of abating "their prejudice against antagonists . . . [and] their pride."[33] Perceiving the limitations of the human mind, Hume felt that "an analytic and critical philosophy [could] be a powerful instrument for diminishing fanaticism and intolerance."[34] For Hume, "superstition and fanaticism

[were] the supreme threats to civilized life."[35] Skepticism, which mortified every passion ("except the love of truth"), constrained any passion from being "carried to too high a degree." Hume instructed his readers to "yield to that propensity, which inclines us to be positive and certain in particular points, according to the light, in which we survey them in any particular instant."[36] As skeptics, then, we may assume knowledge in particular and specific instances but we may never presume knowledge in general or ultimate contexts.

Hume maintained that "truth is disputable" and that men are so varied and changeable in their thinking, values, and behavior, that no acceptable, let alone "true," doctrine could be formulated characterizing man's nature or purpose.[37] "Human nature is too inconstant to admit of any such regularity. Changeableness is essential to it." He pointed up a mistake of which all philosophers seemed susceptible, that of extending a "favorite principle, . . . over the whole creation" obliterating the variety so apparent in nature."[38] Always wary of the authoritarian nature of systems-making, Hume maintained that being "dogmatical" was unphilosophical and a likely indicator of error. He therefore cautioned against "imposing [one's] conjectures and hypotheses on the world for the most certain principles."[39] Hume wished men to be mindful of the "universal perplexity and confusion, which is inherent in human nature. In general, there is a degree of doubt, and caution, and modesty, which in all kinds of scrutiny and decision, ought for ever to accompany a just reasoner."[40]

Hume did not deny the existence of truth; he denied the capacity of man's reason to know or explain it. The effects of his denial, however, are significant for he implied "that knowledge is unavailable and [that]

judgment must consequently be suspended"; "if one does not know, the issue is wide open."[41] In modern times, the significant legacy of Hume's skepticism is its capacity for discerning and denying authoritarian systems and attitudes. In his introduction to Hume's Enquiries, Selby-Bigge remarks that in his writings "it is very hard to say positively that [Hume] taught, or did not teach, this or that particular doctrine."[42] The reason for this is that he taught none and an intellectual should know by definition that a skeptic could do nothing else. Hume's conception of science emphasized speculation rather than security,[43] and he recognized no philosophical system as final or true, believing "the most agreeable guide in daily life [to be] a philosophy whose errors are merely ridiculous, and whose excesses do not warp our lives."[44]

In his "speculative" conception of science, Hume achieved the pre-eminent goal of his era. He established the value of the scientific method as applied to the study of man. While the philosophes acclaimed the method then denied its conclusions, Hume established the common foundation of all sciences--social or natural. It is not that he "raised" social sciences to the level of "exact" science, rather he qualified the nature of "exact" science such that, since it is dependent on the human observer, it is necessarily limited and imprecise itself. Apparently, the twentieth century agrees with him.

According to Hume, causes would not continue operation without minds contemplating them, that is, causes depend on thought. He wrote, "Experience proves, that there is an original principle of order in mind, not in matter. From similar effects we infer similar causes."[45] In Robert Anchor's summation,

Hume concluded that the uniformity of nature is an axiom, not a proof of the validity of scientific statements. Science is justified in subscribing to this axiom on the grounds of practical necessity. . . . the rational order of nature is only a premise; a useful one, one necessary to action, but a premise nonetheless.[46]

In A History of Science Sir William Dampier observed,

Men of science, most of whom used naively to assume that they were dealing with ultimate reality, are coming to see more clearly the true nature of their work. The methods of science are primarily analytic, and lead . . . to the explanation of phenomena in mathematical form and in terms of physical concepts. But the fundamental concepts of physical science, it is now understood, are abstractions, framed by our minds so as to bring order and simplicity into an apparent chaos of phenomena. The approach to reality through science, therefore, gives only aspects of reality, pictures drawn on simplified lines, but not reality itself. Nevertheless, even philosophers are coming to see that, in a metaphysical study of reality, the methods and results of science are the best available evidence, and that a new realism, if possible at all, must be built up by their means.[47]

In the eighteenth century, Hume knew what both scientists and philosophers "are coming to see" in the twentieth. He asserted that if the "science of man" was flawed in its inability to "explain ultimate principles," all sciences and arts were similarly so. "None of them can go beyond experience, or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority." He insisted that "we never really advance a step beyond ourselves." Interestingly, Einstein's biographer states that "the philosopher whose views Einstein felt helped him the most was David Hume."[48]

Richard Feynman, physicist and Nobel Prize winner, frankly admits that after all the accumulation of scientific research and development over human history, the "meaning of it all" is still unknown. In fact, he urges on the scientist the responsibility "to teach how doubt is not to be feared but

welcomed and discussed."[49] Perhaps modern day scientists will achieve what the philosophe, rather hypocritically, failed--skepticism, speculative inquiry. Perhaps in the twentieth century the separation of philosophy from science, largely effected by the school of Kant and Hegel,[50] can be closed. Historians might facilitate this union by resurrecting the best "Enlightenment" manifestation of it, David Hume.

Renewed interest in Hume might be very apropo in the twentieth century, since we may finally be disposed toward skepticism. Our disillusion with religion, politics, science, and idealism may finally make room for doubt. We can be skeptics by default, that is, not by philosophical reasoning, but (in true Humean fashion) through our experience. Our world forces diversity upon us such that uniformity cannot be observed or very successfully imposed. Fear is becoming wearisome. There is so much to be afraid of--no one identifiable, manageable fear, no one comprehensible evil to contrast with our one pure Truth. Life is finally too confusing for simple truthful systems. Furthermore, our ideals have betrayed us. They do not work; we do not understand them. Zealous opponents resist the "Truth" while potential beneficiaries of it turn their backs on it, uncomprehending and unimpressed. Perhaps now we are ready to admit that we do not know the truth amidst all the instability and complexity of modern living. Perhaps now a new Enlightenment history is possible written by historians who have had to live in the world and not beyond it. Capable themselves of being skeptical, they can appreciate the skeptic of the eighteenth century, whose instruction is clearly validated in the present and vitally relevant for it. Furthermore, they can finally hold the era to its claims and conclude that

if the "enlightened" spirit/philosophy was empirical and skeptical, then David Hume was the Enlightenment.

Similarly, historians should undertake another important corrective regarding Hume (and skepticism). Seriously erroneous interpretations assert that while Hume was personally egoistic and ambitious, his "vision of the feasible is too narrow, his distrust of the ideal too inhibiting. He seems to lack the large spirit of faith in man."[51] Immersed themselves in idealism, scholars urge man to submit his nature to the "grand scheme." But hypnotized by the idea, they lose sight of the human being. By definition, ideals are unrealized, therefore, they are obscure and constantly subject to interpretation and re-interpretation, despite the rational assumption that they are ultimate and absolute. The philosophes perpetuated the error of the church in locating truth outside of the human being, rather than directing the quest within. Hume's purpose of study, directly opposed to religious teaching regarding man's nature and, in reality, that of the philosophes, was one's own amusement, one's own self-analysis, not the renewal of society.[52] As Robert Ginsberg observes "without any commitment to a social utopia, to a god, or to a knowledge of reality, Hume yet lived with all that remained, namely his humanity." Hume "challenged reason but he knew himself."[53] Therefore, the thrust of his philosophy was to teach us to examine our own nature so that we will not adopt and submit ourselves to systems. Hume concluded that whatever systems of universal purpose men held, "they remain men. Hume's analysis reconciles men to themselves. Aware of their nature and limitations men may put themselves at ease concerning the divinity."[54] Assuming the study of man's nature to be the key to understanding all other sciences, Hume dignified man in a

way the philosophes, emphasizing behavior modification, even manipulation, could never do. In truth, Hume had the deepest faith in man and was the premier optimist of the eighteenth century.

According to Ernest Mossner, Hume's Treatise presented "a balanced and reconciling view of both the intellectual capacity and the generosity of man." In the Enquiries, Hume held up the ennobling and pleasurable virtues of Diogenes to the demeaning and suffocating righteouness of Pascal. Diogenes worked to "render himself an independent being as much as possible, and to confine all his wants and desires and pleasures within himself and his own mind." Pascal kept "a perpetual sense of his dependence before his eyes, and never . . . forg[ot] his numberless wants and infirmities." While Diogenes was proud, pleasure-loving, and devoted to his friends even when he railed at them, Pascal constantly abased and hated himself, made himself suffer, and "endeavoured to be absolutely indifferent towards his nearest relations, and to love and speak well of his enemies."[55] Self-satisfaction and self-enjoyment rank high in Hume's account of virtuous living.

While the canaille was relegated to Catholicism and state control, Hume left his reader "to draw [his] own final conclusions about the facts," feeling "no need to go on and pronounce upon the truth or falsity of that thing which the facts display."[56] Though desirous of influencing the opinions and behavior of men, Hume proceeded in his work more modestly and with greater respect for his readers (and opponents) than the other philosophes. "Can I do better than propose the difficulty to the public, even though, perhaps, I have small hopes of obtaining a solution? We shall at

least, by this means, be sensible of our ignorance, if we do not augment our knowledge?"[57]

According to Hume, the great stumbling block to peace and harmony among men was the authoritarian conviction which men used to set themselves apart from each other. By denying them such assurance, Hume hoped to foster a tolerance and mutual respect that would sustain a contented society.

> His philosophy, his theory of knowledge, his ethics, and his political theory, are designed to persuade men to understand their passions, and thereafter calmly and without enthusiasm to make arrangements that they should live together peacefully and agreeably, in a decent compromise with the conflicting demands of their nature.[58]

For Hume, Nature operated through men's hearts not their intellect and where other philosophes proclaimed the social benefits of "enlightened" self-interest, Hume disclosed the best indication of personal merit to be benevolence.[59]

Although his is not the philosophy considered characteristic of the Age of Reason, David Hume holds out the best possibility of modern man's realistic self-analysis, not only in terms of explaining our malaise and bewilderment, but also in terms of formulating a mode of existence that is comfortable, enjoyable, fair, and accessible. Accomodating means to the ends, Hume suggested that we must know and respect ourselves in order to understand and respect others. An "enlightened" society must truly be founded on "enlightened" individuals, who can truly perceive the dignity of others through their own self-esteem, who can truly understand the situation of another through sympathy, who can abandon ideals and establish values on the value of human beings. As Robert Ginsberg

observes, "Hume then stands for 'the party of human-kind.' And for his illumination of our humanity he may well endure as the most valuable light of a century said to be enlightened."[60]

NOTES

[1]Hume quoted in Mossner, Introduction to Hume, <u>Treatise</u>, pp. 17, 9.

[2]Cobban, <u>In Search of Humanity</u>, p. 135.

[3]R. R. Palmer, quoted in Crocker, <u>Age of Crisis</u>, p. 461.

[4]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 644; Grimm, quoted in Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 215; Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 644. It should be recalled that Hume did <u>not</u> deny man's drive to believe in what was impossible to demonstrate. In fact, he recognized such belief as essential for survival. He did, however, refuse to speculate on what lay beyond knowledge and denied anyone claiming to know such things ultimate certainty.

[5]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 602.

[6]Bronowski and Mazlish, <u>Western Intellectual Tradition</u>, pp. 474-5.

[7]Quoted in Mossner, Introduction fo Hume, <u>Treatise</u>, p. 7.

[8]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 617.

[9]Ibid., p. 640.

[10]Cragg, <u>Reason and Authority</u>, p. 129.

[11]Hume, <u>Treatise</u>, pp. 319-20.

[12]Cavendish, <u>David Hume</u>, p. 24; Mossner, "Hume: The Voice of the Enlightenment," in <u>Present-Day Relevance</u>, ed. McCutcheon, p. 43.

[13]D.G.C. MacNabb, <u>David Hume: His Theory of Knowledge and Morality</u> (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), p. 17.

[14]Cavendish, David Hume, p. 16.

[15]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 637-8.

[16]Chappell, ed., Hume, pp. 1-2.

[17]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 142.

[18]Mossner, Life of David Hume, pp. 259, 232.

[19]Schiller, "Must Empiricism Be Limited?" p. 309.

[20]Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 3; Hume, Enquiries, pp. 6-7; Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, pp. 452, 527. Stewart, Moral and Political Philosophy, pp. 11, 17; Hume, Treatise. p. 255.

[21]Selby-Bigge, Introduction to Hume, Enquiries, p. ix.

[22]Copleston, Modern Philosophy, Part II, 5:194-5.

[23]Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 266.

[24]Gunther S. Stent, "Prematurity and Uniqueness in Scientific Discovery," in Scientific Genius and Creativity, Readings from Scientific American (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1982), p. 103.

[25]Moritz, "Is Hume the End?" p. 130.

[26]Hume, Enquiries, p. 61; Price, David Hume, pp. 147-8.

[27]Hume, Enquiries, p. 169; Natural History of Religion, p. 51. In fact, Hume considers the inquisition worse, for their victims were chosen in the name of virtue while sacrificial victims were often chosen by lottery.

[28]See Alastair Hamilton, The Appeal of Fascism: A Study of Intellectuals and Fascism, 1919-1945 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971) for an interesting study of the questionable role of ideas in politics. For example, only an intellectual could absolve Hitler of fanaticism

regarding Jews by distinguishing a fanatic's urge to "persuade" people and a rational man's effort to "convince" them. Hamilton, p. 109.

[29]Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:418-9.

[30]Hume, "The Skeptic," in Essays, p. 183; Enquiries, p. 233. This attitude of Hume's may be the reason why Collingwood, an ardent critic of philosophe historians, could give a favorable opinion of Hume's. Collingwood denotes the purpose of history as "human self-knowledge.... Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a man; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the man you are and nobody else is." Idea of History, p. 10.

[31]Maund, "Significance of Hume's Scepticism," p. 172; Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 646. Hume was surprised that "this harmless and innocent" philosophy "should be the subject of so much groundless reproach and obloquy." Enquiries, p. 141.

[32]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 162, 150; Maund, "Significance of Hume's Scepticism," p. 181.

[33]Hume, Enquiries, p. 161.

[34]Copleston, Modern Philosophy, Part II, 5:195.

[35]Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:453.

[36]Hume, Enquiries, p. 41; Treatise, pp. 320-1.

[37]Hume Enquiries, p. 171; "Of Commerce," in Essays, p. 261.

[38]Hume, Treatise, p. 335; "The Sceptic," in Essays, p. 161.

[39]Hume, Enquiries, p. 278; Treatise, p. 45.

[40]Hume, Enquiries, pp. 161-2.

[41]Moritz, "Is Hume the End?" pp. 126-7.

[42]Selby-Bigge, Introduction to Hume, Enquiries, p. vii.

[43]J. A. Passmore, Hume's Intentions (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1952), p. 154.

[44]Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 133. Bongie observes, however, that for the French philosophes philosophy was "not a sport, it was a sacred and deadly serious business." "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 221.

[45]Hume, Treatise, p. 218; "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in Hume Selections, ed. Hendel, p. 307.

[46]Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 63. Refuting the arguments of Hobbes, Clarke, and Locke regarding the necessity of a cause, Hume maintained they were all based on fallacious reasoning. "When we exclude all causes we really do exclude them, and neither suppose nothing nor the object itself to be the causes of the existence. . . . If every thing must have a cause, it follows, that upon the exclusion of other causes we must accept of the object itself or of nothing as causes. But 'tis the very point in question, whether every thing must have a cause or not; and therefore, according to all just reasoning, it ought never to be taken for granted." Treatise, p. 129.

[47]Dampier, History of Science, pp. vii-viii.

[48]Hume, Treatise, pp. 45, 116; Mossner, Introduction to Hume, Treatise, p. 27.

[49]Richard Feynman, What Do You Care What Other People Think? (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), pp. 247-8. Feynman also recounts a personal experiment demonstrating how people think differently and the important ramifications of this difference. In attempting to ascertain if he could count at a steady rate and do other things (e.g., read, walk, etc.),Feynman determined that "the only thing [he] absolutely could not do while counting to [himself] was talk." He found, however, that a colleague could count and talk. The difference was that Feynman counted "aloud" in his head, while his friend, visualized "a tape with numbers on it going by" as he talked. "What goes on in different people's heads when they think they're doing the same thing--something as simple as counting--is different for different peole." Ibid., pp. 58-59. This underscores Hume's assertion of the unique/individual nature of knowledge and the contention that how one

thinks is at least as important as what one thinks. Different modes of thinking can allow for different activities or abilities among people.

[50]Dampier, History of Science, p. xvii. Dampier contends that the French philosophes "ignor[ed] Newton's] wise spirit of caution, [and] converted [his] science into a mechanical philosophy, in which the whole of the past and future was theoretically calculable and man became a machine." Ibid., p. xvi.

[51]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 616. John Stuart Mill criticized Hume's ambition because he disliked Hume's skepticism. Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. 528. Selby-Bigge, editor of Hume's Enquiries, is a classic example of a scholar blind to what is before him. He writes, "Hume's philosophic writings are to be read with great caution. . . . he says so many different things in so many different ways and different connexions, and with so much indifference to what he has said before, that it is very hard to say positively [what] he taught. . . . He is ambitious rather than shy of saying the same thing in different ways, and at the same time he is often slovenly and indifferent about his words and formulae. . . ." Introduction to Hume, Enquiries, p. vii. As for doctrine, Hume is a skeptic and most analysts consider him remarkably consistent in this attitude. As for language, Hume was scrupulously conscious of the definition of terms and his choice of words. He alerted writers and readers to the crucial role of semantics in philosophy. Interestingly, despite Hume's substantial deficiencies as a philosopher, Selby-Bigge finds Book 1 of Hume's Treatise to be "in some ways the most important work of philosophy in the English language." Ibid., p. x.

[52]Bongie determines this to be the difference between a philosopher and a philosophe. "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher, p. 215.

[53]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," pp. 645-6.

[54]MacNabb, Theory of Knowledge and Morality, p. 13; Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 630.

[55]Mossner, Introduction to Hume, Treatise, p. 28; Hume, Enquiries, pp. 342-343.

[56]H. E. Root, Introduction to Hume, Natural History of Religion,

pp. 15-16.

[57]Hume, <u>Enquiries</u>, p. 38.

[58]Hampshire, "Hume's Place in Philosophy," in <u>David Hume</u>, ed. Pears, p. 10.

[59]Ibid.; Mossner, <u>Life of David Hume</u>, p. 608.

[60]Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 647.

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