STUDY MATERIALS: Modern Philosophy

John Hittinger, Ph.D.

Contents

General Information

Materials Needed for Assignments Overall:

TWO REQUIRED BOOKS FOR PURCHASE:**

> Morgan, Michael L., ed. 1996. *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*. 2nd edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. [MORGAN]
>
> Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins, eds. 1998. *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. [ARIEW]

ONE GENERAL HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

> There are three possible books for tracking the history of this period. Get one of them and read the narratives and summaries they provide. All three should be at a good library. Copleston is probably in print or at least findable at used bookstores. Gilson/Langan is the best.
>
> Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963)
>
> Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol IV*, V, VI (New York: Image, 1963).
>
> James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954).

MATERIALS FOR CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVES

> Various Catholic texts will be used as indicated, such as Documents of Vatican II, John Paul II, Jacques Maritain. Most of this material may be found in the library or on line.

**NOTE: You may use individual texts; but you must acquire at least the following texts (all, except Pascal, are available from Hackett Publishing Company):

1. Francis Bacon, New Organon
2. Niccoli Machiavelli, The Prince
3. Descartes, Discourse on Method and Meditations
4. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan
5. Benedict Spinoza, Ethics

6. Pascal, Pensees
7. John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding
8. John Locke, Two Treatises of Government
9. David Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding
10. Immanuel Kant, Prologomena to any Future Metaphysics
11. Immanuel Kant, Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals

THERE ARE 12 SEGMENTS OF 30 MINUTES EACH. READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE MADE FOR EACH OF THE 12 SEGMENTS

Outline

I. THE MODERN PROJECT: SIGNIFICANCE

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

- Introduction To Philosophy

C. Readings

1. "The Apostle Of Our Time" from *Thomas Aquinas* by Jacques Maritain
2. Jacques Maritain, Education at the Crossroads
3. Church in modern world - *Gaudium et spes*
4. Introductory Statement - The Situation Of Men In The Modern World
5. Remarks By Alexandr Solzhenitsyn "On The Crisis In The West"
6. "On Anthropocentric Humanism"

II. THE MODERN PROJECT: ORIGIN AND SCOPE

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Major Figures

2. Major Concepts

3. Three Waves of Modernity

4. Study Guide And Outline For C.S. Lewis Abolition Of Man Chap 3

C. READINGS

1. Swift, "Battle Between Ancient and Modern Books"

2. Rene Descartes - *Discourse on Method*

3. Bacon, "The Great Instauration"

III. FOUNDING THE MODERN PROJECT: CARTESIAN DOUBT

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Descartes Basics

2. Study Guide Descartes' Discourse On Method

3. Study Guide On Descartes' Meditations

C. Readings

1. Jacques Maritain, The Dream of Descartes

2. "The Ancient Knowledge is Useless"

3. "The Ancient Knowledge is Dubious"

4. Jacques Maritain on the effects of Descartes' Philosophy

IV. FOUNDING THE MODERN PROJECT: CARTESIAN DUALISM

A. BASIC THEMES

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Descartes' Meditations I and II

2. Schematic of Cartesian Philosophy

C. Readings

1. Descartes

2. Maritain on Descartes

V. THE POLITICAL SWEEP OF THE MODERN PROJECT: HOBBES

A. Basic Themes

B. STUDY GUIDES AND OUTLINES

1. HOBBES' LEVIATHAN Questions for Reading and Review

2. Outline For Hobbes, The Leviathan

C. Readings

1. Hobbes, "Six lessons to the Professors of the Mathematics"

2. Hobbes, De Corpore politico

3. Hobbes, Vita carmine expressa

4. Hobbes, *Leviathan*

5. Hobbes, "On Body"

6. George Grant - "English Speaking Justice"

VI. THE RELIGIOUS SWEEP OF THE PROJECT: SPINOZA AND PASCAL

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

C. Readings

1. Langan on Spinoza
2. Lewis White Beck on Spinoza
3. Pascal on Man's disproportion

VII. METAPHYSICAL MODERATION? LOCKE'S ESSAY

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

John Locke Questions on epistemology for Review

C. Readings

1. Essay 2.13.27
2. Essay 2.28.14
3. Essay 2.28.7
4. Essay 2.21.55

VIII. POLITICAL MODERATION? LOCKE'S SECOND TREATISE

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

C. Readings

1. Redemptor Hominis, #21
2. Second Treatise #3
3. Second Treatise #4
4. Second Treatise #6
5. Second Treatise #7
6. Second Treatise #8

7. Second Treatise #11
8. Second Treatise #12
9. Second Treatise #16
10. Second Treatise #17

IX. RADICALIZING THE PROJECT: HUME AND ROUSSEAU

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Outline of Hume An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding
2. QUESTIONS ON HUME

C. Readings

1. David Hume - The Project
2. On Hume's Character

X. METAPHYSICAL SALIENCE OF THE MODERN PROJECT: KANT ON KNOWLEDGE

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics
2. Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason

C. Readings

1. Kant, Preface to the Second Edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*
2. Kant, Idea for a Universal History, III & IV

XI. ETHICAL SALIENCE OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY: KANT ON ETHICS

A. Basic Themes

B. Outlines and Study Guides

Kennington on Kant's The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals

C. Readings

Kant on "The Existence of God as a Postulate of Pure Practical Reason"

XII. EVALUATING THE MODERN PROJECT: TOWARDS AN INTEGRAL HUMANISM

READING: Maritain's "Scholasticism and Politics"

Lesson 1: The Modern Project: Significance

A. Basic Themes:

First we must review the basic notion of philosophy, as developed by the ancient Greek thinkers and developed by the medieval philosophers, especially taking note of Thomas Aquinas. At its peak pre-modern philosophy (i.e. ancient and medieval philosophy) is a theoretical attempt to understand the first principles of things; it raises ultimate questions with the hope of catching a glimpse of the eternal visage of Truth. In short, pre-modern philosophy aimed at a contemplation of the divine. One should review or consult Aristotle's Metaphysics Book I chaps 1-2, and Aquinas' commentary as well.

Modern philosophy defines itself as a new thing in opposition to the ancient and medieval philosophy. Modern philosophy reorients the quest to find those principles of things that allow human beings to achieve mastery over nature. It emphasizes self-awareness and is fascinated with human subjectivity and its mark upon all human knowing and striving. It joins together a new science of nature with a new science of ethics and politics, as we shall see in Session 2. But the modern project shows signs of a great crisis. The promise of technology has proven to be ambivalent. As C. S. Lewis has so well explained in Abolition of Man, mastery of nature means mastery of some men over men. Technology has brought us to brink of destruction through war; it has unleashed great new possibilities for the degradation of human beings; it has despoiled the environment. It has allowed the tyrant's fist to hammer harder on the vulnerabilities of human beings through the media, mass brainwashing, and means of espionage and terror. We have abandoned ancient principles of moral education and now wonder

where to turn to find the moral wisdom to guide and live the great power, which we have unleashed. Lewis is not unique in wondering whether some kind of repentance, or re-turn, to ancient philosophy may be in order.

So too many philosophers wonder if we may now be in a post-modern age insofar as the basic principles of modern philosophy, solidified by Kant, have become tenuous and questionable. Thinkers like Nietzsche and his contemporary imitators radically questioned the modern claim to truth and progress.

The Catholic Church has been an antagonist of the modern project from the outset, at least in its pretension to make men gods of the earth and to erect a new secular paradise. She has objected to the lowering of moral standards. She has objected to the disregard for religion and neglect of metaphysics and religious truth. Vatican Council II is very significant because we find some new approaches to the way in which Catholics should respond to and understand the modern world. The Church in the Modern World urges Catholics to enter into the hopes and aspirations of modern men and women and to make new efforts to purify from within the quest for freedom, science, and political harmony. John Paul II helped to write this document and the theological philosophical output of his papacy is a grand and profound elaboration of this great document. Catholics are called upon to "redeem the times" to face the challenges to join in partnership with the initiatives of the day and help to ground them in God and return all things to God. In order to do this Catholics must understand the philosophical basis of the modern age. What are its principal goals and aspirations; with what ways do the great modern philosophers struggle with the questions of being, truth, and ethics? We must be thoughtful critics of the modern age in order to fulfill this task of Vatican II. By understanding the origins and methods of modern philosophy we can be ready to offer constructive solutions and deepen the human understanding of the great questions; for it is still the cross that offers the deepest grasp of the human condition. And the wisdom of the pre-moderns, especially concerning the good, and of being, will assist us to provide a great context and wider comprehension of for what modern men and women think and seek.

B. Outlines and Study Guides:

Introduction To Philosophy

Philosophy comes from Greek terms meaning "Love [philos] of wisdom [sophia]"

Wisdom is knowledge of what is most important or a knowledge of first things, or a knowledge of ultimate causes and principles. Such first causes or principles are those, which influence, form and control other causes and principles, which are called "proximate" or "secondary" causes. Philosophy is called a "love" of wisdom because it is first of all a quest or a search for the first things; those who were named "sophists" or wise men, were considered arrogant and boasters. Socrates said that philosophy begins in wonder. It requires an admission of ignorance or a feeling of perplexity about existence. Everyday things, which seem so familiar and about which we have such

certain opinions, may sometimes take on a dimension of mystery and depth. Perhaps it takes the shock of death, or love - then we realize that the world provokes our wonder and we begin to ask questions and seek to understand it better. Hence, we may conclude with Jacques Maritain, in his book *An Introduction to Philosophy*:

> CONCLUSION I. -- Philosophy is the science which by the natural light of reason studies the first causes or highest principles of all things -- is in other words, the science of things in their first causes, in so far as these belong to the natural order.

Philosophy is the quest for fundamental causes and principles.
Philosophy is the examination of opinion, with the aim of acquiring greater clarity, consistency and insight.

Here are some of the basic questions of philosophy:

- WHAT IS A GOOD LIFE? WHAT IS WORTH LIVING FOR OR DYING FOR?
- WHAT IS JUSTICE? WHAT IS THE BEST SOCIETY?
- IS NATURE THE RESULT OF PURPOSE, CREATION, OR CHANCE?
- IS THERE ONLY MATTER OR ALSO SPIRIT?
- DOES GOD EXIST?
- ARE HUMANS FREE OR DETERMINED?
- IS THERE A SOUL, IS IT IMMORTAL?
- WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE AND HOW DO WE ACQUIRE IT?

Philosophy has traditionally been divided into three principle parts: (i) Logic, which is the introduction to philosophy; it studies the conceptual apparatus which directs the mind to TRUTH (includes study of method and epistemology, what is knowing); (ii) theoretical or speculative philosophy, which studies the BEING of things (includes nature, psychology, and metaphysics, and philosophy of religion); (iii) practical philosophy which studies the GOOD of human acts (includes ethics and politics and aesthetics, the study of beauty and art).

NOW WHY PHILOSOPHY?

We cannot always be thinking about these things; we would go crazy, be too intense, too impractical; we need to eat, work, have fun etc. Further we must engage in our special disciplines, like physics, aeronautics, computer science and so forth. But every discipline contains a philosophy and a set of first principles and causes. The great thinkers in every discipline have been "philosophic" insofar as they pushed their thoughts to the ultimate foundations of the discipline. Further, the first principles of any

discipline may claim to be ultimate or comprehensive, but that is a dubious claim. Are the laws of physics the comprehensive principles to explain all reality? So no God, no soul, no good, no justice? This is a philosophical question. Newton, Einstein, Heisenberg, Turing, Darwin et al all engaged in philosophic questioning about the foundations or postulates of their science and questions about the "whole" of which it was part. Philosophy is an attempt to see things "whole," to go beyond one narrow discipline, to see things in the broadest possible context. Hence, again from Maritain --

> CONCLUSION II. -- Philosophy is the highest of all branches of human knowledge and is in the true sense wisdom. The other (human) sciences are subject to philosophy, in the sense that it judges and governs them and defends their postulates. Philosophy on the other hand is free in relation to the sciences, and only depends upon them as the instruments which it employs.
>
> Now usually we have some notions about ultimate things; and they derive from religion. Philosophy and religion do venture for similar goals; but philosophy is the use of reason in the pursuit, whereas religion is based in faith. Reason seeks to give a logical account and provide proof. Religion derives from God's revelation of the truth about himself which man could not know if unaided by grace. Because reason cannot finally grasp all of the answers it raises, it is fitting for an inquiring mind to return to faith. But religion itself calls for philosophic inquiry; Augustine said, "Faith seeks understanding." So for the defense of faith, explanation of faith one can use philosophy. Reason may also help in moderating the extremism or fanaticism of faith. Finally we cannot ignore the fact of a pluralism of faiths. Philosophy may help us sort out the contradictions, understand the differences. At the very least, philosophy can help us to make our case by appealing to all men and women of reason and good will. So religion and philosophy may actually assist one another; philosophy is not an intrinsic threat to religious faith (although many use it that way!). At the end of the day, religion may actually turn out to be the superior source. Hence:
>
> CONCLUSION III. -- Theology, or the science of God so far as He has been made known to us by revelation, is superior to philosophy. Philosophy is subject to it, neither in its premises nor in its method, but in its conclusions, over which theology exercises a control, thereby constituting itself a negative rule of philosophy.

Reference: Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1930). See also, Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (New York: New American Library, 1962) J.M. Bochenski, Philosophy (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1962)

C. Readings:

1. "The Apostle Of Our Time" from *Thomas Aquinas* by Jacques Maritain

The disease afflicting the modern world is in the first place a disease of the mind: it began in the mind, it has now attacked the roots of the mind. Is it surprising that the

world should seem to us shrouded in darkness? *Si oculus tuus fuerit nequam, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit*. Just as at the moment when the original sin was committed all the harmony of the human being was shattered, because the order that insists that the reason shall be subject to God had first been violated, so at the root of all our disorders there is apparent, in the first place and above all, a rupture in the supreme ordinations of the mind. The responsibility of philosophers in this respect is enormous. In the sixteenth century, and more particularly in the age of Descartes, the interior hierarchies of the virtue of reason were shattered. Philosophy abandoned theology to assert its own claim to be considered the supreme science, and, the mathematical science of the sensible world and its phenomena taking precedence at the same time over metaphysics, the human mind began to profess independence of God and being. Independence of God: that is to say, of the supreme Object of all intelligence, whom it accepted only half-heartedly until it finally rejected the intimate knowledge of Him supernaturally procured by grace and revelation. Independence of being: that is to say, of the connatural object of the mind as such, against which it ceased to measure itself humbly, until it finally undertook to deduce it entirely from the seeds of geometrical clarity which it conceived to be innate in itself.

We have difficulty in realizing that the ordered relation of the mind to its object should be thus shattered; we have difficulty in realizing -- so material have we become -- the frightful significance, sodden with blood and tears, of those few abstract words; we have difficulty in realizing the tremendous upheaval, the tremendous invisible catastrophe, thereby indicated. The mind is that 'divine' activity, as Aristotle said, that prodigy of light and life, that supreme glory and perfection of created nature, through which we become immaterially all things, through which we shall one day posses our supernatural beatitude, the cause of all our actions on earth so far as they are human actions and of the rectitude of everything we do. Can we conceive what is the meaning for man of the disturbance of that life, which he carries in him and in which the divine light has its share? The revolution inaugurated by Descartes and continued by the philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which merely let loose the destructive forces for ever active in the minds of the children of Adam, is an infinitely greater historical cataclysm than the most formidable upheavals of the crust of the earth or the economy of the nations (page 56-57).

Three main symptoms of the disease afflicting the mind at the present day down to its very roots may be discerned at the point of evolution which speculation has reached since the great changes inaugurated by the Cartesian reform.

The mind imagines that it is giving proof of its own native strength by denying and rejecting as science first theology and then metaphysics; by abandoning any attempt to know the primary Cause and immaterial realities; by cultivating a more or less refined doubt which is an outrage both to the perception of the senses and the principles of reason, that is to say the very things on which all our knowledge depends. Such a presumptuous collapse of human knowledge may be described in one word: **agnosticism**.

The mind at the same time refuses to recognize the rights of primary Truth and repudiates the supernatural order, considering it impossible -- and such a denial is a blow at all the interior life of grace. That may be described in a word as *naturalism*.

Lastly, the mind allows itself to be deceived by the mirage of a mythical conception of human nature, which attributes to that nature conditions peculiar to pure spirit, assumes that nature to be in each of us as perfect and complete as the angelic nature in the angel and therefore claims for us, as being in justice our due, along with complete domination over nature, the superior autonomy, the full self sufficiency, the avtáoxela appropriate to pure forms. That may be described as *individualism*, giving the word its full metaphysical meaning, although *angelism* would be a more accurate description; such a term is justified by historical no less than by doctrinal considerations, because the ideal origin and metaphysical type of modern individualism are to be found in the Cartesian confusion between substance of whatever sort and the angelic monad.

I say that these three great errors are the symptoms of a really radical disease, for they attack the very root, the triple root rational, religious and moral, of our life Page (58-59).

2. Jacques Maritain, Education at the Crossroads

In answer to our question then, "What is man?" we may give the Greek, Jewish, and Christian idea of man: man as an animal endowed with reason, whose supreme dignity is in the intellect; and man as a free individual in personal relation with God, whose supreme righteousness consists in voluntarily obeying the law of God; and man as a sinful and wounded creature called to divine life and to the freedom of grace, whose supreme perfection consists of love.

Human Personality

From the philosophical point of view alone the main concept to be stressed here is the concept of human personality. Man is a person, who holds himself in hand by his intelligence and his will. He does not merely exist as a physical being. There is in him a richer and nobler existence; he has spiritual superexistence through knowledge and love. He is thus, in some way, a whole, not merely a part; he is a universe unto himself, a microcosm in which the great universe in its entirety can be encompassed through knowledge. And through love he can give himself freely to beings who are to him, as it were, other selves; and for this relationship no equivalent can be found in the physical world.

If we seek the prime root of all this, we are led to the acknowledgment of the full philosophical reality of that concept of the soul, so variegated in its connotations, which also described as the first principle of life in any organism and viewed as endowed with supramaterial intellect in man, in which Christianity revealed as the dwelling place of God and as made for eternal life. In the flesh and bones of man there exists a soul which is a spirit and which has a greater value than the whole physical universe. Dependent though he may be upon the slightest accidents of matter, the human person

exists by virtue of the existence of his soul, which dominates time and death. It is the spirit which is the root of personality.

The notion of personality thus involves that of wholeness and independence. To say that a man is a person is to say that in the depth of his being he is more a whole than a part and more independent than servile. It is this mystery of our nature which religious thought designates when it says that a person is the image of God. A person possesses absolute dignity because he is in direct relationship with the realm of being, truth, goodness, and beauty, and with God, and it is only with these that he can arrive at his complete fulfillment. His spiritual fatherland consists of the entire order of things which have absolute value, and which reflect, in some manner, a divine Absolute superior to the world and which have a power of attraction toward this Absolute.

3. Church In Modern World - *Gaudium et spes*

1. The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.

2. Hence this Second Vatican Council, having probed more profoundly into the mystery of the Church, now addresses itself without hesitation, not only to the sons of the Church and to all who invoke the name of Christ, but to the whole of humanity. For the council yearns to explain to everyone how it conceives of the presence and activity of the Church in the world of today.

Therefore, the council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives; that world which is the theater of man's history, and the heir of his energies, his tragedies and his triumphs; that world which the Christian sees as created and sustained by its Maker's love, fallen indeed into the bondage of sin, yet emancipated now by Christ, Who was crucified and rose again to break the strangle hold of personified evil, so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God's design and reach its fulfillment.

3. Though mankind is stricken with wonder at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of its individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity. Hence, giving witness and voice to the faith of the whole people of God gathered together by Christ, this council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with, as well as its respect and love for the entire human family with which it is bound up, than by engaging with it in conversation about these various problems. The council brings to mankind light kindled from the Gospel, and puts at its disposal those saving resources which the Church

herself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, receives from her Founder. For the human person deserves to be preserved; human society deserves to be renewed. Hence the focal point of our total presentation will be man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will. Therefore, this sacred synod, proclaiming the noble destiny of man and championing the godlike seed which has been sown in him, offers to mankind the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs. Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served [2].

4. Introductory Statement - The Situation Of Men In The Modern World

To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics. Some of the main features of the modern world can be sketched as follows.

Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world. Triggered by the intelligence and creative energies of man, these changes recoil upon him, upon his decisions and desires, both individual and collective, and upon his manner of thinking and acting with respect to things and to people. Hence we can already speak of a true cultural and social transformation, one which has repercussions on man's religious life as well. As happens in any crisis of growth, this transformation has brought serious difficulties in its wake. Thus while man extends his power in every direction, he does not always succeed in subjecting it to his own welfare. Striving to probe more profoundly into the deeper recesses of his own mind, he frequently appears more unsure of himself. Gradually and more precisely he lays bare the laws of society, only to be paralyzed by uncertainty about the direction to give it. Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic power, and yet a huge proportion of the world's citizens are still tormented by hunger and poverty, while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy. Never before has man had so keen an understanding of freedom, yet at the same time, new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance. Although the world of today has a very vivid awareness of its unity and of how one man depends on another in needful solidarity, it is most grievously torn into opposing camps by conflicting forces. For political, social, economic, racial and ideological disputes still continue bitterly, and with them the peril of a war which would reduce everything to ashes. True, there is a growing exchange of ideas, but the very words by which key concepts are expressed take on quite different meanings in diverse ideological systems. Finally, man painstakingly searches for a better world, without a corresponding spiritual advancement.

Influenced by such a variety of complexities, many of our contemporaries are kept from accurately identifying permanent values and adjusting them properly to fresh discoveries. As a result, buffeted between hope and anxiety and pressing one another with questions about the present course of events, they are burdened down with uneasiness. This same course of events leads men to look for answers; indeed, it forces them to do so.

5. Remarks By Alexadr Solzhenitsyn On The Crisis In The West

"The failings of human consciousness, deprived of its divine dimensions, have been a determining factor in all the major crimes of this century. The first of these was World War I, and much of our present predicament can be traced back to it. That war took place when Europe, bursting with health and abundance, fell into a rage of self-mutilation that could not but sap its strength for a century or more, and perhaps forever. The only possible explanation for this war is a mental eclipse among the leaders of Europe due to their lost awareness of a Supreme Power above them. Only a godless embitterment could have moved ostensibly Christian states to employ poison gas, a weapon so obviously beyond the limits of humanity. The same kind of defect, the flaw of consciousness lacking all divine dimension, was manifested after World War II when the West yielded to the satanic temptation of a nuclear umbrella ... The pitifully helpless state to which the contemporary West has fallen is in large measure due to this fatal error: the belief that the defense of peace depends not on stout hearts and steadfast men, but solely on the nuclear bomb" Alexandr Solzenhitsyn, Templeton Address, 1983.

"And yet no weapons no matter how powerful, can help the West until it overcomes its loss of will-power. In a state of Psychological weakness, weapons become a burden to the capitulating side. To defend oneself, one must be ready to die; there is little such readiness in a society raised in the cult of material well-being. Nothing is left then, but concessions, attempts to gain time, and betrayal" Alexandr Solzenhitsyn, Harvard Address, 1978.

"The material laws alone do not explain our life or give it direction. The laws of physics and physiology will never reveal the indisputable manner in which the Creator constantly day in and day out, participates in the life of each one of us, unfailing granting us the energy of existence. ... To the ill-considered hopes of the last two centuries, which have brought us to the brink of nuclear and non-nuclear death, we can propose only a determined quest for the warm hand of God, which we have so rashly and self-confidently spurned" Alexandr Solzenhitsyn, Templeton Address, 1983.

"It cannot be the unrestrained enjoyment of everyday life. It cannot be the search for the best ways to obtain material goods and then cheerfully get the most out of them. It has to be the fulfillment of a permanent, earnest duty, so that one's life journey may become an experience of moral growth, so that one may leave life a better human being than one started it" Alexandr Solzenhitsyn, Harvard Address, 1978.

"It is time, in the West, to defend not so much human rights as human obligations" Solzenhitsyn, Harvard Address, 1978.

6. On Anthropocentric Humanism

"Anthropocentric humanism," or what we now call "secular humanism." This is a humanism which defines man by excluding all reference to the transcendent and divine. Human happiness is to be found in this world alone. Anthropocentric humanism grounds the modern project to master nature; its aim is "to be lord of exterior nature and to reign over it by means of technological procedures [and] . . . to create. . . a material world where man will find, following Descartes' promises, a perfect felicity." Bourgeois life is a "cult of earthly enrichment"; economic life absorbs every other field of activity. Thus it debases human nature. Maritain often cited Werner Sombart, who said that the bourgeois man is neither ontological nor erotic because he lives by external signs such as money and honor, and he loves things more than persons. False humanism is the source of the other characteristics of bourgeois liberalism. By excluding the eternal and spiritual values, the bourgeoisie have only material goods for private consumption and no basis for a common good. By excluding a transcendent measure for human action, libertarianism and mere mutually-agreed-to restrictions on liberty obtain. And the cult of earthly enrichment, the lust for profit, leads to exploitation of the worker.

He was very interested in incorporating a sound philosophy of human rights into Christian social doctrine. Maritain insisted that we must face the difference between two philosophies of rights which must be traced back to fundamental differences in philosophy of God. He distinguishes the underlying philosophies as theocentric humanism and anthropocentric humanism: "the first kind of humanism recognizes that God is the center of man; it implies the Christian conception of man, sinner and redeemed, and the Christian conception of grace and freedom. The second kind of humanism believes that man himself is the center of man and implies a naturalistic conception of man and of freedom" [30]. According to the philosophy of theocentric humanism, human rights rest upon a natural and divine order, according to which human beings possess a dignity in virtue of their nature and destiny as creatures before God. The rights are limited in scope and are designed to assist the person in attaining their full stature as human beings. According to anthropocentric humanism, rights are based upon "the claim that man is subject to no law other than that of his will and freedom" and as a result have become "infinite, escaping every objective measure, denying every limitation imposed upon the claims of the ego." In his philosophy, Maritain sought to rescue the notion of human rights from the philosophical errors in which it has been put forward.

A KEY ISSUE: PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF AUTONOMY: GAUDIUM ET SPES

36. Now many of our contemporaries seem to fear that a closer bond between human activity and religion will work against the independence of men, of societies, or of the sciences.

If by the autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by men, then it is entirely right to demand that autonomy. Such is not merely required by modern man, but harmonizes also with the will of the Creator. For by

the very circumstance of their having been created, all things are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order. Man must respect these as he isolates them by the appropriate methods of the individual sciences or arts. Therefore if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith, for earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God [6].

Indeed whoever labors to penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind, even though he is unaware of the fact, is nevertheless being led by the hand of God, who holds all things in existence, and gives them their identity. Consequently, we cannot but deplore certain habits of mind, which are sometimes found too among Christians which do not sufficiently attend to the rightful independence of science and which, from the arguments and controversies they spark, lead many minds to conclude that faith and science are mutually opposed [7].

But if the expression, the independence of temporal affairs, is taken to mean that created things do not depend on God, and that man can use them without any reference to their Creator, anyone who acknowledges God will see how false such a meaning is. For without the Creator the creature would disappear. For their part, however, all believers of whatever religion always hear His revealing voice in the discourse of creatures. When God is forgotten, however, the creature itself grows unintelligible.

Required Readings:

Primary Texts:

- "Church in the Modern World" (Gaudium et spes) ## 1-11 *The Documents of Vatican Council II*, vol 1 edited by Austin Flannery (New York: Costello, 1996), pp. 903-912.

- Pope John Paul II, *The Redeemer of Man*, # 15 "What is Modern Man Afraid of" and #16 "Progress or Threat"

Secondary Literature: read one of the following:

- Jacques Maritain, "Integral Humanism and the Crisis of Modern Times," in *Scholasticism and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), pp. 11-32
  OR

- Jacques Maritain, "Christian Humanism," *Range of Reason* (New York: Scribner's, 1952), pp 185-199

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 3 page paper on the following theme: Select one of the signs of crisis of the "modern" civilization and explain why it is "modern" and why it indicates a "problem" for us today.

Supplemental Readings:

- Romano Guardini. Letters from Lake Como: Explorations in Technology and the Human Race. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Romano Guardini,. *The End of the Modern World*. Wilmington: ISI Books, 1998.
- Leo Strauss. "The Crisis of Our Time." In *The Predicament of Modern Politics*, ed. Harold J. Spaeth, 41-54. Detroit: Univ of Detroit Press, 1964.
- Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, "Harvard Address: A World Split Apart" In *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard*. Washington, D.C. Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980.
- Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. *Nobel Lecture*. New York: Noonday Press, 1972.
- C. S. Lewis. *Abolition of Man.* New York: Macmillan, 1947.

Lesson 2: The Modern Project: Origin and Scope

A. Basic Themes:

The unique concerns and perspectives of modern philosophy can be traced back to multiple sources - the rise of modern mathematical physics (Copernicus and Galileo); the new approach to politics (Machiavelli); the weakening and undermining of religious authority due to the reformation. Langan points out in his history that scholastic philosophy was already a spent force at this time. Skepticism was the position adopted by the learned. In this new situation it took the genius of Descartes to consolidate a new project for philosophy and politics. What is called the modern project is a combination of the new science of nature and the new science of politics. The former is characterized by an abandonment of teleological nature in favor of a MECHANISTIC approach to nature. Its dangers are that this approach to nature is abstractive (using mathematical intelligibility) and it is reductive (reads the higher in terms of the lower). It dovetails with the new science of politics. Machivaelli claimed to study man as he is and not he ought to be. It assumes a new notion of nature - nature as the low, nature as origins. Man is passionate and selfish. He recommends that men learn how to do evil; to find an effectual truth - to be practical. It is Descartes who brings those together in a coherent notion of the modern project.

B. Outlines and Study Guides:

1. Major Figures

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI	1469-1527	ITALY	THE PRINCE
COPERNICUS	1473-1543	POLAND	ON REVOLUTIONS
FRANCIS BACON	1561-1626	ENGLAND	THE NEW ORGANUM
GALILEO	1564-1642	ITALY	DIALOGUE ON CHIEF WORLD SYSTEMS
J. KEPLER	1571-1630	SWABIA	NEW ASTRONOMY
THOMAS HOBBES	1588-1679	ENGLAND	LEVIATHAN
RENE DESCARTES	1596-1650	FRANCE	DISCOURSE ON METHOD
BLAISE PASCAL	1623-1662	FRANCE	PENSEES
JOHN LOCKE	1632-1704	ENGLAND	ESSAY ON HUMAN UNDERSTANDING
BENEDICT SPINOZA	1632-1677	HOLLAND	POLITICAL TREATISE, ETHICS
ISAAC NEWTON	1642-1727	ENGLAND	PRINCIPIA; OPTICKS
GOTTFRIED LEIBNIZ	1646-1716	GERMANY	NEW SYSTEM, MONADOLOGY
GEORGE BERKELEY	1685-1753	IRELAND	DIALOGUES
DAVID HUME	1711-1776	ENGLAND	TREATISE ON HUMAN NATURE
JEAN J ROUSSEAU	1712-1778	FRANCE	FIRST DISCOURSE
KANT	1724-1804	PRUSSIA	CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON; FOUNDATION OF METAPHYSICS OF MORALS

2. Major Concepts

THE NEW SCIENCE OF NATURE
Unified heaven and earth: uniform laws of motion -- Galileo 1564-1642; Newton 1642-1727 Mechanism: nature as a machine: extended parts in motion; no purpose or "telos"; mathematical analysis Practical: orientation to technology and increase of power -- Bacon 1561-1626 New Organon; New Atlantis

THE NEW ETHICS AND POLITICS
Machiavelli 1469-1527 The Prince; Hobbes 1588-1679 Leviathan Realism: study man as he is, not as he ought to be Lower goal: comfortable self-preservation no highest good thin theory of good: life, liberty, property as conditions for the pursuit of happiness Rights over duties; individualism or atomism; derivation of moral law from self-interest

THE MODERN PROJECT
Mastery of nature for the relief of human condition-- Descartes 1596-1650 Discourse on Method; Meditations Liberty and protection of property as necessary and sufficient condition for just society Locke 1632-1704 Two Treatises of Government; Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Letters on Toleration Science as a means for practical ends - knowledge is power

3. Three Waves of Modernity

Three Waves Of Modernity From Leo Strauss, *Essays in Political Philosophy*

	Names	Human Nature	History	Project
1 Enlightenment	Machiavelli Hobbes Locke Descartes	Selfish but rational; Equal rights, unequal capacity and result; "joyless quest for joy"	Progress and enlightenment Limited government, separation church state Liberal regime American British revolution	Rational conquest of nature Comfortable self preservation Rights to life, liberty, property (pursuit of Happiness) or negative liberty
2 Romanticism	Rousseau Kant Herder Hegel	Gentle and compassionate; Irrational and Malleable; Forced to be Free Equal, oppressed Historical origins Alienation Sweet sentiment of existence	Utopian progress Heaven on earth or end of history - secularization of religion Perpetual peace Radical/socialist regime French Russian Revolution (Jacobinism)	Return or Escape To Irrational But Sweet Nature OR Citizen merged in general will Positive liberty; government facilitates freedom Bourgeois rights as formal and empty
3 Existentialism "All ideals are the outcome of human creative acts, of free human projects" (96)	Nietzsche Sartre	Selfish and irrational; cruel Unequal, hierarchical New nobility (ubermensch); Angst and terror	No rational meaning No eternity, eternal return Permanent war and strife and struggle (Mein Kampf) Fascist regime Naziism	TRANSVALUATION OF ALL VALUES Create new meanings and values - emptiness and terror of existence; All Rights as sham; resentment of weak; Irresponsible indifference or irresponsible activism

4. Study Guide And Outline For C.S. Lewis *Abolition Of Man* Chap 3

1. "Man's mastery of nature turns out to be man's mastery of man with the help of nature as an instrument." Explain in the case of airplanes, radios (wireless) and contraceptives. Can you think of other examples that show the same point?

2. Explain the two sides - the ambivalence - of human progress, and why there is no simple increase of power on man's side.

3. What is the last part of Nature to surrender to Man?

4. The power for man to make himself means what?

5. What are the two respects in which the power acquired is novel or new? Elaborate on each novel difference.

6. What is the problem faced by the new "motivators" of the human race?

7. Explain the case of duty in light of the above.

8. Does Lewis suppose the conditioners to bad men? Explain.

9. How and why do the conditioners step into a "void"?

10. Why is man's final conquest an "abolition of man"?

11. What is the last basis upon which their values can be based?

12. When the "good" is debunked, what remains?

13. How can one prefer one impulse over another without the TAO?

14. In the fully planned and conditioned world what kind of chatter will no longer be heard?

15. What is the new scientific view of nature that lends it to being dominated?

16. The wresting of power from nature is also ... ?

17. To get power what must we give up? How are magic and applied science alike?

18. For this wise men of old what was the cardinal problem? The solution?

19. Why is reconsideration and perhaps repentance now required?

Abolition of Man, chap. 3

Philosophical expression of utopian ideas; following out the logic.

I. Conquest of Nature

A. Man's mastery of nature turns out to mean man's mastery of man with the help of nature as an instrument (69).

1. Airplane and

2. Electronics and propaganda.

3. Contraceptives and eugenics.

4. Drugs and mind control.

5. Atom and bombs.

B. Private men over others, nation over nation, government over people, generation over generation.
Ambivalence of progress: we get weaker as well as stronger.

C. Final stage: master human nature: {some men make others what they please}

1. Scientific technique and state power have grown.

2. Man worked on man by circumventing human context of speech and symbolic deeds. Reason morality is product, hence conditioner is outside world of values.

II. The Conditioners

A. Ethical void

1. Good and duty are determined by them; no standard or principle no value response: inhuman.

2. Filled by impulse "What I Want"; no ground for choice.

3. Irrational will to power.

4. At best - the good of the group (mankind, nation, race) hence totalitarian

III. The Conditioned

A. [Reductionism,:] man is reduced to matter, material to be used
In order to master nature we must first reduce nature to the empirical and quantifiable. This allows it to be manipulated. Technology strives for efficiency, predictability, and repeatability. Consider steel for a bridge. Trees for paper. Even with nature something is lost. We lose a sense of mystery and qualities of nature.

The ecologists remind us of this. But when it comes to man, the result is more startling. Can we be human without spontaneity and adventure; without uniqueness? Worst of all, the circumvention of speech and symbolic deeds. The person is denied responsibility and freedom. The person is denied his intrinsic worth, as an end in himself. The person is viewed merely as useful for the group.

B. Human integrity

1. Personal dignity (intrinsic teleology).

2. Freedom and responsibility (capable of living a moral meaning).

3. Physical integrity.

C. Hence - only objective value can save us from slavery & tyranny (84).

C. READINGS

1. Swift, A full and true Account of the Battle fought last Friday Between the Ancient and the Modern Books

(The spider to the bee): "...Your livelihood is an universal plunder upon nature; a freebooter over fields and gardens; and for the sake of stealing will rob a nettle as easily as a violet. Whereas I am a domestic animal, furnished with a native stock within myself. This large castle (to show my improvements in the mathematics) is all built with my own hands, and the materials extracted altogether out of my own person."

2. Rene Descartes - *Discourse on Method*

The Project: It is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and instead of the Speculative knowledge of the Schools, we may find a practical philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens and all other bodies which environs us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves like the masters and possessors of nature." "...to have the fruits of life without pain... principally, health."

3. Bacon, "The Great Instauration," Preface & plan:

. . . that wisdom which we have derived principally from the Greeks is but like the boyhood of knowledge, and has the characteristic property of boys: it can talk, but it cannot generate...barren of works, full of questions...This doctrine then of the expurgation of the intellect to qualify it for dealing with truth, is comprised in three refutations: the refutation of the Philosophies, the refutation of the Demonstrations; and the refutation of the Natural Human Reason. The explanation of which things, and of the true relation between the nature of things and the nature of the mind, is as the strewing and decoration of the bridal chamber of the Mind and the Universe, the Divine

Goodness assisting; out of the marriage of which let us hope (and be this the prayer of the bridal song) there may spring helps to man, and a line and race of inventions that may in some degree subdue and overcome the necessities and miseries of humanity...a history not only of nature free and at large (when she is left to her own course and does her work her own way), -- such as that of the heavenly bodies, meteors, earth and sea, minerals, plants, animals, -- but much more of nature under constraint and vexed; that is to say, when by art and the hand of man she is forced out of her natural state, and squeezed and molded...the nature of things betrays itself more readily under the (vexations of art) then in its natural freedom.

Required Readings:

- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Books 15, 16, 17 25 [MORGAN: 532-536; 551-553]
- Bacon, *New Organon* [ARIEW: 4-7]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 3-6, 16-24, 25-44
  OR
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 51-100

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 3-4 page paper on the following theme: In what ways did Bacon and Machiavelli claim to find fault with ancient philosophy?

Supplemental Readings:

- Richard Kennington. "Bacon's Critique of Ancient Philosophy in New Organon, I." In *Nature and Scientific Method*, ed. D. Dahlstrom, 300-310. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1991.
- Howard White. "Francis Bacon" in *History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 366-385.
- Leo Strauss. "The Three Waves of Modernity." In *Political Philosophy: Six Essays by Leo Strauss*, ed. Hildail Gilden, pp. 81-98. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975.
- Pierre Manent. 1995. *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1995. pp. 10-19.
- Stephen Toulmin, "Descartes in His Time," in David Weismann, editor, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*. New Haven: Yale, 1996. pp. 121-146.

- Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity.* Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990. pp. 5-88.

Lesson 3: Founding the Modern Project: Cartesian Doubt

A. Basic Themes

Rene Descartes and the Mastery of Nature

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) outlined the philosophy which gave a charter to the growth of experts in society in his Discourse on Method. Rejecting the ancient philosophy for its lack of effective control, Descartes says that he wishes to found a new practical philosophy; by "knowing the force and actions of the fire, water, air and stars, the heavens, and all other bodies that surround us, just as we understand the various skills of our craftsmen, we could make ourselves the masters and possessors of nature" [1]. We are now approaching the fulfilled dream of Descartes' modern project. For Descartes promised as the fruit of his new philosophy, "an infinity of devices that would enable us to enjoy without pain the fruits of the earth and all the goods one finds in it, but also principally the maintenance of health." In order to reach this goal Descartes recognized the need to reform the entirety of education and the social role of the intellectual in society such that expertise would be more readily developed and experts be revered as great benefactors who are free to pursue their study. He evaluated the curriculum of studies in terms of the certitude and utility: he sought "a clear and assured knowledge useful for life." Poetry, theology, philosophy, ethics and a few other disciplines were cast aside in light of these new criteria of certitude and utility. In fact, the disciplines that would lay the basis for the experts, scientific studies, would have to be built from the ground up. On the basis of mathematical science, Descartes proposed his famous new method for the conduct of inquiry. It would begin with a universal doubt of anything not clear and distinct; again, traditional opinion would be swept aside in all areas in order to make room for the useful and certain knowledge of science. The certitude of science would be assured by the use of simple nature and forms such as principles of mechanics. In its streamlined form, the method for arriving at knowledge would follow the analytical method, breaking apart a problem into its simplest terms and then building up to greater level of complexity. Descartes' project and method have been tremendously successful.

But its success is marred by an ambiguity about its goal or purpose. For when Descartes turned to human production he praised projects that followed a rational and effective plan, whatever their end. For he admits that in the political order he must admire Sparta even if its ends or purposes were not sound. At least they were

organized effectively. The crack in the system appears here. For the end is not subject to the same clarity as the method. The end is left ambiguous since it is not within the competence of the new science to determine it; as Richard Kennington puts it, "the utility goal can never be brought within the charmed circle of certitude" [2]. Descartes simply adopts the lowest common denominator by appealing to that which is most universally desired: health and life and convenience of living. To cite Kennington again, "the benefits are as universally available to humanity as they are devoid of exacting duties or self-sacrifice." But this begs the question about the nature of the good life. The technical skills appear to be neutral to an end; but in fact they point to one end and encourage us to judge in terms of a utilitarian and hedonistic ethic.

The charter for the reign of the expert derives from Cartesian philosophy. Its goal is mastery of nature and it appears humanitarian as it seeks to provide human convenience. The criterion for the new knowledge is certitude which entails skepticism towards traditional modes of opinion and grants to the expert a special status. The method is not only inherently set against tradition and opinion, it requires a reductive approach to the material in the name of "objectivity." And it further requires specialization and a narrow or partial vision in the name of competence. Most of all, the Cartesian project is problematic because of the ambiguity about the end or purpose. On the one hand the expert must appear neutral; for the question of end or purpose is beyond his competence. This is the contradiction at the heart of the project. Every technique is put to use for some end, but the end is not determined by a technique. The expert easily assumes an end for technique by appealing to what people want. Thus, on second look, the expert appears as a humanitarian who simply appeals to universal human desires and passions. The expert is therefore unproblematic. But when it is seen that the method requires a reductive approach and that it encourages the lowering of human goals, it becomes problematic in the extreme. The reductive approach to human affairs is potentially dehumanizing and degrading. It may well lead to the "abolition of man" [3].

1. Rene Descartes, Discourse on Method, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985). See Richard Kennington, "Rene Descartes," in History of Political Philosophy, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 421- 439.

2. Richard Kennington, "Descartes and the Mastery of Nature," in Organism, Medicine, and Metaphysics, ed. S. F. Spicker (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1978), 212.

3. See C. S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 80-91. See Michael D. Aeschliman, The Restitution of Man: C. S. Lewis and the Case Against Scientism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983). Peter Kreeft, C. S. Lewis for the Third Millenium (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994).

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Descartes Basics

NEW GOAL - MASTERY OF NATURE

NEW CRITERIA: CERTAINTY AND UTILITY

NEW METHOD: RADICAL DOUBT; RATIONAL PLAN - ANALYSIS TO SIMPLES AND SYNTHESIS

NEW SCIENCE: MECHANISM; YET DUALISM

AMBIGUITY: EFFICIENCY AND PRAISE OF SPARTA; GOAL AS UNCERTAIN

WHENCE: LOWER GOAL - HEDONISM; PROFIT, PLEASURE, SELF-ASSERTION, PEACE

EFFECT: BRAVE NEW WORLD- technological society

2. Study Guide - Descartes *Discourse On Method*

PART 1

- What is the most evenly distributed commodity in the world?
- What is the origin of the diversity opinions?
- Is it enough to have a good mind? Explain.
- What is Descartes' purpose in writing?
- What did Descartes expect to get from education on "letters"?
- By what was Descartes embarrassed?
- Make a list of the benefits and problems with each of the following disciplines he studied in school: language (travel), fables, histories, great books, poetry, math, morals, theology, philosophy, law and medicine, science
- What did Descartes learn in his travel about the truth of how people reason?
- What else did he learn from travel about custom?

PART 2

- Where is perfection found in a house, a city, a state?
- Why does he admire Sparta?

- How does Descartes apply the same principle to learning?
- Does he claim to be a reformer? Explain.
- What are the four principles of his method?

PART 3

- Why does Descartes counsel an attitude of "going along"? In everything or are there limits?
- What is Descartes' ideal of virtue?
- What is the Stoic maxim? Does Descartes agree with it or not? Explain.

PART 6

- Why did Descartes decide to publish his method and book?
- What kind of philosophy was taught in the schools? What kind of science is the new science taught by Descartes? To what end does it lead? Why is this desirable? What will be the chief science? Why?

3. Study Guide On Descartes *Meditations*

Meditation I

- Characterize the Cartesian approach to tradition and beliefs inherited from the past.
- Why does Descartes have some doubt about the senses? Is there a disproportion or hyperbole?
- Why does Descartes have some doubt whether he is sitting by the fire?
- Why does Descartes have some doubt whether he is really awake? I.e. what is a dream?
- Interpret this method of doubt in light of the dualism of modern science and "the similarity thesis."
- Explain the analogy of a painter painting images of sirens and satyrs - what is real? How does this apply to world of senses, i.e. what is real or "simple and more universal."
- Why does Descartes even doubt the world of science and mechanism compared to arithmetic and geometry?
- What does Descartes say about a powerful God? Does he say that God is supremely good?

- How does this belief place in doubt even mathematics?
- How does he treat this belief in God and God's nature? Why?
- Describe the evil genius. On his supposition what is eliminated? Does anything remain?
- What is the one thing that is within the philosopher's power?
- How is the Cartesian philosopher likened to "a captive who in sleep enjoys an imaginary liberty"?

Meditation II

- How is the Cartesian philosopher like "a man in very deep water," i.e. a deep whirlpool?
- What is the only certain truth? Why is Archimedes invoked?
- How is the truth of self discovered?
- What is the next question after self-discovery?
- What did he formerly believe himself to be? Why does he now doubt that? What kind of thing can he say that he is with certitude?
- Why is imagination excluded? This is about order of knowing - not being.
- What activities can a "thinking thing" perform?
- What is the true thing to say about imagining, feeling, sensing?
- Explain idea of "free rein" and "regulation."
- Recount his meditation and reflection on a piece of wax - what do senses, imagination and mind tell him? Which tells truly? Explain.
- What is the deepest or most certain truth revealed by reflection on the piece of wax? Explain.
- What does Descartes no longer distinguish?

C. READINGS

1. Jacques Maritain, The Dream of Descartes

Jacques Maritain, The Dream of Descartes, London, 1946.

From beneath the stern and mighty brow of Descartes shine two living truths, two precious truths - one that is old, the other new. The latter is the young truth of physico-mathematical science [Galileo], the former is the ancient truth, the Socratic and Christian precept: Go back into thyself and into the spiritual element which is within thee. . . . Perceived more or less confusedly, these truths fascinated and deceived the seventeenth century.

2. The Ancient Knowledge is Useless

"It is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and instead of the Speculative knowledge of the Schools, we may find a practical philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens and all other bodies which environs us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves like the masters and possessors of nature. ... to have the fruits of life without pain ... principally, health." Rene Descartes - Discourse on Method D6

"I always had an excessive desire to learn to distinguish the true from the false, in order to see clearly in my actions and to walk with confidence in this life."

3. The Ancient Knowledge is Dubious

"No single thing is to be found in it which is not subject of dispute, and in consequence which is not dubious." Rene Descartes - Discourse on Method

"But as regards all the opinions which up to this time I had embraced I thought I could not do better than endeavor once for all to sweep them completely away, so they might later be replaced, either by others which were better, or by the same, when I had made them conform to the uniformity of a rational method or scheme." Rene Descartes - Discourse on Method

Certain and Useful Knowledge: Mathematical Physics, "A Geometry of the World."

"Most of all was I delighted with Mathematics because of the certainty of its demonstrations and the evidence of its reasoning; I did not yet understand its true use ... I was astonished that, seeing how firm and solid were its foundations, no loftier edifice had been reared thereupon." Rene Descartes - Discourse on Method

4. Jacques Maritain on the effects of Descartes' Philosophy

What fruits did this germ bring forth? To determine them one would have to survey the whole of Descartes' systems. I shall here confine myself to three principal aspects of it; the first, which concerns the connection between thought and being; the second, the intellectual hierarchies and the meaning of knowledge; the third, the conception of man.

From this first point of view, it is idealism that we owe to Descartes; from the second, it is rationalism; from the third, Cartesian dualism.

If it is the question of the connection between thought and being, I shall simply recall (in order not to become involved in discussions of too-technical a nature) -- that for the Scholastics we communicate with things first by means of the senses which attain the thing itself existing outside of us, not in its intimate nature but in its action upon us; and then by means of the intellect and of ideas -- ideas which are drawn actively from the senses by the mind, and which are essentially immaterial means, living and vital relations by which we get at what things are, at their natures.

Thus, whereas divine knowledge precedes things and measures them, since it makes them, our own knowledge is measured by things; and the least thing, the tiniest grain of wheat is a resisting, consisting, subsisting reality, the intelligibility of which we shall never have ceased to drain.

For Descartes, on the contrary, the senses have no knowledge value; they have only a pragmatic value. And ideas are not only means, they are already things; it is as things that they are attained by thought (now conceived only as self-consciousness) -- as if they were pictures which it discovers in itself. Locke's formula, ideas are the immediate objects of thought, is a pure Cartesian formula. Idea-pictures, idea-screens. In short, we know only our ideas; thought has direct contact only with itself.

Descartes, no doubt, does not stop there. He still believes in things, he wants to know them. You know to what device he has recourse in order to justify that knowledge. Cogito, my thought seizes upon itself and grasps its own existence. In this thought there is the idea of God; from the idea of God I conclude that God exists: God existing and being veridical, the clear and distinct ideas which I find in me, like innate pictures and like objects immediately attained by my thought, these idea-pictures are good; back of them are models, doubles, which are things. Thus I am certain that this table exists, and I am sure of the truth of the propositions that I can set forth on the subject because, first of all, I'm sure of my thought and sure of the existence of God, through whom I must pass in order to be sure of anything, and who is the Guarantor of my science, of the Science.

There you have the Cartesian circuit. Modern philosophy will not be long in pulling it to pieces -- from that point of view it is like the primitives according to Freud; it has killed and eaten its father, it has devoured Descartes. It is clear, for example, that the whole system remains in the air because one simply does not demonstrate the existence of God by starting with the sole idea of God.

What is left then, is not the Cartesian system, it is the Cartesian conception of thought and ideas. Whether one believes in the existence of things as Descartes himself believed (thanks to the circuit in question), or as Spinoza did (to the extent that he was a realist) in saying that there is a parallelism between the thing and the idea, and that the order and the connection of ideas are identical to the order and connection of things,

the fact remains that the modern conception of knowledge itself is from the very outset idealistic.

Thought directly attains only itself; it is not ruled by things, but by its own internal exigencies; it does not depend on things but on itself alone. A world shut up, absolute -- by itself alone it develops science within itself, without measuring its strength against any extraneous resistance. There it is, a human knowledge like divine knowledge, a knowledge which depends only upon itself. When the great modern idealists, Kant and his successors, make their appearance, they will make Cartesian root produce its natural fruit.

What is the cultural significance of idealism? It carries along with it a sort of anthropocentric optimism of thought. Optimism because thought is a god, who unfolds himself, and because things either conform to it, or do not even exists apart from it. What drama could possibly occur? Either there is no being to set off against thought, or there is only being completely docile to thought. An optimism which is anthropocentric, because the thought in question is the thought of man; it is around human thought that objects revolve. All is well for that thought; and all will be better and better.

But this optimism is, if I may say so, committed to suicide; for it presupposes a rupture with being, and finally, in spite of Descartes' personal intentions and in spite of the efforts of his immediate successors, it supposes an eviction of the ontological. There we have the great, the primordial Cartesian break. Man shut up within himself is condemned to sterility, because his thought lives and is nourished only upon the things that God has made. Man the center of an intelligible universe which he has created in his own consistence, for his consistence is to be the image of God. He is in the middle of a desert.

Let us consider now another aspect of the Cartesian revolution, the aspect which concerns the intellectual hierarchies and the meaning of knowledge.

Human reason is Reason in itself, Reason in its pure state. A universal rule and measure, all things must be adjusted to its level. It is no longer measured, it measures, it subjugates the object. Even the adversaries of rationalism like Pascal have, in the seventeenth century, this absolutist conception of reason. Descartes formulated its philosophy.

Descartes did not invent evidence as textbooks believe, but he completely changed the meaning of the word. Evidence is no longer a property of the thing; that is, its radical intelligibility blossoming in the mind and imposing itself on us in the judgment we bring to bear upon the thing. It becomes a property of the ideas, of the idea picture which we contemplate in our thought. There are self-evident ideas; they are clear and distinct ideas, the ideas of what Descartes called simple natures. To know is to reduce everything to these clear and distinct ideas, to break up the object into these atoms of evidence.

In reality we are not born with those atoms of evidence in us. The clear and distinct ideas will, in fact, be easy ideas, the most conveniently manageable and communicable representations, the elements of a mechanical reconstruction of reality. We can see how, from the Cartesian short-cut for arriving at wisdom, people will pass on to the philosophy of enlightenment.

We can see especially how it was that evidence, for the ancients, being in the last analysis the manifestation of a mystery (that is, of the root intelligibility of created things imposing itself on our mind by becoming luminous within it), a sort of natural relationship existed for them between intelligence and mystery. On the one hand then, in order to avoid the absurd and to remain faithful to the very first evidence -- that of sense perception and that of the principle of identity, science itself and philosophy had to recognize a mystery of relative unintelligibility or ontological obscurity in things; that is, potentiality in Aristotle's meaning of the word, witnessing that the created is not God, who is the pure Act of intelligibility.

On the other hand, human knowledge had to recognize at the summit of things, a mystery of superintelligibility, that of the spiritual realities and above all, of God. And if God revealed to us in the obscurity of faith something of Himself, the intellect could and even should make every effort to penetrate as far as possible these revealed truths, and to grasp their concatenation, even though it cannot have the evidence of their principles. A science of the mysteries is possible: a science of what is not evident for us, but is infallibly believed on the authority of the first Truth -- that is theology. And Christian intelligence could say with St. Lawrence: "My night allows the light to enter," mea nox obscurum non habet.

Thus the whole movement of intelligence was holy, consecrated, because it was orientated toward God. Philosophy itself was Christian, secular knowledge was Christian. As a matter of fact, philosophy by its very object is quite distinct from faith and from theology. It is strictly of the natural and rational order. But in the subject in the human soul it is fortified and illuminated by the superior virtues with which it is in vital continuity, integrated to the great movement of love which carries the soul toward the vision of its Creator.

With Descartes, everything changes. This distinction achieved in coherence and dynamic solidarity becomes separation, isolation -- and soon even opposition. Philosophy is sufficient absolutely and unto itself alone in the soul; not only is its object of the natural order, but to all intents and purposes it demands that its subject as such be cut off from all supernatural life, cut off from itself as Christian. Hence is explained the absurd myth from which we are still suffering, of a man presumably in the state of pure nature in order to philosophize, who crowns himself with grace in order to merit heaven. The crown will not be long in falling away like a useless accessory. The man of nature -- of fallen nature -- will remain. The Cartesian revolution has been a process of secularization of wisdom.

As evidence for Descartes is a quality of our ideas -- ideas which constitute science only if they are purely and absolutely luminous, and which we should sort out in order to

discard everything that is obscure -- a total antinomy exists henceforth between intellection and mystery. On one hand, the pure geometrical light and the pure light of the cogito; on the other, an impenetrable darkness. From the world of matter, which is beneath thought, thought must drive out absolutely all obscurity. Above all, it must acknowledge the obscurity of things divine; but woe to it if it tries to venture there.

Let us briefly characterize these two series of consequences of the Cartesian position.

On the side of what is superior to man, Descartes was too intelligent to deny mystery. He deepened it rather; he made everything, even science itself, appendant to God, and to His incomprehensibility, the sovereign guarantee of the value of understanding and of clear ideas.

But what remains, and what is essential to the whole future of thoughts, is that a science of mystery is henceforth impossible.

We know that in matters of religion Descartes was a fideist; he was, as he said, of the religion of his king and of his foster-mother. This fideism was accompanied by a violent antitheologism. In short, Descartes denied the possibility of theology as science; the only science, the only wisdom, was it not natural wisdom -- philosophy? A century and a half later Kant, as though to punish that pride, will deny in his turn the possibility of metaphysics as science. Contempt for theology, that is, for the most exalted use that man can make of speculative reason, in familiarizing it with things pertaining to deity -- contempt for theology was the first resignation, and the first betrayal, of Christian intelligence.

Concerning metaphysics itself, Descartes left an insoluble contradiction as a legacy to modern thought. On the one hand, in order that the knowledge of the existence of God may be the most certain of all knowledge, the idea of God must be a clear idea in the Cartesian system, the clearest and most distinct idea of all -- an intellectual intuition. Here we have modern thought launched in the direction of ontology and of pantheism. On the other hand, the infinite is in no way intelligible to us; it is vain to speculate upon it; no science of it is possible. And there we have modern thought launched toward agnosticism. Pantheism, agnosticism, it will ceaselessly swing back and forth between the two terms of this contradiction.

To tell the truth, Descartes did not trouble himself much over the speculative conciliation of such a contradiction, as he constantly broke up the harmonies of philosophia perennis into two antinomic errors, each one disguising the other. He needs God as the guarantor of science; therefore he betakes himself to Him by the quickest route, one which most resembles an intuition: to know that He exists and that He guarantees the human order. Reassured of it as a practical man, he loses interest in God; it is the world which interests him now. He turns aside religiously from God. Too exalted a God! Too sublime. Let us pay our respects to the Creator with dispatch. And now, bring on the world. If reason were to linger over things divine, it could only be in order to submit them to itself, since to know, for Cartesian reasoning is to subjugate the object. A sacred flight precipitates it toward things below.

And this is what matters to us: the overturning of the intellectual order, the inversion of the impulse of knowledge, for which Descartes is doubtless not the first one responsible, but as it were the prince and legislator. Metaphysics is reduced to a justification of science; it has as its aim to make physics possible.

Aristotle said that there is more joy in knowing divine things imperfectly and obscurely than in knowing perfectly the things proportioned to our minds. And thus the nature of our intellect is to drag along toward divine things. Descartes on the contrary, boasted of devoting only a very few hours a year to metaphysical thoughts. In his eyes, it is important "to have thoroughly understood once in one's life the principles of metaphysics," but "it would be very harmful to occupy one's understanding in meditating upon them, because it would then be unable to attend to the function of the imagination and the senses as well. Cartesian understanding does not drag itself along toward things divine, it settles comfortably in worldly things. Cartesian science is by essence a rich man's, a propertied man's science. What is, first of all, important to him is not the dignity of the object, even though it be obtained only through certainty not luxurious means -- what is important to him is the perfection of the means, it is the comfort of clear ideas.

With regard to what is inferior to man, to the world of corporeal nature, Cartesian intellect claims to understand everything exposed to the core, through the substance, through the essence itself. Matter lies naked before it as before the angels. The mathematical knowledge of nature, for Descartes, is not what it is in reality, a certain interpretation of phenomena, invaluable moreover, but which does not answer questions bearing upon the first principles of things. This knowledge is, for him, the revelation of the very essence of things. These are analyzed exhaustively by geometric extension and local movement. The whole of physics, that is, the whole of the philosophy of nature, is nothing but geometry.

Thus Cartesian evidence goes straight to mechanism. It mechanizes nature, it does violence to it; it annihilates everything which causes things to symbolize with the spirit, to partake of the genius of the Creator, to speak to us. The universe becomes dumb.

And why all this? What is the end of all our effort to know? It is a practical end: to become, as Descartes puts it in the Discourse on Method, masters and possessors of nature. To desire to dominate and utilize material nature is a good thing! But once the direction of knowledge was reversed, as I remarked a while back, this practical domination created force was to become two centuries after Descartes, the final aim of civilization -- and that is a very great evil.

The cultural significance of rationalism thus becomes clearly apparent to us. It implies an anthropocentric naturalism of wisdom; and what optimism! It is a doctrine of necessary progress, of salvation by science and by reason; I mean, temporal and worldly salvation of humanity by reason alone, which, thanks to the principles of Descartes, will lead man to felicity, to "that highest degree of wisdom in which the sovereign good of human life consists" (he wrote it himself in the preface to the French translation of the Principles)-in giving man full mastery over nature and over his nature;

and, as the Hegelians were to add two centuries later, over his history. As if reason by itself alone was capable of making men act reasonably and of securing the good of people! There is no worse delusion.

On the balance-sheet we should inscribe: rupture of the impulse which was directing all the labor of human science towards the eternal, toward conversation with the three divine Persons -- upsetting to the élan of knowledge. Knowledge does not aspire to do more than give man the means of domesticating matter. The sole retreat remaining for the spiritual will be science's reflection upon itself. And doubtless, that is indeed something of spiritual but of an autophagous spiritual. To delude oneself with the thought that the idealistic ruminating of physics and mathematics is enough to force the gates to the kingdom of God, to introduce man to wisdom and to freedom, to transform him into a fire of love burning for all eternity, is psychological childishness and metaphysical humbug. Man becomes spiritualized only by joining with a spiritual and eternal living One. There is only one spiritual life which does not mislead -- that which the Holy Spirit bestows. Rationalism is the death of spirituality.

Then it is through the experience of sin, of suffering and despair that in the nineteenth century we will see spirituality reawaken in the wilderness: through a Baudelaire, Rimbaud. An ambiguous spirituality, good for heaven if grace takes hold of it, good for hell if pride interferes. Many of our contemporaries will seek nourishment for their souls in anti-reason, and below reason, nourishment which should be sought only above reason. And to have led so many reasoning animals around to a hatred of reason is another of rationalism's misdeeds.

Required Readings:

Primary Texts:

- Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, parts I and II [ARIEW: 12-19]
- Rene Descartes, *Meditations*, I and II [ARIEW: 27-34]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 55-67
- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol IV* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 63-115
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 138-174

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 5 page paper on THE COGITO: what is it? How is it discovered? What function does it serve in Descartes philosophy?

Supplemental Readings:

- Richard Kennington, "Rene Descartes," in *History of Political Philosophy,* eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 421-439.
- Richard Kennington, "Descartes and the Mastery of Nature," in *Organism, Medicine, and Metaphysics,* ed. S. F. Spicker (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1978), pp. 201-223.
- John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* Edited by Vittorio Messori (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), pp. 37-41, 50-54.
- Etienne Gilson, "Cartesian Idealism," *Unity of Philosophical Experience*. New York: Scribner's, 1937. pp. 176-197.
- Etienne Gilson, "Cartesian Mathematicism," *Unity of Philosophical Experience.* New York: Scribner's, 1937. pp. 125-151.
- Jacques Maritain. *The Dream of Descartes* trans. Labelle L Andison. London: Editions Poetry, 1946. pp. 9-23.

Lesson 4: Founding the Modern Project: Cartesian Dualism

A. Basic Themes

Descartes divides the self from the world and posits a dualism of consciousness versus extension. Only through an elaborate proof for God does Descartes regain the world. The status of the proof is quite problematic; in one way it is unnecessary. The world is also regained through pragmatic dealings with the world. The teaching of nature, self-preservation, forces us to come to terms with the external world.

B. Outlines and Study Guides

Descartes Meditations III and VI: God and Bodies

Meditations III

- Summarize the result of radical doubt.
- How did he previously look on the world?
- What is the principal or commonest error about the world?
- What are the three kinds of ideas in respect to source?
- Why does nature teach us that ideas of senses are adventitious?
- What is the "blind impulse"?
- Recount the proof for God -what are premises? How does he arrive at the conclusion by process of elimination? Does it work? Why or why not?
- How does he account for sensible images? For mathematical ideas? Extension figure, etc.
- How does he deal with objection of finite as source for idea of infinite by way of negation?
- Why does he say that he did not create himself? 355 does this suggest something about God?
- How does he get the idea of God? What analogy does he use? Does this analogy beg the question one more time? Hint - similarity thesis.

Meditations VI

- What is difference between imagination and intellect? E.g. chiliagon.
- What are three parts of his strategy?
- What does natural attitude teach him?
- Why is his faith destroyed in natural attitude?
- He discovers himself - what is he?
- What are the faculties for thinking? How take corporeal things now?
- What are two descriptions for the complex of nature?
- Key - what is deepest teaching of nature?
- What else does nature teach the "composite self"?

- What is the inconsiderate judgment on things?
- What are the three regions for investigation?
- What is the purpose of nature's teaching?
- Why do we need scientific account?
- How is the sick organism described scientifically? (nature #2) How described from common sense? (nature #1)
- How might mind and body interact?
- What is the usefulness of studying brain?

2. Schematic Of Cartesian Philosophy

DESCARTES MEDITATION VI

NATURAL ATTITUDE
"Nature teaches that. . body adversely affected when in pain."
Man as composite of body and soul
Theoretically misleading
i.e. similarity thesis
i.e. existence thesis
Purposive - benefit and harm,
pleasure and pain; desire aversion; agreeable disagreeable

SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE
Science teaches . .
Man as machine: extension, body only
Theoretical correction - reality or true picture
mathematical, clear and distinct
only primary qualities - quantitative;
secondary qualities as subjective
neutral - no good or evil; things just are and occur by necessity

PHILOSOPHY
self-consciousness mind only
certain and absolute
strong resolve: dissolve world, opinion
world - being is relative to me
the idea is immediate, not things

C. READINGS

1. Descartes

"Cogito, ergo sum"; "I knew I was a substance the whole nature or essence of which is only to think."

The essence of body is extension. "A continuous body, or a space indefinitely extended in length, breath, height, depth, which was divisible into various parts, and which might have various figures and sizes, and might be moved or transposed in all sorts of ways."

2. Maritain on Descartes

It remains for us to consider rapidly a third aspect of Descartes' doctrine -- the one which concerns human nature. Cartesian dualism breaks man up into two complete substances, joined to one another no one knows how: on the one hand, the body which is only geometric extension; on the other, the soul which is only thought -- an angel inhabiting a machine and directing it by means of the pineal gland.

I shall not emphasize here the inextricable difficulties into which Descartes has thus' thrown metaphysics and psychology. The soul being only consciousness, the whole unconscious will be henceforth purely corporeal, for a psychological functioning is a contradiction in terms. On the other hand, the conflict between determinism and freedom becomes insoluble. Finally, the interaction of the body and the soul being rendered from then on unintelligible, one must have recourse to the great metaphysical myths of occasionalism, or of pre-established harmony, or of Spinozistic parallelism. An extremist spiritualism, regarding every psychic function as purely spiritual, will precipitate into materialism such sciences as medicine and neurology, which must indeed recognize that the psyche undergoes the consequential effects of body conditions. It is the Cartesian hyperspiritualism which has caused the mass-production of innumerable materialistic physicians rampant in science up to the close of the last century.

But enough of this. What I wanted to indicate was the cultural significance of Cartesian dualism, thought side, and body side.

Thought side. We know the effects of the triumph of this dualism in the second half of the seventeenth century: a theoretical contempt of the body and the senses; nothing worthwhile but pure thought. That means, in fact the triumph of artificial thought and of false intellectualism; for human intellection is living and fresh only when it is centered upon the vigilance of sense perception. The natural roots of our knowledge being cut, a general drying-up in philosophy and culture resulted, a drought for which romantic tears were later to provide only an insufficient remedy.

In the second place, a complete disregard of the affective life. Feeling is no longer anything more than a confused idea. The existence of love and of will as forming a distinct world, having its own life and its own laws in the heaven of the soul, is radically

misunderstood. Affectivity will have its revenge. Take for example the present tendencies of psychology, which would submerge everything under affectivism and instinctivism.

In the third place, for Cartesian civilization, man is only thought. "I, that is to say, my thought," said the philosopher. Man has lost his body. Alas! The body has not let go of him. Only the ascetics have the means of scorning the body. The Cartesian contempt for the body is a theorist's illusion. In the end, Freud will turn up with his great sadistic lyricism and claim to reduce man to sexuality and the instinct of death.

Body side. I was saying that the Cartesian man had lost his body: he has delivered it over to the universal mechanism, to the energies of matter regarded as forming a closed world. What have been the results?

First of all, man's body ceases to be regarded as human by essence. Cartesian physicians, iatromechanists or iatrochemists, treat it as an automaton or as a retort. And, in a general way, medicine tends to forget that it is dealing with a being whose life is not only corporeal, but moral and spiritual as well.

This observation ought to be generalized: we leave Descartes himself then, but not the Cartesian spirit. Let us say that in the modern world, everything which is amenable to any (technique) whatever in human life tends to resolve itself into a closed world, separate, independent. Things like politics and economics in particular will become contrivances removed from the specific regulation of the human good; they will cease to be, as the ancient wished, subordinated intrinsically and of themselves, to ethics. With greater reason, speculative science and art, which do not appertain of themselves to the domain of ethics, will impose on man a law which is not his own.

Here is man then, the center of the world, of a world inhuman in every respect, pressing in upon him. Nothing in human life is any longer made to man's measure, to the rhythm of the human heart. The forces he has unleashed, split him asunder.

He wishes to reign nevertheless, and more than ever and over his own nature. But how? By technique alone that is, by means extraneous to himself. Thus we arrive at the great dispute of our age, freedom by technique versus freedom by self-determination.

I should like to put it in this way; there are two ways of looking at man's mastery of himself. Man can become master of his nature by imposing the law of reason aided by grace -- on the universe of his own inner energies. That work, which in itself is a construction in love, requires that our branches be pruned to bear fruit: a process called mortification. Such a morality is an ascetic morality.

What rationalism claims to impose upon us to-day is an entirely different morality, anti-ascetic, exclusively technological. An appropriate technique should permit us to rationalize human life, i.e. to satisfy our desires with the least possible inconvenience, without any interior reform of ourselves. What such a morality subjects to reason are material forces and agents exterior to man, instruments of human life; it is not man, nor

human life as such. It does not free man it weakens him, it disarms him, it renders him a slave to all the atoms of the universe, and especially to his own misery and egoism. What remains of man? A consumer crowned by science. This is the final gift, the twentieth century gift of the Cartesian reform.

Techniques is good -- mechanics is good. I disapprove of the spirit of archaism which would suppress the machine and technique. But if mechanics and technique are not mastered, subjected by force to the good of man, that is to say entirely and rigorously subordinated to religious ethics and made instruments of all ascetic morality, humanity is literally lost.

How, then, shall we characterize the cultural significance of Cartesian dualism? To sum up the preceding observations, let us say that this dualism carries along with it both an anthropocentric angelism and materialism of civilization. On the balance-sheet must be written: division of man, rupture of the human life. They began by putting the human self above everything else, an angelic self -- nay, a divine self. It is so perfectly one that no plurality of powers or of faculties is to be distinguished in it! Its substance is the very act of thinking.

This Cartesian man, naturally good in so far as he is reason, will later become the man of Rousseau, naturally good in so far as he is sentiment and instinct, and whom social life and reflection corrupt. He has not further need to perfect himself, to build himself up by his virtues, he has only to blossom forth, to display himself by virtue of sincerity. It is as though one were to tell a fertilized egg to be sincere and not to have hypocrisy to construct its form by its own efforts, through a host of morphogenetic choices and differentiations which cruelly limit its availability.

Finally, I am not forgetting what I pointed out last the beginning: Namely, that it is not a question of destroying all that Descartes has left us; that would be simply absurd. Not only did he bring about considerable progress in the physical and mathematical sciences: not only did he keep many of the ancient treasures -- many more than his offspring have kept; not only did he himself have great intuitions, but what is more, certain developments of primary importance demanded by historical growth of thought were stimulated by his errors; physico- mathematical science was founded, and reflexivity carved out its own domain in philosophy ... T*he Dream of Descartes*

Required Readings:

- Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, part V [ARIEW: 19-21]
- Rene Descartes, *Meditations* III, IV, V and VI [ARIEW: 34-55]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 68-86.

- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol IV* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 116-152.
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 175-199.

Writing Assignment:

Write a 4 page paper on one of the following themes:

- Descartes' notion of God
- The dualism of body and soul.

Supplemental Readings:

God

- Etienne Gilson. *God and Philosophy.* New Haven: Yale, 1941. pp. 74-91.
- Jacques Maritain. *The Dream of Descartes* trans. Labelle L Andison .London: Editions Poetry, 1946. pp. 83-129.

Dualism

- Jacques Maritain. *Three Reformers.* New York: Apollo, 1970. pp. 53-92.
- Jacques Maritain. *The Dream of Descartes trans.* Labelle L Andison .London: Editions Poetry, 1946. pp. 130-150
- William Barrett. Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer. New York: Anchor, 1987. pp. 14-20
- Richard Kennington. "The 'Teaching of Nature' in Descartes' Soul Doctrine," *The Review of Metaphysics.* XXVI, no. 1. September 1972. pp. 86-117.

Lesson 5: The Political Sweep of the Modern Project: Hobbes

A. Basic Themes

There is scholarly dispute over the historical origin of moral and political discourse involving rights. Richard Tuck, for example, traces the origin back to the late medieval ages and the theology of Jean Gerson, who in a work published in 1402 first assimilated the term "ius", that is justice or right, to the term "libertas" or freedom [2]. As Tuck explains, this is one of the first appearances of the idea of an active right, a right that does not have a strict correlative duty, thereby implying that right is a dominion over something to use as one pleases. Human freedom becomes the fundamental moral fact, not virtue, or divine command. The development of such a notion wound its way through late medieval nominalism and became the main theme of Hugo Grotius, John Seldon, and finally to Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes' work, especially Leviathan, is usually the marked as the turning point from the ancient natural right or natural law to the modern account of natural rights [3]. Hobbes most articulately challenged the fundamental presuppositions of the Thomistic synthesis of Biblical Theology and Aristotelian Philosophy such as the sociability of man and the possibility of a common good, the existence of a highest good in virtue and contemplation, and the natural law derived from such human teleology. Hobbes, rather, began with a state of nature as a state of war, the futility of seeking a good higher than the pleasant preservation of the individual, i.e., comfortable self-preservation, and a natural law clearly derivative from more fundamental rights of nature such as the right to self-preservation. Following the early lead of Gerson, Hobbes defines "right of nature" (ius naturale) as "the liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own nature" [4]. Hobbes clearly distinguishes right (ius) from law (lex) - "right, consisteth in liberty to do, or forbeare; whereas Law, determineth, and bindeth to one them; so that Law, and Right, differ as much, as Obligation, and Liberty." For Hobbes, right, i.e., liberty, clearly takes precedent over law, i.e., obligation. The fundamental right or liberty of the self is unbounded or unlimited by anything; by the fundamental right of preservation, each man has a right to everything and anything done in the pursuit of preservation is without blame. The intolerable conflicts between individuals however amounts to a state of war. It is reasonable, therefore, to limit ones claim to things for the sake of self-protection. Morality exists by way of contract. Morality is a rational deduction of moral rules from the right of self-preservation [5]. Hobbes' defense of individual rights required the existence of an absolute power in society to keep all potential wrongdoers in a state of awe such that they would obey the law. Hobbes' account was shocking in so many ways, not the least of which was its implicit anti-theistic philosophy, that it was frequently decried and banned. The direct contrast between Hobbes and the biblical and philosophical accounts of moral and political order would in many ways be the easiest approach to take to the philosophical questions about rights.

Thus, Thomas Hobbes developed a new type of ethical inquiry; he shifted the emphasis from duty and virtue to individual rights; he shifted from sociability to individual liberty as the primary characteristic of human nature; and he lowered to goal of ethics from human perfection and religious goals to comfortable self-preservation. Natural rights inquiry traces moral obligation back to a social contract in which the individual rights to life, liberty, and property (or pursuit of happiness) are protected through common agreement. The norm simply stated is to refrain from harming another in life, liberty or property: each person thus has the right to live as he or she pleases as long as they grant that same equal right to others. It may be said to be a negative morality or a minimalist morality because it reduces morality to a much narrower scope and because it proceeds on the assumption of a "thin theory of human good". With this theory of human good, a substantive account of human perfection is replaced with a procedural account comprised of goods that any one would desire whatever their life plan or goals. Without an agreement to protect such goods as life, liberty and property no one would be safe or secure. This type of inquiry has exerted tremendous influence upon American mores.

The strengths of the liberal natural rights approach are obvious. It does not depend upon contentious religious or metaphysical principles. Further, it promotes tolerance and human freedom and escapes from the dogmatism and intolerance of the pre-modern traditions. On the one hand, it appears to defend fundamental human dignity and on the other it is clear to reason and easily adapted to self-interest.

But there are many problems with the system of natural rights. It is hard to determine who is the bearer of the rights and what precisely are the rights thus held. It places self-interest and individual rights as the first principles of the inquiry. It is based on a theory of human nature which is atomistic and fails to account for the social nature and social duties of human persons. It tends to reduce morality to the matter of civil law and thus leaves out of purview a wide range of important issues regarding human perfection and happiness and perhaps even erases the distinction between a noble or base conception of human life and striving.

2. Richard Tuck, *Natural rights theories: Their origin and development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 24-31.

3. See Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952); *What is Political Philosophy?*, (New York: Free Press, 1959); Richard Tuck, Hobbes, (New York: Oxford, 1989); C. B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962); David Johnson, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Ian Shapiro, *The Evolution of Rights in Liberal Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

4. *Leviathan*, chapter 14. In the Penguin edition edited by C. B. MacPherson (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 189.

5. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*; see also Richard Tuck, Hobbes and Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*.

B. STUDY GUIDES AND OUTLINES

1. Hobbes *Leviathan* - Questions for Reading and Review

1. How does Hobbes define "good"?
2. What is happiness? Is there a highest good?
3. What is power? How is it integral to human striving?
4. What are the reasons for considering all men equal?
5. How does this give rise to equality of hope? And what follows from equal hope?
6. What are the three causes for quarrel?
7. What is the state of war?
8. What are the effects of a state of war?
9. What are some examples of a state of war?
10. What is the status of morality in a state of war? what passions incline men to peace?
11. What is THE Right of Nature? What is its extent in a state of war?
12. How is liberty defined?
13. Which rights are "inalienable"? Why?
14. What is natural law? What is the difference of right and law?
15. What is the first law of nature? Explain each part.
16. What is the second law of nature? How is it like the Golden rule?
17. What is the original meaning of injustice? What rights can never be given away (alienated)? Why?
18. What is the ultimate source of obligation and duty? What gives a duty its binding power?
19. What is a contract? A covenant? What is performance or failure to perform called?

20. What are the conditions for keeping a contract? What conditions make it void? Why are certain covenants void or invalid? (Inalienable rights) of what use are oaths? Explain.

21. What is the third law of nature?

22. What is the origin of justice? Explain the role of commonwealth.

23. Why keep contracts? What if you get away with breaking it?

24. What is the source of value of things? People?

25. Explain the origin of gratitude (law 4), sociability (law 5), pardon (law 6), revenge (law 7), and contempt?

26. Explain the rationale for the procedural problems known as equity, arbitration, and partiality?

27. What is the touchstone or motto for natural law? Compare this with the Christian Golden Rule.

28. In what sense do the laws bind? Difference between in foro interno/in foro externo; in what sense are they eternal laws? Are natural laws really laws? Explain.

29. What is the liberty of the subject?

30. How does Hobbes treat issues of the soldier's courage?

31. In what situations is the subject free of obedience?

2. Outline For Hobbes, *The Leviathan*

HUMAN NATURE

IMPELLED BY DESIRE OR APPETITE
GOOD AS SATISFACTION (NATURE AS BEGINNING OR ORIGIN, NOT END OR PERFECTION)
NO HIGHEST GOOD
- RELATIVE
- INCOMPLETE
POWER IS KEY: ABILITY TO CONTROL/ASSURE FUTURE ACCESS

STATE OF WAR
EQUALITY
FORCE AND SELF REGARD
CAUSES OF QUARREL
EFFECTS OF WAR

EXAMPLES OF STATE OF NATURE/STATE OF WAR
MORALITY OF . . . .

RIGHTS
THE RIGHT OF NATURE - WHAT? EXTENT?
LIBERTY - DEFINED
INALIENABLE? WHICH? WHY?

COMMUNITY
HOW ARRANGED
SUBSEQUENT LAWS OF NATURE

C. READINGS

1. Hobbes, six lessons to the Professors of the Mathematics

Hobbes, six lessons to the Professors of the Mathematics, Ep. ded.:

Of art some are demonstrable, others indemonstrable; and demonstrable are those the construction of the subject whereof is in the power of the artist himself, who, in his demonstration, does no more but deduce the consequences of his own operation. The reason whereof is this, that the science of every subject is derived from a precognition of the causes, generation, and construction of the same; and consequently where the causes are known, there is place for demonstration, but not where the causes are to seek for. Geometry therefore is demonstrable, for the lines and figures from which we reason are drawn and described by ourselves; and civil philosophy is demonstrable, because we make the commonwealth ourselves. But because of natural bodies we know not the construction, but seek it from the effects, there lies no demonstration of what the causes be we seek for, but only of what they may be.

2. Hobbes, De Corpore politico

Hobbes, De corpore politico II, 10, 8

It was necessary there should be a common measure of all things, that might fall in controversy...This common measure, some say, is right reason: with whom I should consent, if there were any such thing to be found or known in rerum natura. But commonly they that call for right reason to decide any controversy, do mean their own. But this is certain, seeing right reason is not existent, the reason of some man or men must supply the place thereof; and that man or men, is he or they, that have the sovereign power....

3. Hobbes, Vita carmine expressa

Hobbes, Vita carmine expressa, authore seipso, Molesworth I, lxxxix.

And it seemed to me that there was a single true thing in all the world, although falsified in many ways: a single true thing which is the foundation of those things which we falsely say to be something; such flitting things as sleep has, and things which I can multiply by mirrors as I choose; fantasies, offspring of our brain, nothing without, nothing in the parts within but motion.

4. Hobbes, Leviathan

Hobbes, Leviathan XXXI.

The right of nature, whereby God reigneth over men, and punisheth those that break his laws, is to be derived, not from his creating them, as if he required obedience as of gratitude for his benefits; but from his irresistible power...the right of afflicting men at his pleasure, belongeth naturally of God Almighty; not as Creator, and gracious; but as omnipotent.

Leviathan VI

For there is no such thing as perpetual tranquility of mind while we live here; because life itself is but motion, and can never be without desire, nor without fear, no more than without sense.

Leviathan XIII.

The passions that incline men to peace, are fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them.

5. Hobbes, On Body

Concerning Body VII,1

The end of knowledge is power...the scope of all speculation is the performing of some action, or thing to be done. In teaching of natural philosophy, I cannot begin better (as I have already shown) than from privation; that is, from feigning the world to be annihilated... We compute nothing but our own phantasms.

6. George Grant English Speaking Justice

While the theoretical foundations of our justice came increasingly to be understood as simply contractual, nevertheless decent legal justice was sustained in our regimes. This can only be comprehended in terms of the intimate and yet ambiguous co-penetration between contractual liberalism and Protestantism in the minds of generations of our people.

It is more important to recognize the dependence of secular liberalism for its moral bite upon the strength of Protestantism in English-speaking societies. Most of our history is written by secularists who see the significant happening as the development of secular liberalism. They are therefore likely to interpret the Protestants as passing if useful allies

in the realization of our modern regimes. This allows them to patronize Protestant superstitions in a friendly manner, as historically helpful in the development of secularism. To put the ethical relation clearly: if avoidance of death is our highest end (albeit negative), why should anyone make sacrifices for the common good which entail that possibility? Why should anyone choose to be a soldier or a policeman, if Lockean contractualism is the truth about justice? Yet such professions are necessary if any approximations to justice are to be maintained. Within a contractualist belief, why should anyone care about the reign of justice more than their life? The believing Protestants provided the necessary moral cement which could not be present for those who consistently directed by contractualism or utilitarianism or a combination of both. This fundamental political vacuum at the heart of contractual liberalism was hidden for many generations by the widespread acceptance of Protestantism. At one and the same time believing Protestants were likely to back their constitutional regimes; yet they backed them without believing that the avoidance of violent death was the highest good, or that justice was to be chosen simply as the most convenient contract.

As Protestants accepted the liberalism of autonomous will, they became unable to provide their societies with the public sustenance of uncalculated justice which the contractual account of justice could not provide from itself.

Most intellectuals in our societies scorned the fundamental beliefs of the public religion, and yet counted on the continuance of its moral affirmations to serve as the convenient public basis of justice. Clever people generally believed that the foundational principles of justice were chosen conveniences, because of what they had learnt from modern science; nevertheless they could not turn away from a noble content to that justice, because they were enfolded more than they knew in long memories and hopes.

George Parkin Grant *English-Speaking Justice* Notre Dame Press, 1985, pp. 58-68

Required Readings:

- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1-15 [MORGAN: 581-646]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 45-54.
- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol V* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 1-51.
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 101-137.

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 5 page paper on the following theme: The passionate nature of human beings and structure and aim of civil society.

Supplemental Readings:

- Pierre Manent,. 1995. *An Intellectual History of Liberalism.* Princeton: Princeton University, 1995. pp. 20-38.
- Thomas Prufer. "Notes on Nature." *Recapitulations*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University, 1993. pp.22-26.
- Leo Strauss. *Natural Right and History.* Chicago: Univ Chicago Press, 1953. pp. 166-201.
- Richard Tuck. *Hobbes*. New York: Oxford, 1989.
- Laurence Berns., "Thomas Hobbes" in *History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 396-420.
- C. B. Macpherson. The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Lesson 6: The Religious Sweep of the Project: Spinoza and Pascal

A. Basic Themes

Spinoza and Pascal are the surprises for students of modern philosophy. For what begins as a worldly venture devoted to the relief of men's estate cannot keep the inevitable speculation concerning God's existence, nature and relation to the world. Spinoza, referred to by men of his age as a "God intoxicated man", fully undermines the claims of traditional religion, biblical revelation, but turns the mind and heart to a pantheistic vision of God as nature. Tocqueville saw pantheism as one of the chief dangers of the modern age: "All those who still appreciate the true nature of man's greatness should combine in the struggle against it [pantheism]" (Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1988. *Democracy in America*. Translated by George Lawrence. New York: Harper Collins. P. 452). Pantheism combines that loss of individual existence and confidence with the deification of generality and the mass of men. Pascal on the other hand reaffirms biblical revelation and traditional faith through a dialectical assault upon the

basic premises of modern philosophy. Through the very alienation of the self from the mechanisms of the world and through the very skeptical bent of the modern epistemology, Pascal takes the reflective man of science to a vision of faith.

B. Outlines and Study Guides

Spinoza:

- How do the definitions of substance rule out anything but pantheism?
- Where is the human being in cosmic order?

Pascal:

- How does Pascal describe man's alienation in terms of the "two infinities"?
- What does Pascal have to say about the heroes of modern science, Copernicus and Descartes?
- As for Spinoza and grand speculative metaphysics, what would Pascal have to say to him? "He has hid the knot too high" (246).
- As for Hobbes, what kind of life is bourgeois existence if not simple diversion? How is Pascal invoking the Augustinian perspective of restlessness to get the better of the restless Hobbes?
- What kind of proof is the "wager"? How does it motivate?

C. READINGS

1. Langan on Spinoza

But if all is seen *sub specie aeternitatis* - everything is "quasi-divine; nothing is to be despised; everything is to be honored with almost religious devotion, as emanatings and modes of the divine substance" (Tom Langan, *Modern Philosophy*, p. 13).

2. Lewis White Beck on Spinoza

"Men do not act for the purpose of realizing some objective good; good and evil are mere ideas in the mind, and we call things good only because we desire them, and do not desire them because we find that they are good. All nature including human nature and its aspirations is laid open by the principle of mechanism to scientific dissection and mathematical computation. There is no mystery only ignorance; there are no miracles, but only events the ignorant do not understand under the laws of nature; there is no purpose and no providential hand of God anywhere in the universe, but all events occur and all things exist under the laws of mechanical and logical necessity" (*Spinoza*, Lewis White Beck 36-37).

3. Pascal on Man's Disproportion

--This is where our innate knowledge leads us. If it be not true, there is no truth in man; and if it be true, he finds therein great cause for humiliation, being compelled to abase himself in one way or another. And since he cannot exist without this knowledge, I wish that, before entering on deeper researches into nature, he would consider her both seriously and at leisure, that he would reflect upon himself also, and knowing what proportion there is... Let man then contemplate the whole of nature in her full and grand majesty, and turn his vision from the low objects which surround him. Let him gaze on that brilliant light, set like an eternal lamp to illumine the universe; let the earth appear to him a point in comparison with the vast circle described by the sun; and let him wonder at the fact that this vast circle is itself but a very fine point in comparison with that described by the stars in their revolution round the firmament. But if our view be arrested there, let our imagination pass beyond; it will sooner exhaust the power of conception than nature that of supplying material for conception. The whole visible world is only an imperceptible atom in the ample bosom of nature. No idea approaches it. We may enlarge our conceptions beyond an imaginable space; we only produce atoms in comparison with the reality of things. It is an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere. In short, it is the greatest sensible mark of the almighty power of God that imagination loses itself in that thought.

--Returning to himself, let man consider what he is in comparison with all existence; let him regard himself as lost in this remote corner of nature; and from the little cell in which he finds himself lodged, I mean the universe, let him estimate at their true value the earth, kingdoms, cities, and himself. What is a man in the Infinite?

--But to show him another prodigy equally astonishing, let him examine the most delicate things he knows. Let a mite be given him, with its minute body and parts incomparably more minute, limbs with their joints, veins in the limbs, blood in the veins, humours in the blood, drops in the humours, vapours in the drops. Dividing these last things again, let him exhaust his powers of conception, and let the last object at which he can arrive be now that of our discourse. Perhaps he will think that here is the smallest point in nature. I will let him see therein a new abyss. I will paint for him not only the visible universe, but all that he can conceive of nature's immensity in the womb of this abridged atom. Let him see therein an infinity of universes, each of which has its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as in the visible world; in each earth animals, and in the last mites, in which he will find again all that the first had, finding still in these others the same thing without end and without cessation. Let him lose himself in wonders as amazing in their littleness as the others in their vastness. For who will not be astounded at the fact that our body, which a little while ago was imperceptible in the universe, itself imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, is now a colossus, a world, or rather a whole, in respect of the nothingness which we cannot reach? He who regards himself in this light will be afraid of himself, and observing himself sustained in the body given him by nature between those two abysses of the Infinite and Nothing, will tremble at the sight of these marvels; and I think that, as his curiosity changes into admiration, he will be more disposed to contemplate them in silence than to examine them with presumption.

--For, in fact, what is man in nature? A Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything. Since he is infinitely removed from comprehending the extremes, the end of things and their beginning are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret; he is equally incapable of seeing the Nothing from which he was made, and the Infinite in which he is swallowed up.

--What will he do then, but perceive the appearance of the middle of things, in an eternal despair of knowing either their beginning or their end. All things proceed from the Nothing, and are borne towards the Infinite. Who will follow these marvellous processes? The Author of these wonders understands them. None other can do so.

--Through failure to contemplate these Infinites, men have rashly rushed into the examination of nature, as though they bore some proportion to her. It is strange that they have wished to understand the beginnings of things, and thence to arrive at the knowledge of the whole, with a presumption as infinite as their object. For surely this design cannot be formed without presumption or without a capacity infinite like nature.

--If we are well informed, we understand that, as nature has graven her image and that of her Author on all things, they almost all partake of her double infinity. Thus we see that all the sciences are infinite in the extent of their researches. For who doubts that geometry, for instance, has an infinite infinity of problems to solve? They are also infinite in the multitude and fineness of their premises; for it is clear that those which are put forward as ultimate are not self- supporting, but are based on others which, again having others for their support, do not permit of finality. But we represent some as ultimate for reason, in the same way as in regard to material objects we call that an indivisible point beyond which our senses can no longer perceive anything, although by its nature it is infinitely divisible.

--Of these two Infinites of science, that of greatness is the most palpable, and hence a few persons have pretended to know all things. "I will speak of the whole," said Democritus.

--But the infinitely little is the least obvious. Philosophers have much oftener claimed to have reached it, and it is here they have all stumbled. This has given rise to such common titles as First Principles, Principles of Philosophy, and the like, as ostentatious in fact, though not in appearance, as that one which blinds us, De omni scibili. [Title given by Pico della Mirandola to one of his proposed nine hundred theses, in 1486.]

--We naturally believe ourselves far more capable of reaching the centre of things than of embracing their circumference. The visible extent of the world visibly exceeds us; but as we exceed little things, we think ourselves more capable of knowing them. And yet we need no less capacity for attaining the Nothing than the All. Infinite capacity is required for both, and it seems to me that whoever shall have understood the ultimate principles of being might also attain to the knowledge of the Infinite. The one depends on the other, and one leads to the other. These extremes meet and reunite by force of distance and find each other in God, and in God alone.

--Let us, then, take our compass; we are something, and we are not everything. The nature of our existence hides from us the knowledge of first beginnings which are born of the Nothing; and the littleness of our being conceals from us the sight of the Infinite.

--Our intellect holds the same position in the world of thought as our body occupies in the expanse of nature.

--Limited as we are in every way, this state which holds the mean between two extremes is present in all our impotence. Our senses perceive no extreme. Too much sound deafens us; too much light dazzles us; too great distance or proximity hinders our view. Too great length and too great brevity of discourse tend to obscurity; too much truth is paralysing (I know some who cannot understand that to take four from nothing leaves nothing). First principles are too self-evident for us; too much pleasure disagrees with us. Too many concords are annoying in music; too many benefits irritate us; we wish to have the wherewithal to overpay our debts. Beneficia eo usque laeta sunt dum videntur exsolvi posse; ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur. [Tacitus, Annals, iv. "Kindnesses are agreeable so long as one thinks them possible to render; further, recognition makes way for hatred.] "We feel neither extreme heat nor extreme cold. Excessive qualities are prejudicial to us and not perceptible by the senses; we do not feel but suffer them. Extreme youth and extreme age hinder the mind, as also too much and too little education. In short, extremes are for us as though they were not, and we are not within their notice. They escape us, or we them.

--This is our true state; this is what makes us incapable of certain knowledge and of absolute ignorance. We sail within a vast sphere, ever drifting in uncertainty, driven from end to end. When we think to attach ourselves to any point and to fasten to it, it wavers and leaves us; and if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us, and vanishes for ever. Nothing stays for us. This is our natural condition and yet most contrary to our inclination; we burn with desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens to abysses.

--Let us, therefore, not look for certainty and stability. Our reason is always deceived by fickle shadows; nothing can fix the finite between the two Infinites, which both enclose and fly from it.

--If this be well understood, I think that we shall remain at rest, each in the state wherein nature has placed him. As this sphere which has fallen to us as our lot is always distant from either extreme, what matters it that man should have a little more knowledge of the universe? If he has it, he but gets a little higher. Is he not always infinitely removed from the end, and is not the duration of our life equally removed from eternity, even if it lasts ten years longer?

--In comparison with these Infinites, all finites are equal, and I see no reason for fixing our imagination on one more than on another. The only comparison which we make of ourselves to the finite is painful to us.

--If man made himself the first object of study, he would see how incapable he is of going further. How can a part know the whole? But he may perhaps aspire to know at least the parts to which he bears some proportion. But the parts of the world are all so related and linked to one another that I believe it impossible to know one without the other and without the whole.

--Man, for instance, is related to all he knows. He needs a place wherein to abide, time through which to live, motion in order to live, elements to compose him, warmth and food to nourish him, air to breathe. He sees light; he feels bodies; in short, he is in a dependent alliance with everything. To know man, then, it is necessary to know how it happens that he needs air to live, and, to know the air, we must know how it is thus related to the life of man, etc. Flame cannot exist without air; therefore, to understand the one, we must understand the other.

--Since everything, then, is cause and effect, dependent and supporting, mediate and immediate, and all is held together by a natural though imperceptible chain which binds together things most distant and most different, I hold it equally impossible to know the parts without knowing the whole and to know the whole without knowing the parts in detail.

--The eternity of things in itself or in God must also astonish our brief duration. The fixed and constant immobility of nature, in comparison with the continual change which goes on within us, must have the same effect.

--And what completes our incapability of knowing things is the fact that they are simple and that we are composed of two opposite natures, different in kind, soul and body. For it is impossible that our rational part should be other than spiritual; and if any one maintain that we are simply corporeal, this would far more exclude us from the knowledge of things, there being nothing so inconceivable as to say that matter knows itself. It is impossible to imagine how it should know itself.

--So, if we are simply material, we can know nothing at all; and if we are composed of mind and matter, we cannot know perfectly things which are simple, whether spiritual or corporeal. Hence it comes that almost all philosophers have confused ideas of things, and speak of material things in spiritual terms, and of spiritual things in material terms. For they say boldly that bodies have a tendency to fall, that they seek after their centre, that they fly from destruction, that they fear the void, that they have inclinations, sympathies, antipathies, all of which attributes pertain only to mind. And in speaking of minds, they consider them as in a place, and attribute to them movement from one place to another; and these are qualities which belong only to bodies.

--Instead of receiving the ideas of these things in their purity, we colour them with our own qualities, and stamp with our composite being all the simple things which we contemplate.

--Who would not think, seeing us compose all things of mind and body, but that this mixture would be quite intelligible to us? Yet it is the very thing we least understand.

Man is to himself the most wonderful object in nature; for he cannot conceive what the body is, still less what the mind is, and least of all how a body should be united to a mind. This is the consummation of his difficulties, and yet it is his very being. Modus quo corporibus adhaerent spiritus comprehendi ab hominibus non potest, et hoc tamen homo est. [St. Augustine, *City of God*, xxi. 10. "The manner in which the spirit is united to the body can not be understood by man; and yet it is man."]

Required Readings:

- Spinoza, *The Ethics* [ARIEW: 129-180]
- Pascal, *The Wager* [ARIEW: 94-96]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 127-144; 108-126
- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol IV* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 205-263; 153-173.
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 199-251.

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 3 page reflection paper on the following theme:

  Reflect upon Alexis de Tocqueville's saying that anyone who wishes to defend human dignity and greatness must fight against pantheism. ("What Causes Democratic Nations to Incline Toward Pantheism," Democracy in America, Volume 2, part 1, chap 7)

  OR

  How does Pascal provide the modern man a way back to God in light of modern science and modern sensibility? (You must acquire a complete edition of the Pensees, or the Kreeft edition listed below - in addition to wager read on diversion and two infinities)

Supplemental Readings:

- Richard Kennington. "Analytic and Synthetic Methods in Spinoza's Ethics." In *The Philosophy of Baruch Spinoza*, ed. Richard Kennington. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1980.

- Lewis White Beck. "Spinoza" *Six Secular Philosophers*. New York: Harper, 1960. pp. 27-41.

- Stanley Rosen, "Benedict Spinoza" in *History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987. pp. 456-475.
- Romano Guardini. *Pascal for Our Time.* Translated by Brian Thompson. New York: Herder and Herder. 1966.
- Peter Kreeft. Christianity for Modern Pagans: Pascal's Pensees Edited, Outlined and Explained. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993.

Lesson 7: Metaphysical Moderation? Locke's Essay

A. Basic Themes

Locke states his intention and explains the aim and style of the Essay in two introductory epistles and the introduction proper (1.1) [1]. The clearest statement of aim is often quoted: "This, therefore, being my Purpose to enquire into the Original, Certainty, and Extent of humane Knowledge; together with the Grounds and Degrees of Belief, Opinion, and Assent" (1.1.2). Why did Locke set this purpose for the work to begin with? The second part of the statement of aim holds the answer: a consideration of the grounds of belief and opinion. The development of the statement of purpose clearly links the search for the origin of knowledge with the problem of opinion. He is in quest of a "measure" for human persuasions. Opinions of men are so "various, different, and wholly contradictory" and yet "asserted with such assurance and confidence" that one is led to doubt the existence of truth or man's capacity to know it. Locke begins his work with the classic philosophical distinction between opinion and knowledge and the concern for the contradictory character of opinion [2]. Locke too wants to make the firm distinction between knowledge and opinion, certainty and probability; and this so as to moderate and regulate opinion. He wishes to avoid skepticism and presumption. Yet from the "in-between" a search begins for a knowledge of first things, a trans-historical standard and perspective [3]. The philosopher is in search of a view of the whole, "sub specie aeternitatis." The original intention does have a classical resonance. But the classical intent is quickly changed and undermined. Locke does not really share this philosophical quest of the ancients. His purpose involves the avoidance of perplexity; he urges great caution about the difficult things [4]. The philosopher should avoid the "vast Ocean of Being" wherein man has no sure footing (1.1.7), and rest content with a short tether. Locke is tired of the talk and dispute (see also 3.10.13). Yet Locke does not embrace a classical form of skepticism either. For the skeptic is idle and useless. The

mind is narrow, but it can be usefully employed. The human understanding is suited, not to metaphysical speculation, but to practical matters: "Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our Conduct" [5]. The philosopher is concerned with the contrariety of opinion in order to regulate its ill-effects and to turn human understanding to useful pursuits.

The practical aim of the Essay entails a reform, a reorientation, of both natural philosophy and ethics. Natural philosophy is reoriented from speculation to utility, from certainty to probability. Ethics is reoriented from a matter of prudence and gentlemanly opinion to mathematical certainty. The Essay introduces a great reversal: speculative science is probable and practical science, ethics, is certain. Ethics is superior to natural philosophy both because of its greater certitude and because natural philosophy issues ultimately in practical fruit and convenience. This stands in great contrast to Aristotelian philosophy in which natural philosophy, a contemplative science, leads to metaphysics. And speculative science is superior to practical because of its certitude and the dignity of its subject matter. And further, ethics issues ultimately in contemplation.

The Essay is an experiment in "free-thinking." It is a model of free-thinking and a guide to those who wish to do like-wise. Free-thinking is the foundation for ethics and political philosophy. By adopting the perspective of rational consciousness Locke draws the reader into a radical position by which personal happiness and political order can be evaluated and pursued. Both the individual and the society will profit from the experiment in free-thinking. Locke begins with an appeal to the innocent delight of thinking, a "hunter's satisfaction," he calls it in the "Epistle to the Reader." By the end of the work he deems liberty of thought to be the greatest liberty of all, for "he is certainly the most subjected, the most enslaved, who is so in his Understanding" (4.20.6). And the laws and fashions of the regime correspond to the liberty of thought, enslaving men or freeing them. The "liberty and opportunities of a fair Enquiry" are more important than the economic and material conditions which impose the crushing burden of necessity on mankind (4.20.4). When men are forced to accept the opinions they are enslaved in "the freest part of Man, their Understandings." Men should be free to think, and most of all to be free to "chuse the Physician, to whose Conduct they would trust themselves." Locke the "under-laborer" has really become Locke the physician by the end of the Essay. Locke is the model whose conduct of understanding throughout the Essay stands to cure and free men of their bondage. The Essay's call for a demonstration of morality is also integral to this motif of freedom of thought:

Whilst the Parties of Men cram their tenets down all Men's Throats, whom they can get into their Power, without permitting them to examine their Truth or Falsehood; and will not let Truth have fair play in the World, nor Men the Liberty to search after it; What improvement can be expected? What greater Light can be hoped for in the moral Sciences. (4.3.20)

The great light in moral science comes from the experiment in free-thinking and the appropriation of oneself in rational consciousness, a task embodied in the Essay itself.

Marion Montgomery observes that "Locke contributed to the break with the past and to the intellectual and spiritual fragmentation of our world . . . for Locke reinterprets significantly the old sense of the individual in community and of the community in nature" (Trilogy 129). Yet despite the radical consequences of Locke's thought and its secularizing tendency, Locke appeared to be a friend of the religious man. He was read by many people who decried a Hobbes or Spinoza. Montgomery correctly judges that "Bacon is too robust a creature to supply that empirical thought to the Puritan mind; piety requires the pious Locke" (213). This remark perfectly uncovers the great success of Locke's philosophical rhetoric. The "pious" Locke uses the old terminology, such as virtue, natural law, and even God, but he invests them with a new meaning. Only by the greatest of equivocations can Locke's ethics be called a doctrine of natural law. It departs entirely from the traditional meaning. Yet he uses the ambiguity to its full rhetorical advantage. Although this can be shown in the Two Treatises of Government it is fully clear in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding. In that massive work we encounter the darker side of Locke's cheerful and Christian surface. Montgomery is to be commended for pursuing this line of inquiry. I would suggest that it be taken further.

The Puritan's were attracted, Montgomery says, to Locke's statement that we should avoid the "vast Ocean of Being" wherein a man has no sure footing. They shared his distrust of the world. In the Essay Locke recommends that the mind rest content with its short tether, because if the mind is not suited for metaphysical speculation, it is suited for practical matters: "Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct" (1.1.6) [7]. Human conduct, Locke says, must be concerned with "convenience" and "virtue"; it is within our reach to discover "the comfortable provision for this life and the way that leads to a better" (1.1.5). Locke combines in his account both the Puritan goal, heaven, and the goal of the "robust Bacon", earthly convenience. In the Essay Locke treats of now one goal and then the other; at times he merges the two together. In the final analysis, Locke puts forward a secular Baconian goal and dresses it in Christian garb.

It is the supreme irony of the Essay that the divine law is reconstrued in the very attempt to reassure the Christian believer. Locke does not explicitly deny the integrity of faith, nor the existence of a life beyond this world. But he makes the conditions for knowledge of divine law so strict reason cannot discover it. For example divine law requires knowledge of divine existence, attributes and the immortality of the soul. But in the Essay Locke admits that reason cannot prove the status of the soul. And the divine attributes are very sketchy. So he allows faith to appropriate the rational morality of earthly peace and convenience. But the "rational morality" is vastly different from the traditional Christian and Aristotelian ethic come to be known as natural law.

The traditional doctrine of natural law appeals to nature as a norm. Within the context of a teleological understanding of nature, the good is defined in terms of human perfection. The good attracts the human agent by its fullness and beauty. The good man performs his functions well and perfects his human faculties of reason and will. Locke constructs a science of ethics that does not depend on a notion of nature with purpose and fulfillment, nor does is depend on any notion of spiritual faculties to be perfected. A

notion of "person," as a conscious self, replaces the traditional notion of soul. Consciousness of self has the highest degree of certainty according to Locke. This consciousness is not an abstract or pure mind, however. It is a consciousness of pleasure and pain; it is an agent's awareness of its own ease or uneasiness in the world and is defined in terms of the self's awareness of its own happiness and misery:

Self is that conscious thinking thing, (whatever Substance, made up of whether Spiritual, or Material, Simple or Compounded, it matters not) which is sensible, or conscious of Pleasure and Pain, capable of Happiness and Misery, and so is concern'd for itself, as far as that consciousness extends. (2.27.17)

The certainty of existence of the entire external world rests upon practical truths connecting the operation of things with the pleasure and pain they produce in the agent. The certainty of things "existing in rerum Natura" is as great "as our condition needs" (4.11.8). Human faculties are not suited to a "perfect, clear and comprehensive Knowledge of things" but are suited rather to "the preservation of us, in whom they are; and accommodated to the use of Life: they serve to our purpose well enough, if they will but give us certain notice of those things, which are convenient or inconvenient to us." He goes on to say that the evidence for the external world is as great as we can desire, i.e., "as certain to us, as our Pleasure or Pain; i.e., Happiness or Misery; beyond which we have no concernment, either of Knowing or Being" (4.11.8). Locke avoids the "ocean of being" and speculative philosophy because it is not necessary for preservation. Personal convenience dictates Lockean sensibility.

From the perspective of personal consciousness and its own convenience, a rational ordering of choice is possible. The future consequences of an action must be taken into account. And so too must the conditions for continuance of any present good be assured into the future. The fear of loss extends self-consciousness into the future. Ethics is oriented not by a notion of duty or perfection, but by self-advantage and self-interest. Utilitarian calculation harmonizes the interest of the self with the interest of others. But this harmony can be established only by radically restricting the scope of ethics. The content of moral precepts must be pared down to a minimum. It must be made to focus on the civil goods of life, liberty, and property. Without these rules one can be neither safe nor secure. So despite the variability of and the subjectivity of happiness [8], the precepts of this restricted morality are universal. Everybody requires the protection of their life, liberty, and property whatever their notion of happiness. By lowering the aim of ethics, restricting it scope, Locke can assure its effectiveness. By reorienting ethics to the demands of self-conscious temporal concern he can assure its certainty.

Such is the ethic appropriated by faith: the rational pursuit of happiness, however happiness may be defined, is virtuous conduct. It is really an astounding remark, incorporating as it does, such moral relativism and concern for temporal convenience. The appropriation of the rational laws of utility by faith reorients that faith to the things of this world. The concern for the better world, an after life, is superfluous. For if by following the rules for happiness on earth one is de facto virtuous, no other special

"religious" concern is called for. In some other passages Locke drops out the aim of finding the way to a better life after this one and speaks only of the aim of using knowledge to increase the stock of conveniences for the advantages of ease and health (4.12.10). And when the two aims are put into juxtaposition the greatest praise by far goes to the inventor as the "greatest benefactor." It does not go to the works of mercy and charity. Nor does it go to contemplation, philosophic or religious[9]. He praises the discoverer of iron and deems him the "Father of Arts and Author of Plenty" (4.12.11). These are striking juxtapositions, that could border on a form of blasphemy. At the very least, the judgment entails an elevation of human power and places God in the background. Technological "know-how" is to be esteemed above the quality of mercy. Technology saves men from the grave, Locke says. But we know that works of mercy may secure men's "eternal estate." Whatever Locke's interest in Christianity, it surely differs from the traditional Christianity in which works of mercy and charity are the stuff of sanctity, and not technological discovery and entrepreneurial ambition. Despite the acknowledgement of God and religious duty, the temporal focus of Locke's practical aim is manifest. Locke has constructed a purely secular ethic.

If faith is superfluous, then why is it even retained? We know that Locke wished to communicate his new ethic to various audiences, including Christian believers. The use of a familiar terminology is retained so that the new ideas are made "easie and intelligible to all sorts of readers," as Locke admits in his "Epistle to the Reader." John Yolton quotes approvingly a statement that "Locke secured for posterity advances by radical and progressive forces." Those who openly professed themselves "antithetical to revealed religion" found in Locke "tools to be exploited." Yolton notes that others of more moderate temperament, aligned to orthodoxy, effected more gradual and long lasting modifications:

It was in the hands of these men, even more than in those of the Deists who appealed to Locke's epistemology, that the new tendencies within religion were most aided and abetted by the theoretical structure of the Essay. The application by the Deists was flashy and superficial; that of the traditionalists much more penetrating, perceptive, and positive. [10]

Locke found a way to enter into the most sacred and guarded of domains -- such as theology, morality, and religious belief -- and left his philosophic mark. Whereas Bacon, Descartes, and especially Hobbes and Spinoza, stirred up great resistance, Locke was able to introduce modern rationalism and the conquest of nature into the theological heart of the moral and political order. Indeed, Montgomery is right to assign to the "pious Locke," by way of the Puritans in the north and the enlightened statesmen in the south, the most devastating effect on American sensibility.

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. John Locke Questions on epistemology for Review

Knowledge

- What is knowledge?
- Why is Locke's approach idealistic?
- How does he know about the existence of the external world?
- Why is Locke's approach a case of "epistemological atomism"?
- Nature and essences of things
- What is the nominal essence of a thing? How is it made?
- What is the real essence of a thing? How is it known? (what is hypothetical deductive method? see notes) if at all
- What is corpuscularism and its relation to real essences?
- Difference of secondary and primary qualities?

Morality

- What is a mixed mode? What are the imperfections and abuses of a mixed mode?
- Compare with knowledge of substances
- Why does morality need to add a rule to the mixed mode? What does the rule add?
- What are the three norms or rules? (e.g. source, type of sanction)
- Compare specifically the three norms.

C. READINGS

1. Essay 2.13.27

"Tis not easie for the Mind to put off those confused Notions and Prejudices it has imbibed from Custom, Inadvertancy, and common Conversation: it requires pains and assiduity to examine its Ideas, till it resolves them into those clear and distinct simple ones, out of which they are compounded."

2. Essay 2.28.14

Whether the Rule, to which, as to a Touchstone, we bring our voluntary Actions, to examine them by, and try their goodness, and accordingly to name them; which is, as it were, the Mark of the value we set on them: Whether I say, we take that Rule from the Fashion of the Country, or the Will of a Law-maker, the mind is easily able to observe the Relation any Action hath to it; and to judge, whether the Action agrees, or disagrees with the Rule: and so hath a Notion of Moral Goodness or Evil, which is either

Conformity or not Conformity of any Action to that Rule: And, therefore, is often called Moral Rectitude. This Rule being nothing but a collection of several simple Ideas, the Conformity thereto is but so ordering the Action, that the simple Ideas, belonging to it, may correspond to those, which the law requires. And thus we see, how Moral Beings and Notions, are founded on, and terminated in these simple Ideas, derived from Sensation or Reflection. (e.g. murder as a collection of simple ideas)...This collection of simple Ideas [murder] may be found to agree or disagree, with the esteem of the Country I have been bred in; and to be held by most Men there, worthy Praise, or Blame, I call the Action vertuous or vitious: If I have the Will of a supreme, invisible Law-maker for my Rule: then, as I supposed the Action commanded, or forbidden by God, I call it Good or Evil, Sin or Duty: and if I compare it to the civil Law, the Rule made by the Legislative of the Country, I call it lawful, or unlawful, a Crime, or no Crime. So that whensoever we take the Rule of Moral Actions; or by what Standard soever we frame in our Minds the Ideas of Vertues or Vices, they consist only, and are made up of Collections of simple Ideas, which we originally received from Sense or Reflection: and their Rectitude, or Obliquity, consists in the Agreement, or Disagreement, with those Patterns prescribed by some Law.

3. Essay 2.28.7

The Laws that Men generally refer their Actions to, to judge of their Rectitude, or Obliquity, seem to me to be these three. 1. The Divine Law. 2. The Civil Law. 3. The Law of Opinion of Reputation, if I may so call it. By the relation they bear to the first of these, Men judge whether their Actions are Sins, or Duties; by the second, whether they be Criminal or Innocent; and by the third, whether they be Vertues or Vices.

4. Essay 2.21.55

The Mind has a different relish, as well as the Palatae; and you will as fruitlessly endeavour to delight all Men with Riches or Glory, (which yet some Men place their Happiness in,) as you would satisfy all Men's Hunger with Cheese or Lobsters; which though very agreeable and delicious fare to some, are to others extremely nauseous and offensive: And many People would Reason preferr the griping of a hungery Belly, to those Dishes, which are a feast to others. Hence, it was, I think, that the Philosophers of old did in vain enquire, whether Summum bounum consisted in riches, or bodily Delights, or Virtue, or Contemplation: and they might have as reasonably disputed, whether the best Relish were to be found in Apples, Plumbs, or Nuts; and have divided themselves into Sects upon it. For as pleasant Tastes depend not upon the things themselves, but their agreeablneness to this or that particular Palate, wherein there is great variety: so the greatest Happiness consists, in the having those things, which produce the greatest Pleasure; and in the absence of those, which cause any disturbance, any pain. Now these, to different Men, are very different things.

Required Readings:

- Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* I.1-2; II.1-14, 21-23, III.3,6; IV.1-4, 10-11, 15-16 [ARIEW: 27-373]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 191-216.
- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol V* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 67-122.
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 311-352.

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 3 page paper on the following theme: Locke claims to be nothing but a "humble underlaborer" clearing the ground for science. What obstacles stand in the way of science? How does Locke propose to clear them aside and formulate a philosophy for the new science of Newton?

Supplemental Readings:

- Buchdahl, Gerd. *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Science: The Classical Origins: Descartes to Kant.* Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1969.
  _____. The Image of Newton and Locke in the Age of Reason. London: Sheed and Ward, 1961.
- Danford, John W. Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy: A Reexamination of the Foundations of Social Science. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Gibson, James. Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931.
- Klocker, Harry R. *God & the Empiricists.* Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1968.
- Yolton, John. *John Locke and the Way of Ideas.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Lesson 8: Political Moderation? Locke's Second Treatise

A. Basic Themes

Locke transformed the Hobbesian philosophy into a more palatable and balanced philosophy of natural rights. It is in the Lockean form that many Americans came to know about rights. And Locke's philosophy contains a fundamental ambiguity that pertains to the alternatives mentioned above. That is, the very tension over the autonomy of the person and the workmanship of God is played out in the writing and interpretation of Locke.

Locke sought to find a solution to the problem of politics that would restore peace to a country divided by wars of religion. The tolerance of religious belief required, in his mind, the lowering of the goal and mission of the temporal order, away from the inculcation of virtue and the defense of the faith to the protection of the temporal welfare of its citizens, that is to the protection of the rights to life, liberty and property of its citizens [6]. By removing the matter of religious contention from the civil sphere Locke hoped to quell the disturbances inflicted upon Europe because of intolerance. Hobbes, however, removed contentious matters by making the sovereign absolute over the determination of the beliefs of its citizens. It was Locke who overcame the inconsistencies in this account, and sought to place structural and formal limits upon the sovereign political power and to bind the sovereign to the respect of rights to life, liberty and property. The division of powers, taxation with representation, limited prerogatives of the state power balanced by a "right to revolution" are all part of the Lockean system. For Hobbes rights are fundamental moral claims against others; Locke adds to this the claim of the individual against the state, at least when a "long train abuses" are perceived by a majority and rouse it to act. Locke's more moderate and reasonable account of human rights has appealed to generation of political statesmen and thinkers. John C. Murray, in discussing the First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution, calls the concepts "articles of peace," reasonable devices learned through experience, to limit government. He rejects certain "theologies of the First amendment," which posit, for example, the ultimate subjectivity of religious truth [7]. Locke has been interpreted along both lines. However, the same seed of radical autonomy as the basis for human rights remains in Locke.

Like Hobbes, Locke derives the principles of limited government from a hypothetical state of nature [8]. This original state of nature is said to be a state of "perfect freedom." By freedom Locke here means no more than an absence of restraint. Locke mentions in the same passage with the perfect freedom, the bounds of a natural law. This is to distinguish "liberty" from "license." The natural law which initially guides men in the state of nature is to refrain from harm: "The State of Nature has a Law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one; And Reason, which is that Law, teaches all Mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his Life, Health, Liberty, or Possessions." The restraint demanded by natural law derives

from an additional characteristic of the state of nature: in the state of nature men are equal in addition to being free [9]. Locke makes clear that equality means equal jurisdiction, or the absence of subordination and subjection. The basis for this mutual respect and recognition is the fundamental problem, since it is the basis for natural law.

The key difficulty in interpreting the philosophy of John Locke pertains to the foundation of natural rights and the rationale for mutual restraint. Locke in fact gives a two-fold rationale and foundation. On the one hand, he speaks of man as God's workmanship, and from this axiom derives the right to life, liberty, and property as essential to the divine moral order; on other occasions he simply appeals to the primacy of self-preservation and unfolds from radical autonomy the list of rights and the self-interested basis for mutual respect.

In the first model, the basis for equal respect is divine workmanship, and the order of creation. Locke argues that all creatures are equal under God and occupy the same rank or status as "creature" [10]. Thus, no one can assume to take the position of God and rule over others. This argument from the order of creation reflects a pre-modern understanding of equality. Men are neither beasts nor gods, but occupy equally a ground mid-way between [11]. It is neither appropriate to act as a god nor to treat others as beasts or inferior creatures. Locke explicitly uses this pre-modern image. In light of this order of creation, man can make no claim to absolute dominion over his fellow creature. Mutual respect depends upon the recognition of one's status as creature, along with others, before the Creator. That is, man cannot claim the type of superiority that would authorize the destruction or arbitrary use of another, and rights protect this status.

But Locke says that the grasp of "natural law" does not depend on divine revelation nor does it depend on knowledge of God's promulgated law and sanctions. This content can be appreciated independently of the workmanship model. For to deny the mutuality of equal right is to propel oneself into a state of war with others. And by such a declaration one has "exposed his Life to the others Power to be taken away by him" (2.16). To put oneself in such an insecure state is most unreasonable and dangerous. One is open to being treated like a noxious beast [12]. It is more safe, more reasonable to acknowledge the equality of rights. Thus, mere self-interest would counsel mutuality and restraint. Locke refers to the law of nature as simply the law of reason and common equity (2.8): the law of nature is the reasonable restraint of common equity which will establish mutual security (2.8). It is discovered through the person's own desire for safety and security. The basis for restraint is fear of harm and self-interest. According to this model of rights, selfish interest, comfortable preservation, is the basis for my claims. Enlightened self-interest leads me to recognize the equal right of others to their life, liberty and property [13].

The legacy of Locke is therefore ambivalent. The advocate of limited government, and an apparent friend of the theistic tradition, Locke nevertheless underwrote a model of radical human autonomy in which freedom dominates the moral order. Locke's philosophy of human rights is derived from a subjectivist account of the good; it lowers

the goal of the state to a supposedly neutral position; it imposes a minimal obligation of non-harm; and ultimately does encourage self-interest. The minimal obligations embodied in civil law become the extent of morality; the wide sphere of private life must come to occupy the bulk of human energies. With Locke, such freedom was aimed at unlimited acquisition of property and the self found its affirmation in labor and the "work ethic," or what Leo Strauss called "the joyless quest for joy." But such terms as equal freedom and mutual respect came to be transformed under the inspiration of Rousseau and Kant to mean much more than civic liberty and protection of private property. In contemporary American jurisprudence they have come to promote the existence of what University of Illinois Law Professor Gerard Bradley has recently referred to as the "erotic self."14

1. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Peter H. Nidditch. *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975. References are to Book, chapter and section, e.g., (1.2.1) refers to Book I, chapter 2, section 1.

2. See for example, Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.1; Parmenides, "Proem"; Plato, Meno 98b.

3. See for example, Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* Chicago: University of Chicago, 1952., pp. 89, 123-125.

4. Cf. Essay 1.1.4 with Meno 84.

5. 1.1.6. Cf. 4.12.11, "Morality is the proper business of mankind."

6. John Locke, Letter concerning Toleration.

7. John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960). pp. 48-56.

8. "To understand Political Power right, and derive it from its Original, we must consider what state all Men are naturally in, and that is a state of perfect Freedom to order their Actions, and dispose of their Possessions, and Persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the Law of Nature, without asking leave or depending on the Will of any other Man." John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, edited by Peter Laslett, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968). (2.4)

9. "A State also of Equality, wherein all Power and Jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another: there being nothing more evident, than that Creatures of the same species and rank promiscuously born to all the same advantages of Nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without Subordination or Subjection, unless the Lord and Master of them all, should by any manifest declaration of his Will set one above another, and confer on him by an evident and clear appointment an undoubted Right to Dominion and Sovereignty." (2.4)

10. For Men being all the Workmanship of one Omnipotent, and infinitely wise Maker; All the Servants of one Sovereign Master, sent into the World by his order and about his business, they are his Property, whose Workmanship they are, made to last during his, not another's Pleasure. And being furnished with like Faculties, sharing all in one Community of Nature, there cannot be supposed any such Subordination among us, that may authorize us to destroy one another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of Creatures are for ours. (2.6)

11. See Harry Jaffa, "Equality as a Conservative Principle," in *How to Think about the American Revolution*, (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1978) pp. 13-48.

12. One may destroy a Man who makes War upon him, or has discovered an Enmity to his being, for the same Reason, that he may kill a Wolf or a Lyon; because such men are not under the ties of the Common Law of Reason, have no other Rule, but that of Force and Violence, and so may be treated as Beasts of Prey, those dangerous and noxious Creatures, that will be sure to destroy him, whenever he falls into their Power. (2.16)

13. See also Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* ed. Peter Niditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), I.3.6: "It is no wonder, that every one should, not only allow, but recommend, and magnifie those Rules to others, from whose observance of them, he is sure to reap Advantage to himself. He may, out of Interest, as well as Conviction, cry up that for Sacred; which if once trampled on, and prophaned, he himself cannot be safe nor secure."

14. Gerard V. Bradley, "The Constitution & the Erotic Self," First Things no. 16 (October 1991), pp. 28-32.

B. Outlines and Study Guides:

- What is the basis for rights?
- What is the end or purpose of civil government?
- What is the state of nature and why is government a cure?

C. READINGS

1. Redemptor Hominis, #21:

JPII: "Nowadays it is sometimes held, although wrongly, that freedom is an end in itself, that each human being is free when he makes use of his freedom as he wishes, and that this must be our aim in the lives of individuals and societies. In reality freedom is a great gift only when we know how to use it consciously for everything that is our true good. Christ teaches us that the best use of freedom is charity, which takes concrete form in self-giving and in service."

2. Second Treatise #3:

Political power then I take to be a Right of making Laws with Penalties of Death, and consequently all less Penalties, for the Regulating and Preserving of Property, and of employing the force of the Community, in the Execution of such Laws, and in the defense of the Common-wealth from foreign Injury, this only for the Publick Good.

3. Second Treatise #4:

A State also of Equality, wherein all Power and Jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another: there being nothing more evident, than that Creatures of the same species and rank promiscuously born to all the same advantages of Nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without Subordination or Subjection, unless the Lord and Master of them all, should by any manifest declaration of his Will set one above another, and confer on him by an evident and clear appointment an undoubted Right to Dominion and Sovereignty. To understand Political Power right, and derive it from its Original, we must consider what state all Men are naturally in, and that is a state of perfect freedom to order their Actions, and dispose of their Possessions, and Persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the Law of Nature, without asking leave or depending on the Will of any other Man.

4. Second Treatise #6:

But though this be a State of Liberty, yet it is not a State of Licence, though Man in that State have an uncontrollable Liberty, to dispose of his Person or Possessions, yet he has not Liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any Creature in his Possession, but where some nobler use, than its bare Preservation calls for it. The State of Nature has a Law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one; And Reason, which is that Law, teaches all Mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his Life, Health, Liberty, or Possessions. For Men being all the Workmanship of one Omnipotent, and infinitely wise Maker; All the Servants of one Sovereign Master, sent into the World by his order and about his business, they are his Property, whose Workmanship they are, made to last during his, not another's Pleasure. And being furnished with like Faculties, sharing all in one Community of Nature, there cannot be supposed any such Subordination among us, that may authorize us to destroy one another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of Creatures are for ours. Every one as he bound to preserve himself, and not to quit his station willfully; so by like reason when his own Preservation comes not into competition, ought he, as he can, to preserve the rest of Mankind, and may not unless it be to do Justice on an Offender, take away, or impair the life, or what tends to the Preservation of the Life, the Liberty, Health, Limb, or Goods of another.

5. Second Treatise #7:

And that all Men may be restrained from invading others Rights, and from doing hurt to one another, and the Law of Nature be observed, which willeth the Peace and preservation of all Mankind, the Execution of the Law of Nature is in that State, put into

every Mans hands, whereby every one has a right to punish the transgressors of that Law to such a degree, as may hinder its Violation. For the Law of Nature would, as all other Laws that concern Men in this World, be in vain, if there were no body that in the State of Nature, had a power to Execute that Law, and thereby preserve the innocent and restrain offenders, and if any one in the State of Nature may punish another, for any evil he has done, every one may do so. For in that State of perfect Equality, where naturally there is no superiority or jurisdiction of one, over another, what any may do in Prosecution of that Law, every one must needs have a Right to do.

6. Second Treatise #8:

In transgressing the Law of Nature, the Offender declares himself to live by another Rule, than that of reason and common Equity, which is that Measure God has set to the actions of Men, for their mutual security: and so he becomes dangerous to Mankind, the tyger, which is to secure them from injury and violence, being slighted and broken by him. Which being a trespass against the whole Species, and the Peace and Safety of it, provided for by the Law of Nature, every man upon this score, by the Right he hath to preserve Mankind in general, may restrain, or where it is necessary, destroy things noxious to them and so may bring such evil on any one, who hath transgressed that Law, as may make him repent the doing of it, and thereby deter him, and by his Example others, from doing the like mischief. And in this case, and upon this ground, every Man hath a Right to punish the Offender, and be Executioner of the "LN"

7. Second Treatise #11:

Every Man has a Power to punish the Crime, to prevent its being committed again, by the Right he has of Preserving all Mankind, and doing all reasonable things he can in order to that end: And thus it is, that every Man in the State of Nature, has a Power to kill a Murderer, both to deter others from doing the like injury, which no Reparation can compensate, by the example of the punishment that attends it from every body, and also to secure Men from the attempts of a Criminal, who having renounced Reason, the common Rule and Measure, God hath given to Mankind, hath by the unjust Violence and Slaughter he hath committed upon one, declared War against all Mankind, and therefore may be destroyed as a Lyon or a Tyger, one of those wild Savage Beasts, with whom Men can no Society nor Security: and upon this is grounded the great Law of Nature, Who so sheddeth Mans blood, by Man shall his blood be shed. And Cain was so fully convinced, that every one had a Right to destroy such a Criminal, that after the Murther of his Brother, he cries out, Every one that findeth me, shall slay me; so plain was it writ in the Hearts of all Mankind.

8. Second Treatise #12:

It is certain that there is such a Law, and that too, as intelligible and plain to a rational Creature, and a Studier of that Law, as the positive laws of Common-wealths, nay possibly plainer; As much as Reason is easier to be understood, than the Phansies and intricate Contrivances of Men, following contrary and hidden interests put into words; For so truly are a great part of the Municipal Laws of Countries, which are only so far

right, as they are founded on the Law of Nature, by which they are to be regulated and interpreted.

9. Second Treatise #16:

The State of War is a State of Enmity and Destruction; And therefore declaring by Word or Action, not a passionate and hasty, but a sedate setled Design, upon another Mans Life, puts him in a State of War with him against whom he has declared such an Intention, and so has exposed his Life to the others Power to be taken away by him, or any one that joyns with him in his Defence, and espouses his Quarrel: it being reasonable and just that I should have a Right to destroy that which threatens me with Destruction. For by the Fundamenttal Law of Nature, Man being to be preserved, as much as possible, when all cannot be preserv'd, the safety of the innocent is to be preferred: And one may destroy a Man who makes War upon him, or has discovered an Enmity to his being, for the same Reason, that he may kill a Wolf or a Lyon; because such men are not under the ties of the Common Law of Reason, have no other Rule, but that of Force and Violence, and so may be treated as Beasts of Prey, those dangerous and noxious Creatures, that will be sure to destroy him, whenever he falls into their Power.

10. Second Treatise #17:

And hence it is, that he who attempts to get another Man into his Absolute Power, does thereby put himself into a State of War with him; It being to be understood as a Declaration of a Design upon his Life. For I have reason to conclude, that he who would get me into his Power without my consent, would use me as he pleased, when he had got me there, and destroy me too when he had a fancy to it: for no body can desire to have me in his Absolute Power, unless it be to compel me by force to that, which is against the Right of my Freedom, i.e. to make me a slave. To be from such force is the only security of my Preservation: and reason bids me look on him, as an Enemy to my Preservation, who would take away that Freedom, which is the Fence to it: so that he who makes an attempt to enslave me, thereby puts himself into a State of War with me. He that in the State of Nature, would take away the Freedom, that belongs to any one in that State, must necessarily be supposed to have a design to take away every thing else, that Freedom being the Foundation of all the rest: As he that in the State of Society, would take away the Freedom belonging to those of that Society or Common-wealth, must be supposed to design to take away from them every thing else, and so be looked on as in a State of War.

Required Readings:

- Locke, *Two Treatises* sections 1-10 [MORGAN: 736-780]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following:

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 212-219.

- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol V* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 123-142.
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 352-363.

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 3 page paper on the following theme: How does Locke improve on, and moderate, Hobbes' view of man and society?

Supplemental Readings:

- Pierre Manent. *An Intellectual History of Liberalism.* Princeton: Princeton University, 1995. pp. 39-52.
- Leo Strauss. *Natural Right and History.* Chicago: Univ Chicago Press, 1953. pp. 202-251.
- Leo Strauss. "Locke's Doctrine of Natural Law." In *What is Political Philosophy.* Free Press: New York, 1959: pp. 197-220.
- Robert Goldwin. "John Locke" in *History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987).
- John Cox. "Introduction," to *Second Treatise of Government*. By John Locke. Harlan Davidson, Inc.: Arlington Heights, 1982: vii-xliii.
- _____. *Locke on War and Peace.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- John Dunn. The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two Treatises of Government'. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- C. B. Macpherson. The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Harvey Mansfield. "On the Political Character of Property in Locke." In Powers, Possessions, and Freedom. Edited by A. Kontos. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1979: pp. 23-28.
- James Tully. A Discourse on Property John Locke and his adversaries. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Lesson 9: Radicalizing the Project: Hume and Rousseau

A. Basic Themes

Hume and Rousseau follow the trajectory of modern philosophy to a concluding limit; Hume traces out the principle of radical doubt and skepticism to the point where the very self and world disappear. The late Professor Prufer would say that in Hume's skeptical account there are but "free floating impressions illuminating nothing for nobody." For his part Rousseau traces out the radical quest for a state of nature. He goes beyond rational self interest to find a languid but perfectible ape like creature. Both Rousseau and Hume are well aware of the unlivableness of their philosophy. So conservative custom wins the day for Hume; for Rousseau, it is revolutionary constructions.

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Outline of Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding

I. Axioms

"Only perceptions are present to the mind" (Idealism)
Q - What is mental "representation"? Is this a good doctrine of signs?

"Whatever is distinct is separable" (Atomism)

II. Criteria for understanding

Meaning of terms reduces to sensations: "from what impression is the supposed idea derived?"
Q - Is this an adequate account of human experience and meaning?
Are these sensations available without a public world of things and people?

The truth of propositions depends on the source - the a priori (independent of experience) and the a posteriori (depends on experience).

RELATIONS OF IDEAS. a priori. Logical truth, based on tautology (A = A, A (not A). The truth is necessary because the contrary is a contradiction

MATTERS OF FACT. a posteriori. empirical truth based on association of perceptions in experience. The truth is not necessary because the contrary is always possible (i.e., conceivable or imaginable). Matters of fact can only be stated in the form "That it is (or was)" we cannot know "why" the fact is.

Q - Does scientific theory not tell why a law holds? Are all contraries of matters of fact possible just because they are imaginable? Any thing may go?

III. Hume's Problems: non-perceptual factors in human understanding

The being of things (independence, continuity, coherence); blink the eye turn the cube.

The power of a cause (agency). do you "see" the power?

The uniformity of nature. Why should the future resemble the past, or this lemon be like that lemon.

Hume's solution: custom fills in the blanks and impels us to believe in beings, causes, nature: "Without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of matters of fact, beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses" (sec. 5) Custom spreads vivacity from present perception to absent.

Are these non-perceptual factors so irrational? Unintelligible? A topic for metaphysics.

The practical resolution: the mixed life or the moderate skeptic Hume still has the basic dualism plaguing Cartesian philosophy: the two worlds of common sense and philosophy. Philosophy corrects common sense; common sense corrects philosophy. In the end, practical life and instinct must rule over reason and theory. There are four stages to this outcome. Hume explicitly mentions three of them, but the extra one is implicit. The three major stages are: 1. common life without philosophy; 2. philosophy; 3. common life with philosophy.

For Hume, philosophy includes the theoretical sciences, e.g. Newton was a "natural philosopher."

1. Vulgar

    Point of view: common sense world of things and causes "the very perception is the external object”

    World: mere opinion dogmatic, arbitrary "runs out of control"

2. Philosophic - Scientific

    Point of view: "reflections of common life methodized, corrected”

    World: verified laws; evidence

3. Philosophic - Skeptic

    Point of view: fragmented world: unconnected, free-floating impressions illuminating nothing for nobody; “only perceptions are present” thus common world is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy

    World: "all human life must perish ... all discourse all action must cease"

4. Mixed life; Mitigated Skeptic

Point of view: common world regained: nature is too strong for principle; skeptical doubts vanish like smoke when it comes to practice; custom is necessary to the preservation of the species; practice must prevail over theory

World: enlightened opinion: humble - philosophy is an amusement; science is probable; no metaphysics

2. Questions on Hume

Hume's philosophy begins with some important distinctions and criteria about human knowledge.

What is the difference between impressions and ideas?

What is the difference between relations of ideas and matters of facts?

What are the non-perceptual factors in human understanding and how does Hume raise skeptical doubts concerning them? How does Hume account for these? factors in human understanding?

"Be a philosopher, but amidst all your philosophy, be still a man." Comment on this famous maxim of Hume's by addressing yourself to the following questions:

Why be a philosopher? Why not be simple and vulgar?

Why does philosophy threaten one's humanity.

What corrects philosophical excess?

At the end, in the world of practice the philosopher is just like everybody else; or is he?

C. READINGS

1. David Hume - The Project

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: "When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity school or metaphysics, for instance; let us ask 'Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?' No. 'Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?' No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."

2. On Hume's Character

"Upon the whole, I have always considered him both in his lifetime and after his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will admit." Adam Smith 1776

"Despite the difficulty of his thought, however, despite the profusion of his output and the range of his interests, neither critic nor admirer -- neither Christian nor unbeliever -- had the slightest hesitation in placing Hume among the most radical of radical philosophers. When Boswell and Johnson talked about Hume, they talked about him with an unphilosophical aversion that smacks almost of fear." Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 1966

Required Readings:

- David Hume [ARIEW: 491-557]
- J.J. Rousseau [MORGAN: 853-891]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 250-273; 362-383.
- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol V* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 258-317; Vol VI, pp. 59-100
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 404-454

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 3 page paper on the following theme: Briefly describe Hume's account of causality, the self, or God.

Supplemental Readings:

- Stanley Jaki. *The Road of Science and the Ways to God*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978. pp. 96-111.
- Lewis White Beck. "Hume." *Six Secular Philosophers*. New York: Harper, 1960. pp. 42-60.
- Thomas Prufer. "A Reading of Hume." *Recapitulations*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University, 1993. pp. 43-47.
- William A Wallace. *Causality and Scientific Explanation*. 2 vols. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1974. Vol. 2. pp. 38-51.

- Rom Harre and E. H. Madden. *Causal Powers.* Rowman & Littlefield. 1975.
- James Collins. *God in Modern Philosophy* (Chicago: Regnery, 1959) pp. 114-121.
- James Collins. The Emergence of Philosophy of Religion (New Haven: Yale Univ, 1967) pp. 3-88.

Rousseau:

- Pierre Manent. *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1995. pp. 65-79.
- Jacques Maritain. *Three Reformers.* New York: Apollo, 1970. pp. 93-164.
- Leo Strauss. *Natural Right and History*. Chicago: Univ Chicago Press, 1953. pp. 252-293.
- Ernst Cassirer. *Rousseau Kant Goethe*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1945. pp. 1-42.
- Laurence Berns. "Rousseau" in *History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 396-420.

Lesson 10: Metaphysical Salience of the Modern Project: Kant on Knowledge

A. Basic Themes

Kant is the great synthesis of modern philosophy; he saves the gains of the founders, elevates and purifies them, and keeps philosophy from going over the edge with Hume and Rousseau. Professor Kennington pointed to three items that make Kant the consummate modern: 1. Supremacy of the practical life. Kant transforms early moderns, so practical goal is not just comfortable self preservation, but moral perfection. Realize an idea, e.g. kingdom of ends; 2. Autonomy of man, Kant continues the Stoic quest for self-possession and the autonomy of self, to be free from nature, custom etc.; and 3.Dualism. Man - pure inwardness, consciousness; nature - pure extension, inert. Alienation from the world, nature gives no support to morality, dualism of scientific world and human world. The first step is to limit the claims of metaphysics and skepticism: Kant has denied reason to make room for faith.

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics

1. How is synthetic, a priori knowledge possible?

2. Hence we are not concern with things in themselves, but merely with things as the objects of possible experience. The sum total of these is what we properly called nature. How is it possible to know a priori the necessary laws regulating things as objects of experience?

3. What I mean to show is how the a priori conditions of the possibility of experience are at the same time the sources from which all the general laws of nature must be derived.

4. The bringing together of images in a consciousness is judgment. Thus thinking is the same as judging or referring images to judgments in general.

5. Experience consists of synthetic linking (association) of phenomena (perceptions) in a consciousness.

6. Judgments, considered merely as the condition for bringing together given images in a consciousness, are rules. These rules, in so far as they present the togetherness as necessary, are a priori.

7. Therefore, I understand perfectly the concept of cause as a concept belonging necessarily to the mere form of experience, and I understand its possibility as a synthetic linking of perceptions in a consciousness in general. But I do not understand at all how a thing in itself is a possible cause, because the concept of cause does not at all mean a condition attached to things, but only attached to experience. Experience can only be objectively valid knowledge of phenomena and of their sequence in time, in so far as the antecedent can be united to the consequent according to the rule of hypothetical judgment.

8. The use of concepts is limited to experience because their possibility is grounded solely in the relation of the mind to experience. This is true not because they are derived from experience, but because EXPERIENCE IS DERIVED FROM THEM. This completely reversed mode of thinking never occurred to Hume.

9. When we rightly regard the objects of sense as mere phenomena we thereby admit that each such object is based upon a thing in itself of which we are not aware as it is constituted in itself, but only as known through its appearances, that is, by the manner in which our senses are affected by this unknown something.

10. Nature in its material sense. ... is possible by means of the quality of our senses; in keeping with this quality our senses are affected in a particular manner by objects that are unknown in themselves and are entirely distinct from these phenomena.

11. Nature in its formal sense, as the sum total of the rules to which all phenomena must be subject if they are to be considered as connected in experience. ... is possible by means of the quality of our mind. In keeping with this quality, all images resulting from sense impression are necessarily referred to a consciousness. By referring all images to a consciousness, thinking according to rules is possible.

2. Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason.

Kant's critique is divided into three areas:

1. Transcendental Aesthetic, on the forms of sensibility.

2. Transcendental Analytic, on the concepts and principles of understanding.

3. Transcendental Dialectic, on the ideas of pure reason.

The transcendental dialectic is an account of the disposition of the human mind to think about metaphysical topics. Man has the fate of asking unanswerable questions; the questions lead him into speculative illusions.

- Reason is the faculty that urges understanding on; it is never satisfied with its present knowledge and drives the understanding forward. It aims at a complete and perfect knowledge of the world. Because of this dissatisfaction, it sometimes broods over its own concepts and passes beyond experience in order to bet a completion. Not satisfied with the conditioned and partial truths of science it seeks to find the unconditioned and absolute. It figures that if the conditioned is given, then the unconditioned must also be given. Specifically reason follows out the three types of judgment to the logical limit and crosses over to the thing in itself:

  - Categorical judgment, All X is Y. Is there not a complete or ultimate subject that is not a predicate. Is there not a substantial self? This is the topic of speculative or rational psychology.

  - Hypothetical judgment, If X, then Y. Is there not a complete series of causes and conditions ending with an unconditioned conditions ending with an unconditioned condition? The complete series is signified in the term, WORLD. This is the topic of rational cosmology.

  - Disjunctive judgment, Either X or Y. Is there not some complete complex of possibilities and perfections? Such completeness is signified in the term GOD. It is the topic or rational theology.

- The ideas of pure reason are without object or meaning. Concepts function only within experience, only to interpret sensibility. Concepts without sense content are empty. The pure ideas cross over the limits and go beyond experience; the ideas can never be an object of experience. Hence they are illusory. Kant proves that the ideas are illusory through a series of antinomies - proofs of contradictory assertions, e.g. the world is finite, the world is infinite.

- The ideas of reason should regulate understanding, and not go off on its own, making up its own topics.

- The critique of pure reason is a two edged sword. On the one hand it limits the mind to empirical science and mathematics. But it also "repudiates the audacious assertions of materialism, naturalism, and fatalism." Soul, God, free will are possible. Kant has denied reason to make room for faith. That restlessness of reason should be channeled into moral action; the pure ideas become postulates of practical reason.

C. READINGS

1. Kant, Preface to the Second Edition of the Critique of Pure Reason

Reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own...it must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature's leading-strings, but must itself show the way with principles of judgment based on fixed laws, constraining nature to give answer to questions of reason's own determining...Reason, holding in one had its principles, according to which alone concordant appearances can be admitted as equivalent to laws, and in the other hand the experiment which it has devised in conformity with these principles, must approach nature in order to be taught by it. It must not, however, do so in the character of a pupil who listens to everything that the teacher chooses to say, but of an appointed judge who compels the witnesses to answer questions which he has himself formulated. Even physics, therefore, owes the beneficent revolution in its point of view entirely to the happy thought, that while reason must seek in nature, not fictitiously ascribe to it, whatever as not being knowable through reason's own resources has to be learnt, if learnt, at all, only from nature, it must adopt as its guide, in so seeking that which it has itself put into nature.

2. Kant, Idea for a Universal History, III & IV

Nature does nothing in vain, and in the use of means to her goals she is not prodigal. Her giving to man reason and the freedom of the will which depends upon it is clear indication of her purpose. Man accordingly was not to be guided by instinct, not nurtured and instructed with ready-made knowledge; rather, he should bring forth everything out of his own resources...all this should be wholly his own work. In this, nature seems to have moved with the strictest parsimony...just as if she had willed that...he alone should have the credit and should have only himself to thank...Without those in themselves unamiable characteristics of unsocialbility from whence opposition springs-characteristics each man must find in his own selfish pretensions-all talents

would remain hidden, unborn in an Arcadian shepherd's life, with all its concord, contentment and mutual affection. Thanks be to nature, then, for the incompatibility, for heartless competitive vanity, for the insatiable desire to posses and to rule!

Required Readings:

- Kant, Prologomena to any Future Metaphysics [ARIEW: 579-633]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 411-434.
- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol VI* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 180-307.
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 455-512.

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 4-5 page paper on the following theme: According to Kant, why is the quest for metaphysics (God, soul, world) a futile enterprise?

Supplemental Readings:

- Stanley Jaki. *The Road of Science and the Ways to God*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978. pp. 112-128.
- Roger Scruton, *Kant*. New York: Oxford, 1982. pp. 1-57.
- Roger Scruton. *A Short History of Modern Philosophy*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 1995. pp. 133-143. Etienne Gilson. *God and Philosophy*. New Haven: Yale, 1941. pp. 109-118.
- Etienne Gilson. "Physicism of Kant," *Unity of Philosophical Experience*. New York: Scribner's, 1937. pp. 223-247.
- James Collins. *God in Modern Philosophy* (Chicago: Regnery, 1959) pp. 162-200.
- James Collins. The Emergence of Philosophy of Religion (New Haven: Yale Univ, 1967) pp. 89-211.
- Karl Ameriks. "The critique of metaphysics," in Paul Guyer, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*. New York: Cambridge, 1992. pp. 249-279.

Lesson 11: Ethical Salience of Modern Philosophy: Kant on Ethics

A. Basic Themes

Aware of the problems of the natural rights ethics and utilitarianism, Immanuel Kant attempted to place ethical inquiry on a higher footing. He sought to overcome the problems of modern ethics by establishing moral duty on the new ground of moral autonomy and rationality. He attempted to prove that all men are bound by a universal system of moral duties and that they are so bound by their very rationality as moral agents. This system is often called "deontological" from the Greek term for duty. But by duty, Kant understood a principle absolutely separated from happiness and indeed often in conflict with it. Duty elicits the pure motivation of a "good will" with no regard for consequences or self-interest.

Kant distinguished the categorical imperative of morality from the so-called hypothetical imperatives of skill and prudence. A hypothetical imperative presupposes a given end or outcome in pursuit of which certain steps or means are demanded. One may or may not accept the given end, so the imperative is conditional or hypothetical. The utilitarian ethic is obviously conditioned by various outcomes and the natural rights ethic is conditioned by variable self-interest. Kant wished to defend the absolute or unconditional nature of moral norms. The imperatives of ethics are categorical, permitting no exceptions and requiring no ulterior motive. Kant formulated the categorical imperative in a number of ways, but the two most influential are "universalizability" and "respect for persons." The first formula states that one ought to act according to a maxim that can be a universal law. Such a restraint would exclude self-preference and promote fairness of consideration. Also it would promote consistency and rationality in human action. Kant thought that moral precepts are rational and that their violation would be inconsistent and/or self-interested. Lying for example entails a prior commitment to have one's word accepted as true; lying contradicts that good faith that we all must place in each other for rational conversation. The second formulation is that one should always act so as to treat other persons as ends in themselves and not as mere means. Again, the absolute ethical precepts protect another person from being used as means to another goal. Kant believed that he provided a high ground for human rights different from the low ground of enlightened self-interest provided by Hobbes and Locke.

The advantages of deontological ethics are the clear separation of duty from utility and self-interest. It embodies a principle of equal fairness and overcomes partiality and discrimination. It offers a rational and logical procedure for determining moral norms.

Deontological ethics has been criticized for being overly formal and subject to problems in applying the categorical imperative to concrete duties. It has been argued that it actually rests upon the Judeo-Christian belief in divine commands. Further, like natural rights ethics, it provides a minimal morality.

B. Outlines and Study Guides

1. Kennington on Kant's The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals

1. The abandonment of nature is the liberation of morality.

Kantian morality is a function of pure reason. Why must it be pure? The empirical is "corrupting", in two ways:

a. epistemological - the empirical is particular and contingent e.g. the concept of happiness depends on appetite, whim, and shifting preferences.

   - the a priori is universal and necessary, certainty of the categorical imperative.

b. Practical - empirical principle of action is self interest and it is out of control (nature, fortune)

   - a priori principle has character of law and duty, it is within each man's control.

2. Kant combines ancients and moderns in a new Philosophy of morals. He combines a low view of human nature with a high view of morality. Human nature is selfish, there is not highest good, the good is the pleasant; these are principles of modern hedonism. On the other hand, Kant sees that morality is above the useful and the pleasant, a theme of ancient philosophy. Kant goes beyond them both by taking morality out of human nature. Morality becomes a matter of strict law and the self legislation of a rational being.

3. Kant is more modern than ancient; for he thinks that freedom is the essence of human nature. That enlightenment and philosophic ideal of autonomy is the peak of Kantian morality. Autonomy means auto - nomo, law from one's self. Rational man derives the moral law from within himself. The opposite of autonomy is heteronomy, heter, meaning "other." Kant's ideal of self-legislation is set against any other outside source of law or moral principle, e.g. God, nature, the city.

4. The trans-natural character of Kantian morality, its very purity, makes it very fragile. How livable is it? Does the common man really live at the knife edge of freedom and decision making? Or are not moral habits, virtues, the substance of the moral life? Is there room for prudence as a great moral virtue, as in acts of great statesmen? Kant liberates morality from nature. Later philosophers turn from pure reason to history and seek to realize this "pure reason", this demand of autonomy, in time.

Section I: "Transition from common to philosophical"

1. To have moral worth, an action must be done from duty (not merely in accordance with duty).

2. An action done from duty derives its moral worth not from the purpose which is to be attained from it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and therefore does not

depend on the realization of the object of the action, but merely on the principle of volition by which the action has taken place, without any regard to the object of desire.

3. Duty is the necessity of acting from respect for the law.

THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE: "I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law."

Sum: Nothing is good without qualification except a good will.
A good will acts on a universal law (Categorical imperative).
To act on a categorical imperative is to be free, free from all inclinations and consequences.
Autonomy of will is the supreme principle of morality (necessary, sufficient)

Question: why be moral? (All incentives are removed as a condition for morality) can we be moral? i.e. are we in fact free?

Problem: can we be moral, are we free?
morality and freedom have been shown as connected, circle (195)
but freedom has not been proved; it is an idea of pure reason and thus not really knowable.
Circle: Free because moral; moral because free.

Solution distinction between appearance and thing in itself allows us to regard ourselves from two points of view:

- as a member of the world of sense, the phenomenal world man is completely determined. Desires and inclinations are no more than pushes and pulls. Heteronomy. Passive. Happiness.
  as a member of the world of intelligence, noumenal world, man is completely free, active, autonomous. Morality.
  idea of freedom cannot be proved, but it can be defended as possible and consistent.
  Then we can adapt to its point of view.

Problems:

1. Status of transcendental ego? Can we say that it "is "
2. Is it coherent to explain human action twice?
3. Can the phenomena of life (desire) be explained mechanistically?

Kant begins his ethical reflection with the assertion: nothing in the world can be called good without qualification except a good will. What is a good will? A will that acts for the sake of duty. What is one's duty? It may be found in the categorical imperative, a general or universal law. A good will can universalize its maxims. When it acts for duty, on a universalizable maxim, the agent is free from all empirical and self-interested conditions. So Kant concludes section two saying "autonomy of the will is the supreme

principle of morality." In other words, freedom, rightly understood, is both necessary and sufficient for a moral act. Freedom and morality are inevitably connected (191). Kant claims to have explained the idea of morality. But two questions remain: why be moral? Kant has removed all incentive as the very condition for morality. But he does not address himself to this questions directly. The second, which he does take up, is how is morality possible? That is, can man act freely? Kant admits that he cannot prove man is free. Freedom is an idea of pure reason. In its speculative use, it is illusory. It cannot be proved, but it must be assumed if we are to think of ourselves as moral agents (194). But we are in circle here (195). We assume we are free because we consider ourselves moral. But we consider ourselves moral because we have conferred freedom. How do we break out? Go back to the Critique of Pure Reason and the distinction between appearance and thing in itself. We can consider ourselves from two points of view: as in the world of sense. And as in the world of the intelligible (196-97). As a member of the sensible world he is completely determined. His inclinations and desires are not more than 1/2 pushes and pulls over which he has not control. His action is ruled from outside, it is heteronomous, he is passive (198). As member of the world of mind or as a noumenal being he is entirely an agent, autonomous and free. It is the sphere of morality. The sense world is the sphere of happiness. Yet man is a whole. The noumenal somehow calls to the phenomenal and delivers its "OUGHT". The idea of freedom is consistent with our knowledge of nature, but we cannot explain how it works. There must be something outside of nature - the transcendental ego is a condition for the appearance of nature. But we cannot say in any meaningful way whether "it is" because existence is a term only applicable to phenomena. Very curious dilemma. Further, specifically about will: how can human action be explained twice? Do we explain it once through mechanism? Why then invoke another cause, free will? It seems unnecessary. Finally, Kant makes a big assumption about desires and inclinations - i.e. whether they can be explained mechanistically. To bring all of nature under mechanical laws is a project, not yet an accomplishment. Maybe life cannot be fully explained through mechanism.

Kant sets the stage for further developments in philosophy:

- Marxism: realize the kingdom of ends in time, in social economic conditions.
- Existentialism: man as homeless in the world, cut off from nature, having only his own subjectivity and freedom, abandoning even practical reason.
- Positivism: continue the project of modern science, bring all nature (man also under mathematical and mechanistic explanation, eliminate all metaphysics)
- Phenomenology: continue to explore the "conditions for the possibility" of experience; how objects appear to a subject.

C. READINGS

1. Kant on The Existence of God as a Postulate of Pure Practical Reason.

In the foregoing analysis the moral law led to a practical problem which is prescribed by pure reason alone, without the aid of any sensible motives, namely, that of the necessary completeness of the first and principle element of the summum bonum, viz., morality; and, as this can be perfectly solved only in eternity, to the postulate of immortality. The same law must also lead us to affirm the possibility of the second element of the summum bonum, viz., happiness proportioned to that morality, and this on grounds as disinterested as before, and solely from impartial reason; that is, it must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this effect; in other words, it must postulate the existence of God, as the necessary condition of the possibility of the summum bonum (an object of the will which is necessarily connected with the moral legislation of pure reason). We proceed to exhibit this connection in a convincing manner.

Happiness is the condition of a rational being in the world with whom everything goes according to his wish and will; it rests, therefore, on the harmony of physical nature with his whole end and likewise with the essential determining principle of his will. Now the moral law as a law of freedom commands by determining principles, which ought to be quite independent of nature and of its harmony with our faculty of desire (as springs). But the acting rational being in the world is not the cause of the world and of nature itself. There is not the least ground, therefore, in the moral law for a necessary connection between morality and proportionate happiness in a being that belongs to the world as part of it, and therefore dependent on it, and which for that reason cannot by his will be a cause of this nature, nor by his own power make it thoroughly harmonize, as far as his happiness is concerned, with his practical principles. Nevertheless, in the practical problem of pure reason, i.e. the necessary pursuit of the summum bonum, such a connection is postulated as necessary: we ought to endeavour to promote the summum bonum, which, therefore, must be possible. Accordingly, the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from nature itself and containing the principle of this connection, namely, of the exact harmony of happiness with morality, is also postulated. Now this supreme cause must contain the principle of the harmony of nature, not merely with a law of the will of rational beings, but with the conception of this law, in so far as they make it the supreme determining principle of the will, and consequently not merely with the form of morals, but with their morality as their motive, that is, with their moral character. Therefore, the summum bonum is possible in the world only on the supposition of a Supreme Being having a causality corresponding to moral character. Now a being that is capable of acting on the conception of laws is an intelligence (a rational being), and the causality of such a being according to this conception of laws is his will; therefore the supreme cause of nature, which must be presupposed as a condition of the summum bonum is a being which is the cause of nature by intelligence and will, consequently its author, that is God. It follows that the postulate of the possibility of the highest derived good (the best world) is likewise the postulate of the reality of a highest original good, that is to say, of

the existence of God. Now it was seen to be a duty for us to promote the summum bonum; consequently it is not merely allowable, but it is a necessity connected with duty as a requisite, that we should presuppose the possibility of this summum bonum; and as this is possible only on condition of the existence of God, it inseparably connects the supposition of this with duty; that is, it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God.

It must be remarked here that this moral necessity is subjective, that is, it is a want, and not objective, that is, itself a duty, for there cannot be a duty to suppose the existence of anything (since this concerns only the theoretical employment of reason). Moreover, it is not meant by this that it is necessary to suppose the existence of God as a basis of all obligation in general (for this rests, as has been sufficiently proved, simply on the autonomy of reason itself). What belongs to duty here is only the endeavour to realize and promote the summum bonum in the world, the possibility of which can therefore be postulated; and as our reason finds it not conceivable except on the supposition of a supreme intelligence, the admission of this existence is therefore connected with the consciousness of our duty, although the admission itself belongs to the domain of speculative reason. Considered in respect of this alone, as a principle of explanation, it may be called a hypothesis, but in reference to the intelligibility of an object given us by the moral law (the summum bonum), and consequently of a requirement for practical purposes, it may be called faith, that is to say a pure rational faith, since pure reason (both in its theoretical and practical use) is the sole source from which it springs.

The doctrine of Christianity, even if we do not yet consider it as a religious doctrine, gives, touching this point, a conception of the summum bonum (the kingdom of God), which alone satisfies the strictest demand of practical reason. The moral law is holy (unyielding) and demands holiness of morals, although all the moral perfection to which man can attain is still only virtue, that is, a rightful disposition arising from respect for the law, implying consciousness of a constant propensity to transgression, or at least a want of purity, that is, a mixture of many spurious (not moral) motives of obedience to the law, consequently a self-esteem combined with humility. In respect, then, of the holiness which the Christian law requires, this leaves the creature nothing but a progress in infinitum, but for that very reason it justifies him in hoping for an endless duration of his existence. The worth of a character perfectly accordant with the moral law is infinite, since the only restriction on all possible happiness in the judgement of a wise and all powerful distributor of it is the absence of conformity of rational beings to their duty. But the moral law of itself does not promise any happiness, for according to our conceptions of an order of nature in general, this is not necessarily connected with obedience to the law. Now Christian morality supplies this defect (of the second indispensable element of the summum bonum) by representing the world in which rational beings devote themselves with all their soul to the moral law, as a kingdom of God, in which nature and morality are brought into a harmony foreign to each of itself, by a holy Author who makes the derived summum bonum possible. Holiness of life is prescribed to them as a rule even in this life, while the welfare proportioned to it, namely, bliss, is represented as attainable only in an eternity; because the former must

always be the pattern of their conduct in every state, and progress towards it is already possible and necessary in this life; while the latter, under the name of happiness, cannot be attained at all in this world (so far as our own power is concerned), and therefore is made simply an object of hope. Nevertheless, the Christian principle of morality itself is not theological (so as to be heteronomy), but is autonomy of pure practical reason, since it does not make the knowledge of God and His will the foundation of these laws, but only of the attainment of the summum bonum, on condition of following these laws, and it does not even place the proper spring of this obedience in the desired results, but solely in the conception of duty, as that of which the faithful observance alone constitutes the worthiness to obtain those happy consequences.

Required Readings:

- Kant, Foundation of Metaphysics of Morals I, II [MORGAN: 980-1017]

Secondary Literature: read one of the following

- Etienne Gilson and Thomas Langan, *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 435-448.
- Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Vol VI* (New York: Image, 1963), pp. 308-348.
- James Collins, *History of European Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954) pp. 515-543.

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 3 page paper on the following theme: why can happiness no longer serve as the basis for ethics according to Kant? What then will be the new basis for ethics?

Supplemental Readings:

- Jacques Maritain. *Moral Philosophy*. New York: Scribner's, 1964. pp. 92-118.
- Roger Scruton, *Kant*. New York: Oxford, 1982. pp. 58-94.
- Roger Scruton. *A Short History of Modern Philosophy*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 1995. pp. 144-160.
- Roger J. Sullivan. An Introduction to Kant's Ethics. New York: Cambridge, 1994.
- Pierre Hassner. "Kant" in *History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 581-621.
- Alasdair MacIntyre. *A Short History of Ethics.* New York: Macmillan, 1966. pp. 190-198.

Lesson 12: Evaluating the Modern Project: Towards an Integral Humanism

A. READING

1. Maritain's Scholasticism and Politics

Here we see the peculiar vice of classical humanism. This vice, in my judgment, concerns not so much what this humanism affirms, as what it negates, denies and divides. It is what he may call an anthropocentric conception of man and of culture. I am aware that this word is not too felicitous, but I have used it for want of a better. We might say that the error in question is the idea of human nature as self-enclosed or self-sufficient (that is to say self-divinized, for this nature has infinite longings).

Instead of an open human nature and an open reason, which are real nature and real reason, people pretend that there exists a nature and a reason isolated by themselves and shut up in themselves, excluding everything which is not themselves. (page 12)

Instead of a development of man and reason in continuity with the Gospel, people demand such a development from pure reason apart from the Gospel. And for human life, for the concrete movement of history, this means real and serious amputations.

Prayer, divine love, supra-rational truths, the idea of sin and of grace, the evangelical beatitudes, the necessity of asceticism of contemplation, of the way of the Cross -- all this is either put in parenthesis or is once for all denied. In the concrete government of human life, reason is isolated from the supra-rational. (page 13)

In short, in this view the modern world has sought good things in bad ways; it has thus compromised the search for authentic human values, which men must save now by an intellectual grasp of a profounder truth, by a substantial recasting of humanism. In my opinion, we have today to deal. (page 17)

The new humanism must reassume in a purified climate all the work of the classical period; it must re-make anthropology, find the rehabilitation and the 'dignification' of the creature not in isolation, not in the creature shut in with itself, but in its openness to the world of the divine and superrational; and this very fact implies in practice a work of sanctification of the profane and temporal; it means, in the spiritual order, the discovery of the ways of childhood whereby the 'humanity of God our Savior', as St Paul says, finds with fewer human trappings, a readier way into man, and causes more souls to enter into his hidden task of suffering and vivifying; it involves, in the moral and social order, the discovery of a deeper and fuller sense of the dignity of the human person, so that man would refind himself in God refound, and would direct social work toward an heroic ideal of brotherly love, itself conceived not as a spontaneous return of feeling to

some illusory primitive condition, but as a difficult and painful conquest of civic virtue helped by grace.

Such a humanism, which considers man in the wholeness of his natural and supernatural being, and which sets no a priori limit to the descent of the divine into man, we may call the humanism of the Incarnation. It is an 'integral' and 'progressive' Christian position, which I believe conforms to principles representative of the genuine spirit to Thomism. And, in my country, I am happy to find in agreement with it, not all theologians (that would be too much, and is never the case), but some theologians such as Père Chenu, Père Lavaud, l'Abbè Journet, and many others.

In the perspectives of this integral humanism, there is no occasion to choose, so as to sacrifice one or the other, between the vertical movement toward eternal life (present and actually begun here below) and the horizontal movement whereby the substance and creative forces of man are progressively revealed in history. These two movements should be pursued at the same time. To claim to sacrifice the second to the first is a sin of Manicheism. But to claim to sacrifice the first to the second is materialistic nonsense. And the second, the horizontal movement, unless it turns to the destruction of men, is effected only when vitally joined to the first, the vertical one, because this second movement, while having its own proper and properly temporal finalities, and tending to better man's condition here below, also prepares in history for the kingdom of God, which for each individual person and for the whole of humanity, is something meta-historical. (page 18-19)

A characteristic of the humanism, which I call integral, would be that, far from being limited to the elite, it would care for the masses, for their right to work and to a spiritual life, and for the movement which brings them, we may say, to an historically full age. On the social significance of such a humanism, I will simply say that in my opinion it should assume the task of radically transforming the temporal order, a task which would tend to substitute for bourgeois civilization, and for an economic system based on the fecundity of money, not a collectivistic economy, but a 'personalistic' civilization and a 'personalistic' economy, through which would stream a temporal refraction of the truths of the Gospel.

This task is joined to a thorough awakening of the religious conscience, and I wish to insist for a moment on this point. One of the worst vices of the modern world is its dualism the dissociation between the things of God and the things of the world. The latter, the things of the social, economic and political life, have been abandoned to their own carnal law, removed from the exigencies of the Gospel. The result is that they have become more and more unlivable; at the same time Christian ethics, not really carried out in the social life of people, became in this connection, I do not say in itself or in the Church, I say in the world, in the general cultural behaviour, a universe of formulas and words; and this universe of formulas and words was in effect vassalized, in practical cultural behaviour, by the real energies of this same temporal world existentially detached from Christ. Such a disorder can be cured only by a renewal of the profoundest energies of the religious conscience, arising in temporal existence.

On the other hand, modern civilization, which pays dearly today for the past, seems as if it were pushed, by the very contradictions and fatalities suffered by it, toward contrasting forms of misery and intensified materialism. To rise above these fatalities we need an awakening of liberty and of its creative forces, we need the energies of spiritual and social resurrection of which man does not become capable by the grace of the State or any party pedagogy, but by a love which fixes the centre of his life infinitely above the world and temporal history. In particular, the general paganization of our civilization has resulted in man's placing his hope in force alone and in the efficacy of hate, whereas in the eyes of an integral humanism, a political ideal of brotherly love alone can direct the work of authentic social regeneration: and it follows that to prepare a new age of the world, martyrs to the lover of neighbour may first be necessary. And this also shows how everything depends here on a profound renewal of the interior energies of conscience.

Granted what I said a moment ago about the pathological process of vassalization, in the behaviour of contemporary civilization, of religious formulas by worldly energies, we see that the renewal we speak of should be a kind of Copernican revolution, which would in no way affect the doctrine, not even an iota of it, but would make a great change in the relative importance of the elements in the universe of action. It would consist in general and bold acknowledgement of the primacy of the vital and the real (even the implicitly or virtually real) over matters of appearance and external trappings let us say -- for I am primarily thinking of the Christian conscience -- of the primacy of the practically or vitally Christian over the nominally or decoratively Christian. Such a Copernican revolution -- which is the revolution claimed by the Apostle James -- would have notable consequences for the question of the ways and means of political action.

Truly speaking, it is the idea of the primacy of the spiritual which here commands the debate. To say that Christianity will remake itself through Christian means or that it will unmake itself completely; to say that no good is to be expected from the enterprises of violence and constraint, -- with no compunction of heart and no interior reform or inner creative principle, -- enterprise animated by the same spirit which is at the elemental source of the evils actually suffered by civilization: to say that the evidence and the patient and persevering action of the Christian spirit in the world is more important than the outer apparatus of a Christian order, especially when those who pretend to save this order bind themselves, and also the order, either to established injustice or even to the immense pagan energies sweeping away one part of the actual world,- this is simply to affirm that the principle of the primacy of the spiritual demands respect in the very mode in which men work to give it reality; it is simply to affirm that the primacy of the spiritual cannot be realized while denying itself. (page 28-29 & 30)

Jacques Maritain, *Integral Humanism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), pp. 27-30; *The Range of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner's Press, 1952) chapters 7, 8, 14.

Required Readings:

READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BOOKS/DOCUMENTS:

- Pope John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. 1998.
- James V. Schall, *Jacques Maritain: The Philosopher in Society*. Lanham Md: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998. chaps. 1, 2, 5, 6, 9.
- Romano Guardini. *The End of the Modern World*. Wilmington: ISI Books, 1998. pp. 28-109.
- "Church in the Modern World" (Gaudium et spes) *The Documents of Vatican Council II*, vol 1 edited by Austin Flannery (New York: Costello, 1996).

Writing Assignment:

- Write a 5 page reflection paper on the book - what are some significant reasons for Catholic philosophers to take a confident stance in "crossing the threshold of hope" and in providing solid responses to meet the crisis of modernity?

Supplemental Readings:

- G. K. Chesterton, *The Dumb Ox* chapters 6,7,8
- Pope John Paul II, statement on Galileo, 31 October 1992
- Jacques Maritain, *Challenges and Renewals*, edited by Joseph Evans and Leo R. Ward. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966.
- Jacques Maritain, "The Apostle for Our Time," in *St Thomas Aquinas: Angel of the Schools*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1946. pp. 56-81.