

ON THE EDGES OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT
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Some Preliminary Notes

Enlightenment, French siecle de lumieres (Age of the Enlightened), German aufklärung a European intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries in which ideas concerning God, reason, nature, and man were synthesised into a worldview that gained wide assent and that instigated revolutionary developments in art, philosophy, and politics. Central to Enlightenment thought were the use and the celebration of reason, the power by which humankind understands the universe and improves its own condition. The goals of rational humankind were considered to be knowledge, freedom, and happiness.

The premises of the Enlightenment are dead; only their consequences continue on.

Hegel dates the beginning of the present from the break that the Enlightenment and the French Revolution signified for the more thoughtful contemporaries at the close of the eighteenth and the start of the nineteenth centuries. With "this glorious sunrise" we come, as the old Hegel still thought, "to the last stage in History, our world, our own time,"

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revised for Roehampton University 1998-2004.

Britain's special role in the Enlightenment, "On the Edges", geographically and politically in its differences from most of Europe, was that in many areas – free thinking, empiricism, utilitarianism – it came first.

It needs to be said at the outset, however, that despite the assured and scholarly views offered over the last century and a half, "The Enlightenment" and its many *philosophies*, was not a unity, or a project that can be easily summarised.

It has been assumed – since at least Edmund Burke – that the eruption of the French Revolution in the name of liberty, equality and fraternity gives the French Enlightenment a warranted place in conservative demonology, unlike perhaps the English. But relations between the, so-called *High Enlightenment* and the French Revolution are anything but clear.

In England after 1688 the constitution itself incorporated central Enlightenment demands, such as personal freedom under *Habeas Corpus*, representative government, religious toleration, and the sanctity of property. Furthermore, neither censorship, economic regulation nor unbending social proprieties debarred the affluent, articulate and ambitious from pursuing their own personal Enlightenment goals, such as free speculation, or the accumulation of wealth, or happiness.

Lawrence Stone argued that it was Enlightenment England which saw – among the gentry and professional classes – the first flowering of affective individualism: greater freedom of choice in spouses, some emancipation of women from male domination, and of children from the paternal rod.

Having bid absolutism good riddance Enlightenment elites were confronted with a boisterous and assertive voice of ordinary people. In addition England's free-market economy (itself licensed by Enlightenment individualism) was accelerating by deepening consumption down through the social spectrum.

SOME "PRECURSORS"

LUCRETIUS (c.99 BC-c.55 BC)

Epicurean philosophy and religion as superstition
De rerum natura in 6 books (*On the Nature of the Universe*)
"Such Devilish Acts Religion could persuade"
Used by Voltaire

TACITUS (c.55-117)

Realism and secularism *The Annals*
Used by Hume and Gibbon, translated by Rousseau, Diderot and d'Alembert
Note also the *Djalogues* on rhetoric

MONTAIGNE (1533-92)

Skepticism and horror of fanaticism
Essays

Francis BACON (1561-1626)

Experimentation and induction
The Great Instauration
"The true and lawful goal of the sciences is none other than this:
that human life be endowed with new discoveries and powers."

Rene DESCARTES (1596-1650)

Speculation and deduction, against 'Scholastic' metaphysics *Discourse on Method* (1637)

Sir Isaac NEWTON (1642-1727)

Methodical inquiry, concentration of intellectual effort on matters that could be known,
and an unwearied attention to nature
Correspondence
Opticks (1704)
"I feign no hypotheses"
Known for rudimentary calculus, principles of gravitation and optical reality
that white is a composite colour

Gottfried Wilhelm Freiherr von LEIBNIZ (1646-1716)

Discourse on Metaphysics (1710)
The Monadology (1714)
Independently discovered calculus about 10 years after Newton did.

Benedict de SPINOZA (1632-1677)

The Ethics (1677)
Russell noted, "the noblest and most lovable of the great philosophers, Intellectually,
some others have surpassed him, but ethically he is supreme."

The program of the Enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy.

If ever a philosophy had been vindicated by events it was the Whig philosophy which lay behind the English revolution. John Locke was its oracle. All quintessential thought of the age of Enlightenment is to be found in the writings of this humane and sober Oxonian doctor, the theory that ideas are not innate but reflected from the report of the senses, the theory that civil government is founded on the consent of the governed, the view that the right to private property is based on labour, the doctrine of religious toleration, and of a rational education of the young.

Some introductory background notes on the Enlightenment and how it is spoken of by some cultural historians.

The achievements in science, mathematics, and philosophy in the 18th century elevated the power-of reason to a position never held before or since, and was strikingly exemplified in France by the group known as the ENCYCLOPAEDISTS. This was formed in 1749 when Denis Diderot became editor of what has been called "the great literary monument of the age of the Enlightenment" – the *Encyclopaedie*. published between 1751 and 1772 in 28 volumes. Diderot gathered about him the German writer Melchoir Grimm, the mathematician Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, who became subeditor, and Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Of all the arts music was most affected by this rationalist approach, because of its raw material (sound) is most readily expressed in mathematical terms (ratios and logarithms), and its effect on humankind had been recognised at least since Plato. This reached a peak (as Mellers sees it) in the music and theory of Jean-Phlllpe Rameau. His 1722 *Traite de l'harmonie* attempts to classify music both scientific and philosophically. Rameau believed music "depends on reason, nature and geometry" and that it is a "physio-mathematical science".

Jean Jacques Rousseau of Geneva was neither a philosopher nor a materialist, but a visionary. His sovereign remedy for human ills is the application of virtue. The good state is one in which all of its members (duly educated for the civic life) contracts to conform their will to the general good. Only a society of virtuous citizens, each agreeing to do to others as they would be done by and spontaneously consenting to general laws framed, not for the furtherance of particular interests but, for the common advantage, could be called good.

Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762) begins:

"Man is born free but is everywhere in chains."

John LOCKE (1632-1704)

Empiricist pronouncements of Bacon and practice of Newton into coherent philosophy of mind

A Letter Concerning Toleration (1689)

Attacks innate ideas. Knowledge from sensations and reflections on sensations

Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690)

Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693)

"Where there is no desire, there will be no industry"

On the Reform of the Poor Laws (1690)

Etienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714-1780)

Writer on philosophical and pedagogical questions, on history and economics.

But his work on psychology is what he has remained known for.

Treatise on Sensations

Locke his model. Antimetaphysical attitude towards human psyche.

Dr. John TILLOTSON (1630-1694)

English Latitudinarian

Of the Necessity of Good Works

"the laws of God are reasonable"

Denis DIDEROT (1713-1784)

Pioneer critic of the arts as well as "most difficult of the philosophes to capture" (as Gay puts it).

The Encyclopedia (1746-c.1766) with d'Alembert and Rousseau

Undertones of the world seen through secular eyes

"Encyclopedia, f. n. (Philosophy). This word means the interrelation of all knowledge ... "

Rameau's Nephew and Other Works (1760)

The Paradox of Acting (1769)

"two personalities at the same time: on the stage"

Salon critiques for Grimm, notably 1765 and 1767.

Jean le Rond d'ALEMBERT (1717-1783)

The Encyclopedia (vid. Diderot)

Treatise on Dynamics (1743)

Approval of Genevan deists

Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)

Known to many as the maverick of the Enlightenment

Search for human autonomy

The Social Contract (1762)

The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality (1755)

Emile: or Education (1762)

Moves from the wrongs of civilisation to outline a Utopia Learning by doing; stress on the useful over the decorative Freedom and obedience as dissolved dichotomy.

In Isaak Funk's 1895 Dictionary "enlightenment" was given two separate meanings:

1. Great moral and intellectual advancement
2. Freedom of thought combined with contempt for authority or traditional rationalism: said particularly of the French philosophy of the 18th century.

According to Arnold Hauser, intellectual leadership in the 18th century passes from France to economically, socially and politically more progressive. England. The great romantic movement starts here about the middle of the century. Warton's *The Enthusiast* 1740; Beattie's *The Minstrel. or The Progress of Genius* 1771 (in fact Scottish); Mrs Radcliffe's gothicism; as well as the "sublime" recountings of John Dennis in 1688, of Grey and Walpole in 1739 and 1769; Collins' *Ode on the Poetical character* 1746; Addison in 1712 on "novelty and wonderfulness" (as well as the many English horticulturalists) but the enlightenment also receives its decisive impulse from this country. The French writers of the period see in English institutions the quintessence of progress and build up a legend around English liberalism - a legend which only partly corresponds to reality.

Voltaire, smarting from the tyranny and inequality which prevailed in his own country, (he had been thrown into the Bastille without trial for challenging a nobleman) came to England in 1726, and lived here till 1729. Here he was confronted with the astounding sight of a free, animate and cultured people. He was introduced to Pope, read Addison and Swift, Bacon and Locke, Newton and Shakespeare. In his *Letters Concerning the English* he explained to his compatriots the lineaments of this happy and surprising society, where a man was free to say or publish what he liked, where there was no torture or arbitrary imprisonment, where religious sectaries of ail kinds were permitted to flourish, and among them a religious sect called the Quakers, who were so courageous as to denounce war as unchristian.

Montesquieu's report was no less enthusiastic. "England," he writes in his *Travel Notes*, "is the freest country in the world. I make exception of no republic. And I call it free because the sovereign, whose person is controlled and limited, is unable to inflict any imaginable harm on anyone."

The English constitution of the 18th century, though far in advance of anything existing on the continent of Europe, was not the perfect model of enlightenment which the sanguine enthusiasm of the French philosophers imagined it to be. Its system of religious toleration, its system of parliamentary government, were both imperfect Dissenters were excluded from any share in public power and responsibility. Protestant dissenters were excluded from Parliament until 1828 and from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge until 1871. Parliamentary corruption was another evil unnoticed by the French admirers of English institutions, and tolerate despite opposition protests, at Westminster and in the constituencies, *vid.* H.A.L. Fisher.

In France, the period covering the reigns of Louis XIV and XV (1661-1774) featured contrasted and even opposing trends side by side. The 'Age of Absolutism', when the life of every person was completely subject to the King, also housed 'the Enlightenment', when freedom of thought received a new impetus through scientific discovery. These discoveries encouraged people to regard as true only what could be tested by direct observation or proved by logical deduction, and to accept the premise of perhaps the first modern philosopher, Descartes, that doubt is the starting-point of philosophy. This attitude unsettled absolute authority, and it was almost inevitable therefore that, fanned by Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques* (1734), which caused an uproar by implicitly criticising French society through extolling the personal and political freedom that he experienced in England, the bitterest struggles between absolutism and enlightenment should have taken place in France.

de VOLTAIRE (1694-1778)

Archetypal philosophe (according to writers like Gay)

Concerning the English Nation (1733)

"This is a country (England) where all the arts are honoured and rewarded, where there are differences in rank, but only those based on merit This is a country where one thinks freely and nobly without being held back by any servile fear."

Philosophical Dictionary (1764) Chief target supernatural religion and its profiteers – churches of all kinds

MONTESQUIEU (1689-1755)

Social satire

The Persian Letters (1721)

The Spirit of the Laws (1748)

The latter affected Scottish social science, politics and French philosophy

Antoine-Nicolas de CONDORCET (1743-1780)

Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind

Ecstatic vision in the midst of the French Revolution

Pierre BAYLE (1647-1706)

Teacher of the Enlightenment

The Dictionary Historical and Critical (1697)

Themes of universal and infeasible ignorance, paired with logical corollary; the need for forbearance and toleration. Thought of as skeptic and adversary of superstition and fanaticism.

Voltaire's *Dictionary* owes much to Bayle

Cesare BECCARIA (1738-1794)

On Crimes and Punishments

Used by Voltaire

Cruel punishments, like death penalty, are never justified. Harsh treatment of accused, including torture, always detestable. The Utilitarian principle holds for makers of laws: "the greatest happiness divided among the greatest number"

By the 1760s, writes Nicholas Phillipson, Scotland had become a centre of learning and letters of international importance. The classrooms of Adam Smith and John Millar at Glasgow, Adam Ferguson and Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh and the medical professors of Edinburgh attracted students from every corner of the Continent and the Anglo-Saxon world.

In the salons, Scottish learning meant the histories of David Hume and William Robertson, the poems of Ossian, the philosophical novels of Tobias Smollett and Henry Mackenzie, the moral literary and political essays of Hume and Mackenzie's *Mirror* and *Lounger*. In addition the philosophical treatises of Thomas Reid, James Beattie's *Essay on Truth*, and the aesthetic writings of Lord Karnes and Hugh Blair.

The civic humanist tradition in Western political and moral thinking had taught humankind to value above everything else the sense of moral autonomy that could be won by learning how to live virtuously in civil society. This Scots' concern with the principles of virtue can be related to the traumatic effect of the Act of Union in 1707 on the Scottish political community.

Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun was the ideological father of the Scottish Enlightenment. His understanding of British politics was principally distilled into a short, elliptical and brilliant pamphlet on the militia question which was first published in 1698. 'Independence' rather than 'liberty' was the pivot of which Fletcher's analysis of Scottish politics rested; indeed he was clear that without independent provinces to hold in check the power of the crown there could be no free Britain.

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Tatler* and *Spectator* essays were to provide the Scots with the clue they needed. Their essays, published in London between 1709 and 1712, were instantly republished in Edinburgh. They provided a genre for men like Hume and Kames to exploit the last influential imitation of this style of moral journalism, Henry Mackenzie's journals, and the style which was to replace it, Francis Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review*, were the work of Edinburgh writers. Although we know far less of their activities than we would like, we know enough to be able to identify the Addisonian vocabulary which had penetrated their proceedings. Words like 'conversation', 'friendship', 'moderation', 'easiness', 'taste', 'politeness', and 'improvement' crop up continually in their records.

Part of the background here can be related to Addison's interest in the psychology of Locke and the ethics of Cicero and Shaftesbury, which were taught in Glasgow by Gershom Carmichael and his student Francis Hutcheson. Hutcheson had left Glasgow in the late 1710s for Dublin where he encountered the literary and political world of Irish civic humanism. It was this background that David Hume inherited. For Hume it was imagination, custom and habit and not reason which furnished us with those beliefs which made experience intelligible and a happy, decent and virtuous life possible.

Adam SMITH (1723-1790)

An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations in 2 volumes (1776)
Political economy as the science of wealth and of welfare. "It proposes to enrich both the people and the sovereign." Raises questions of standards of living, division of labour and need to control rapacious monopolists. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759)

Adam FERGUSON (1723-1816)

An Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767)
Systematic thinking about social origins Reader of Montesquieu and Hume

David HUME (1711-1776)

Signal contributions to theory of knowledge, to aesthetic and political thought, and to variety of social sciences.

The History of England in 5 volumes (1762)
Treatise of Human Nature (1739 & 1740)
Of the Standard Taste (1757)
Of National Characters (1748)
Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations (1742)

James BOSWELL (1740-1795)

Conversation with Hume (1777)
Sometimes styled as "Christian against pagan",
Hume on his death bed
The Life of Samuel Johnson in 4 volumes
Adversary of Hume and Rousseau but also Anti-slavery (Vol.III)

Ossian was the preposterous face of the Scottish Enlightenment His discovery was a testimony to the gullibility of the Select Society's militia men and to the strength of their desire to develop a new conception of virtue. Ossian was the creation of a young, unscrupulous man, James MacPherson, who was sent to the highlanders by Alexander Carlyle, Adam Ferguson and their friends to discover the epic by a Celtic Homer that they were sure must exist No such epic existed ... (see Roy Porter, ed.)

Henry MACKENZIE (1745-1831)

The Man of Feeling (1771).
New sensitivity to suffering (including for some sentimentality or romantic sensibility),
New prominence to tears: (e.g. in Addison, Samuel Richardson, Rousseau).
Used by Hogarth for *A Rake's Progress*.

Joseph ADDISON (1672-1719)

Editor *The Spectator*.
Contributors included Swift
Message of decency, humour, reasonableness
"I shall share no pains to make their instruction agreeable and their diversion useful,
for which reasons I shall endeavour to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit
with morality ... " (Issue no.10)

"It was said of Socrates", wrote Addison, "that he brought Philosophy down from Heaven to inhabit among Men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in clubs, Assemblies, at Tea-Tables and in Coffee-Houses.

The presidential election of 1800, contested between John Adams and his old friend and colleague of the heroic years of the Revolution, Thomas Jefferson, is likely to remain the only presidential contest in which rivals were respectively presidents of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. In this light the election itself appears as a supremely political climax to the American Enlightenment, and at the same time supremely American climax to the Enlightenment as a whole; to which the later correspondence between the two ageing patriarchs provides an absorbing and sometimes a profoundly moving coda ...

America was discovered long before the Enlightenment began to form in European minds. English America itself grew up alongside the England of Bacon, Milton, Locke, and Newton.

When Jefferson's plans for public education, put forward to the state legislature in 1778, are traced in the context of what is meant by "self-evident" in the Declaration of Independence, what survives is not so much the limited nature of his expectations but this intense conviction of the importance of education, not only because of its usefulness to individuals but because of its indispensable contribution to the survival of the republic.

To democratise epistemology is a decisive step towards democratising society.

Paradoxically, until many years after the French Revolution had successfully established American credentials, the European Enlightenment's observations of America were dominated by scepticism rather than optimism. The existence of slavery at the base of such a free society undoubtedly provoked one strand of this scepticism, and gave rise to Dr Johnson's famous jibe about the loudest yelps for liberty coming from the slave-drivers of America. The French *Encyclopedie* devoted articles to slavery in which the word 'Negro' was interchanged for 'slave', and in which the British colonies were obviously as heavily implicated as the French.

It is a clue to John Adams' thought that, in justifying his basically defensive form of social conservatism, in addition to the almost obligatory reference to Pope's *Essay on Man* he quoted Ulysses' famous speech on degree from *Troilus and Cressida*.

John Adams told Thomas Jefferson in 1813: "Inequalities of Mind and Body are so established by God Almighty in his constitution of Human Nature that no Art of policy can ever plain them down to a level... the golden rule; do as you would be done by; is all the equality that can be supported or defended by reason, or reconciled to common sense.

It is Locke's political doctrines, with the developments due to Montesquieu, that are embedded in the American Constitution, and are to be seen at work whenever there is a dispute between President and Congress. The British Constitution was based upon his doctrines until about 1898, and so was that which the French adopted in 1871. (vid. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, London, 1946.)

Catherine MACAULAY (1731-1791)

Letters on Education (1790)

Used by Wollstonecraft

Correspondent with Washington in America

An Address to the People of England. Scotland and Ireland on the present Important Crisis of Affairs

Thomas JEFFERSON (1743-1826)

Letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush (1803)

Admirer of Cicero, self-reliance, contempt for fear of death, freedom from superstition.

Freedom of speech and toleration

First inaugurated President of U.S. in 1801

Alexander POPE (1688-1744)

An Essay on Man (1732-1734)

Deism, vision of a reasonable god who places humankind in its proper place on the great chain of being and who exacts only acceptance of his decrees

Fun of deism is made by Pope in his *Dunciad* (1743)

Pope translated Homer's the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

Jonathan SWIFT (1667-1745)

Satire and political pamphleting

A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit

Friend of Pope and Gay, acquaintance of Addison and Steele

A Modest Proposal For Preventing the Children of Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country

James MADISON (1751-1836)

Alexander HAMILTON (1775-1804)

John JAY (1745-1829)

All writers for *The Federalist* (1787-88)

Need to persuade citizens of the state of New York to support proposed federal constitution

One of the major twentieth century writers on the enlightenment was Ernst Cassirer. His *Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (1932) remains a classic text on the subject. In 1945 he followed this book with two essays titled *Rousseau Kant Goethe*. These essays give an interesting view of the problem faced by the simultaneity of Classicism and the Enlightenment seeing them not as antitheses but as complementary intellectual forces. It is because of Cassirer's magisterial classic text that leads Peter Gay to note that the Enlightenment appears as a genuinely philosophical and genuinely empiricist movement, living in the world of affairs and the world of ideas with equal ease. Much becomes clearer, notes Gay, as a result of this reevaluation, including the philosophes' disdain for what they liked to call "metaphysics". The philosophes, then, appear as active philosophers who treated right thinking as a precondition for right action.

Cassirer knew that Rousseau had never used the phrase "noble savage" and he had never invited humankind to return to its primal innocence. That Rousseau's political thought was neither a demand for defiance of all law or (as others have argued) for total slavish subjection to the state. For Cassirer, Rousseau was a rational philosopher, the roots of whose thought were deeply buried in his complex character and his varied experience, and whose ideas display a consistent development and rest on a consistent principle. For Kant (and for Cassirer after him) Rousseau wanted humankind to return to their true nature, which was not a simian primitivism, but a genuine cultivation of his highest capacities.

The rebels of the *Sturm und Drang* had criticised the philosophes for what they called their rigid materialism. These Germans wanted not discipline but self-expression, not form but freedom. The young Goethe agreed with them. But as he matured as an artist Goethe discovered that the rejection of form in the name of genius led not to masterpieces but to unsatisfactory fragments. It was at this point that Kant's *Critique of (Aesthetic) Judgement* Goethe found the justification for his own procedure, his firm reliance on his own inner talent shaped by what Cassirer calls "the will to form". Kant in philosophical theory, and Goethe in literary practice discovered that form and freedom, far from being mortal enemies, were indispensable if often uneasy allies.

Immanuel KANT (1724-1804)

Close reading of Newton, Hume and Rousseau

Critique of Pure Reason (1781)

Critique of Practical Reason (1788)

Critique of judgement (1790)

Comprehensive account of human knowledge and foundations of ethics and aesthetics.

What Is Enlightenment?

"In the small treatise, *Reply to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* (1784), Kant explicitly poses the question of the relation between social authority and freedom. To think and to act according to an authority is for Kant characteristic of 'immaturity', a 'self-inflicted immaturity', for which the person is herself/himself to blame. This self-enslavement of humankind to authority has in turn a particular social purpose, in that civil society 'requires a certain mechanism, for some affairs which are in the interests of the community, whereby some members of the community must behave purely passively, so that they may, by means of an artificial consensus, be employed by the government for public ends (or at least deterred from vitiating them)' [Kant's *Political Writings*], " from Herbert Marcuse's *From Luther to Popper* (1936, translated 1972).

Marcuse sees Kant's contradiction as between the 'public' freedom of the citizen and bourgeois society's interest in discipline. "Kant's solution," writes Marcuse, "remains dualistic; his problematic is in parallel with Luther's: 'the ~ use of man's reason must always be free, and this alone can bring about enlightenment among men (sic); the ~ use of the same may often be very strictly limited, yet without thereby particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment'."

Johann Joachim WINCKLEMANN (1717-1768)

Reflections on the painting and Sculpture of the Greeks,

translated by Henry Fuseli in 1765

Masculine ideal of Greek beauty embodied in statuary

Used in *Laocoön* by Lessing

Gotthold Ephraim LESSING (1729-1781)

The Education of the Human Race

Against intolerance, no patience with superstition.

Laocoön (1766)

Dramaturgie (1767-69)

August Ludwig von SCHLOZER (1735-1809)

Neujahrs-Geschenk aus Iamaika (1780) (*A New Year's Letter*)

Anti-slavery, one of first children's books ever published.

Hermann Samuel REIMARUS (1694-1768)

Apology or Defense for the Reasonable Worshipers of God

Discovered by Lessing and published by him in 1770's until prevented.

Reason offers humankind hope for discovering true religion.

One of the issues that the question "What does modernity stand for?" turns on is the Enlightenment's concern with the place of humankind in THIS world, as distinct from the medieval emphasis on the NEXT.

Part of the definition above begins to highlight the continuing problem which Paul Ricoeur calls, "The struggle between Romanticism and the Enlightenment." That is the Enlightenment and its struggle against prejudices and Romanticism and its nostalgia for the past. Romantic philosophy cannot be simply discarded because it dares to challenge the discrediting of prejudice by the Enlightenment".

"Romanticism," writes Ricoeur, "wages its war on a terrain defined by the adversary, a terrain on which the role of tradition and authority in the process of interpretation are in dispute. It is on the same terrain, the same ground of inquiry, that the *mythos* is celebrated over the *logos*, that the old is defended against the new, historical Christendom against the modern state, the fraternal community against an administrative socialism, the productive unconscious against a sterile consciousness, the mythical past against a future of rational Utopias} the poetic imagination against cold ratiocination. Romantic hermeneutics thus ties its destiny to everything which is associated with the Restoration." (*Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. trans., 1981)

Gregory Bateson in *Mind and Nature: A necessary unity* (1979) writes:

"The discovery (if it be discovery) that the two languages (of algebra and of geometry) are mutually translatable is itself an *enlightenment*." (p.85)

After a chapter examining various ways in which the combining of information of different sorts or from different sources results in something more than addition, Bateson writes,

"The aggregate is greater than the sum of its parts because the combining of the parts is not a simple adding but is of the nature of a multiplication or a fractionation, or the creation of a logical product. A momentary gleam of enlightenment."

Christoph Willibald GLUCK (1714-1787)

Innovation" on principle"

His *Orfeo ed Euridice* an attack on Italian opera (1762)

(As was John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* and Rousseau's championing of Pergolesi's *La serya padrona*. All this part of the "Buffoons' War".)

Libretto for *Orfeo* and other works by Raniero da Calzabigi Alceste followed.

Letter to the Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany;

letter to Duke of Braganza:

letter to Editor of the Mercure de France.

**On the Edges of the Enlightenment:
Art in Britain and North America: 1730-1845**

The course makes a broad selection from the art of the period with an emphasis on painting made in Britain and North America, with brief considerations of work made outside of these boundaries. Much of the art of the period exemplifies the notion of civic humanism: the English enlightenment. It carries the viewer from the beginnings of landscape and portraiture in Britain to the blurred distinctions between historical narratives and apocalyptic vision.

Weeks 1-9 *Civic Humanism* in the 18th century.

Introduction; Conversation pieces; early portraiture and allegory; historical narrative and Idealism; the French Enlightenment; and American Independence.

For example: Hogarth, Rowlandson, Highmore, Hayman, Reynolds, Ramsay, Raeburn, Kauffman, David, Mengs, Copley, West.

Weeks 10-18 *Dark and Light landscapes* in the 18th and early 19th century. Introduction; early landscapes; English watercolourists; "The Age of Reason"; English and German Romanticism; people and the landscape.

For example: Gainsborough, Wilson, Cozens, Stubbs, Morland, Wright, Zoffany, Barry, Turner, Girtin, Cotman, Cox, Constable, Bonington, Friedrich.

Weeks 19-30 *Apocalyptic Visions and historical narratives* in the late 18th and 19th century. Visionary landscapes; apocalyptic narratives; photography; French Romanticism; American narratives; Spanish allegory; and 19th century Idealism. Conclusion.

For example: Fuseli, Blake, Romney, Martin, Ward, Haydon, Lawrence, Fox, Talbot, Gericault, Courbet, Delacroix, Meissonier, Palmer, Turner.

In addition to this pamphlet and the course outlined above, the following papers were prepared, or are in preparation, for other courses and provide links with the above:

WESTERN ART: 1845-1945: DOCUMENTS 1-16 and Supplements 1-6.

MODERNISM: Some preliminary notes. (A second part to this is to be prepared in 1989 regarding collage and simulation).

POST-MODERNISM: Texts (anthologies) lettered A to F.

In 1987 a translation of Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* was published in both England and America:

The "moderns," using historical-critical arguments, called into question the meaning of imitating the ancient models; in opposition to the norms of an apparently timeless and absolute beauty, they elaborated the criteria of a relative or time-conditioned beauty and thus articulated the self-understanding of the French Enlightenment as an epochal new beginning.

Chapter 5 addressed Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's book *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1944). Their first chapter begins:

"In the general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating humankind from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant. The program of the Enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and substitution of knowledge for fancy."

The dilemma that faced Horkheimer and Adorno, as they saw it, was the self-destruction of the Enlightenment. They were convinced that social freedom is inseparable from enlightened thought. For them, the prime cause of the retreat from enlightenment into mythology is to be sought in the Enlightenment itself when paralysed by the fear of the truth.

Another angle of approach might be through Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers' *Order out of Chaos: Man's Dialogue with nature*, 1984. Recalling the remarkable discoveries achieved in science at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century (the theories of heat, electricity, magnetism, and optics) they note that "It is not surprising that the idea of scientific progress, already clearly formulated in the 18th century, dominated the 19th" and also that "the position of science in Western culture remained unstable," which, "lends a dramatic aspect to the history of ideas from the high point of the Enlightenment." They state the alternative: "to accept science with what appears to be its alienating conclusions or to turn to an antiscientific metaphysics."

The Prigogine and Stengers' question then arises: "To what extent is science a basis for the intelligibility of nature, including humankind? What is the meaning of the idea of progress today?"

"Diderot's ... confidence in science, in the possibilities of knowledge was total. Yet this is the very reason why science had, following Diderot, to understand life before it could hope to achieve any coherent vision of nature."

"We have already mentioned that the birth of modern science was marked by the abandonment of vitalist inspiration and, in particular, of Aristotelian final causes. However, the issue of the organisation of living matter remained and became a challenge for classical science. Diderot, at the height of the Newtonian triumph, emphasises that this problem was repressed by physics. He imagines it as haunting the dreams of physicists who cannot conceive of it while they are awake."

E.P. Thompson has argued how scores of intellectual enclaves, dispersed over England, Wales and Scotland, which made up for what they lost in cohesion by the multiplicity of initiatives afforded by these many bases and (as the entire record of scientific and technical advance witnesses) by the opportunities afforded for the interpenetration of theory and praxis. A prominent example of this is the Lunar Society science, the Warrington medical connection, the York literary scene that nurtured Sterne, itinerant lecturers, or the country parsonage as research centre.

Baron d'HOLBACH (1723-1789)

System of Nature (1770) 4 volumes

"In these advanced circles, even telling the truth was intended to deceive the authorities." (Gay)

"Man always deceives himself when he abandons experience to follow imaginary systems ... "

The term "Bluestockings" first used in 1750's referred to men and women of wit, knowledge and advanced opinions who frequented houses where social display of knowledge was cultivated as a fine art ... term became used for women who held salons, and for the female members of these cultural coteries such as Mrs. Delany (1700-1788), Mrs. Carter (1717-1806), Mrs. Chapone (1727-1801), Mrs. Montagu (1720-1800), Mrs. Thrale (later Mrs. Piozzi, 1741-1821), Mrs. Vesey (1715-1791) and from a later generation, Fanny Burney (1752-1840) and Hannah More (1745-1833). *vid.* Burney's *Diaries and letters* and Hannah More's poem '*Bas Bleu*'.

Mary ASTELL (1668-1731)

Some Reflections upon Marriage Occasioned by the Duke of Mazarine's Case (1700)

A Serious Proposal to the Ladies (1694)

Analyses of patriarchal society.

A Letter to a Lady. Written by a Lady (1696)

defence of female sex. "So partial are men to expect bricks where they afford no straw and so abundantly civil as to take care we make good that obliging epithet of *ignorant*, which out of an excess of manners they are pleased to bestow on *us*."

Lady Mary Wortley MONTAGU (1689-1762)

Introduced smallpox inoculation into England.

Friend of Pope's

The Nonsense of Common Sense

opposing the journal *Commonsense*

Under the pseudonym 'Sophia, a Person of Quality' (which may prove to be another woman)

Women Not Inferior To Man (1734)

Woman's Superior Excellence Over Man (1743)

Letters (translated into German by Fuseli).

Edward GIBBON (1737-1794)

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-1788) in 7 vols.

Extensive reading of Cicero.

Jeremy BENTHAM (1748-1832)

Rejection of natural law and advocacy of utilitarian principle;

Fragment on Government (1776)

Hedonism (via Locke, Condillac and Heivetius) and Utilitarianism (its social application).

Calculus of pleasure via its intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity, fecundity, purity, and extent. The best social policy was one that distributed pleasures as widely as possible and reduced pain as much as possible.

The Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789)

AN. RADISHCHEV (1749-1802)

A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow (1790)

Sentimental journey, attacks on serfdom, criticism of bureaucrats, idealising peasant life.

Condemned to death by Catherine in view of French Revolution, sentence commuted to exile in Siberia until 1801.

Mary WOLLSTONECRAFT (1759-1797)

Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke occasioned by his Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790)

Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures of Political and Moral Subjects (1792)

Mary Hays wrote a so-called sequel at Wollstonecraft's death, *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of the Women* (1797)

Friend of Fuseli

Deficiencies of male reasoning Critique of Rousseau

CIVIC HUMANISM

"In the early decades of the eighteenth century in England," writes John Barrell (1986), "the most influential attempts to provide the practice of painting with a theory were those which adopted the terms of value of the discourse we now describe as civic humanism. The republic of the fine arts was understood to be structured as a political republic; the most dignified function to which painting could aspire was the promotion of the public virtues; and the genres of painting were ranked according to their tendency to promote them. As only the free citizen members of the political republic could exhibit those virtues, the highest genre, history-painting, was primarily addressed to them, and it addressed them rhetorically, as an orator addresses an audience of citizens who are his equals, and persuades them to act in the interests of the public."

"With the foundation of the Royal Academy ... in 1768, it became necessary to insist more firmly on the claim that painting had a definite public function ... "

The civic humanist theory itself was propounded in the first half of the century by Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury; Jonathan Richardson; and George Turnbull. The attenuation of that theory was propounded by such writers as Edmund Burke, Alexander Gerard and Daniel Webb.

Third Earl of SHAFTESBURY, Anthony Ashley Cooper (1671-1713)

Characterisks of Men. Manners. Opinions. Times. 3 volumes, (1711)

The insistence on virtuous sociability: the concept of "politeness".

Edmund BURKE (1729-1797)

A Philosophical Enquiry into the sublime and beautiful (1757)

Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790)

Friend of James Barry.

William HOGARTH (1697-1764)

Painter, engraver. Promoted Academy in St. Martin's Lane forerunner of Royal Academy.

The Analysis of Beauty (1753)

Joshua REYNOLDS (1723-1792)

Discourses on Art (1769-1790) (In one volume 1797)

Founded the "Club" with Samuel Johnson (1764).

Members included Burke, Gibbon and Boswell.

President of the Royal Academy when founded in 1768.

His *Discourses* contested by Blake's *maginalia*.

(Separate sheets are available which include extracts from works by all of the above. Those interested are recommended to look at Holt's anthology [see Bibliography on page 23].)

OTHER CONTEXTS (1730-1845)

The periods to be considered begin a decade after the notorious 'South Sea Bubble', in the reign of George II. The periods end at the beginning of the reign of Victoria and before the Crimean War. The span thus encompasses the end of the colonisation of America and its Independence; the colonisation of Australia; the French Revolution; the collapse of the Mogul Empire in India; as well as the War of Austrian Succession; the Jacobite Rising; the Seven Years War, the War between Britain and France and the Napoleonic Wars.

European painters of the period outside Britain include Chardin, Greuze, Fragonard, Goya, David, Ingres, Corot, Millet, Friedrich, Mengs and Courbet. The period sees the end of Medieval Hindu art, the continuation of the Chinese Ching period and the Japanese Edo.

The music in Europe includes work composed by J.S. Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Arne, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Field, Schubert, and the ballet of Camargo. This leads towards the work of Rossini, Mendelsohn, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Glinka, Wagner, Verdi and Berlioz.

Writers in Britain (not already mentioned on previous pages) include Gay, Samuel Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith, Walpole, Cowper, Chatterton, Burns, Sheridan, Austin, Hazlett, Shelley, Mary Shelley, Wordsworth, Thomson, Akenside, Coleridge, Keats, Lamb, Byron, Scott, De Quincey, the Brontes, Thackeray, Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, and Mrs. Gaskell.

Prominent figures include John Wesley, the actor David Garrick, the actress Mrs. Siddons, Elizabeth Fry, and Beau Brummel!

It is the period of architecture designed by the Adams brothers and by John Nash, and that is followed by the Gothic revival in the work of Charles Barry, Joseph Paxton and A.W.N. Pugin. It is the time of the building of the great London hospitals, Wedgwood, Worcester and Derby chinaware, Chippendale furniture, canals, and aqueducts and the first railways as well as the first true air-flight effected by Cayley.

It is the age of industrial revolution and scientific experimentation. The system of Linnaeus (1735); Franklin's lightning conductor (1752); Galvani and the electrical nature of nerves (1771) and Priestly's *History and Present State of Electricity* (1767). It is the period of Rutherford and Priestley's discovery of nitrogen (1772); Priestley's hydrochloric and sulfuric acids (1775); and Lavoisier's discovery that air consists of mainly oxygen and nitrogen (1777). These discoveries can be set beside Jenner's vaccination against smallpox promoted by Lady Montagu (1796); Davy's *Researches*, particularly *Chemical and Philosophical Concerning Nitrous Oxide* (1800); his electrolytic method for preparing potassium and soda (1806) and his miners' Safety Lamp (1815). Faraday discovered the fundamentals of electromagnetic rotation (1821) and liquefied chlorine (1823); this he followed with the isolation of benzene (1825) and demonstrated the discovery of electrodynamic induction (1831). His *Law of Electrolysis* was published in 1834. In 1831 Charles Darwin – the grandson of the eminent poet and scientist Erasmus Darwin – surveyed on the ship *The Beagle* the lands of Southern America, New Zealand and Australia.

The age that produces the skills of Schiller, Goethe, Hegel and Heine is contemporary with the one that produces Gogol, Balzac, Leopardi, Pushkin, Pellico, Stendhal and Hugo.

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