

# The Age of Enlightenment

## An Anthology Prepared for the Enlightenment Book Club

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# Age of Enlightenment

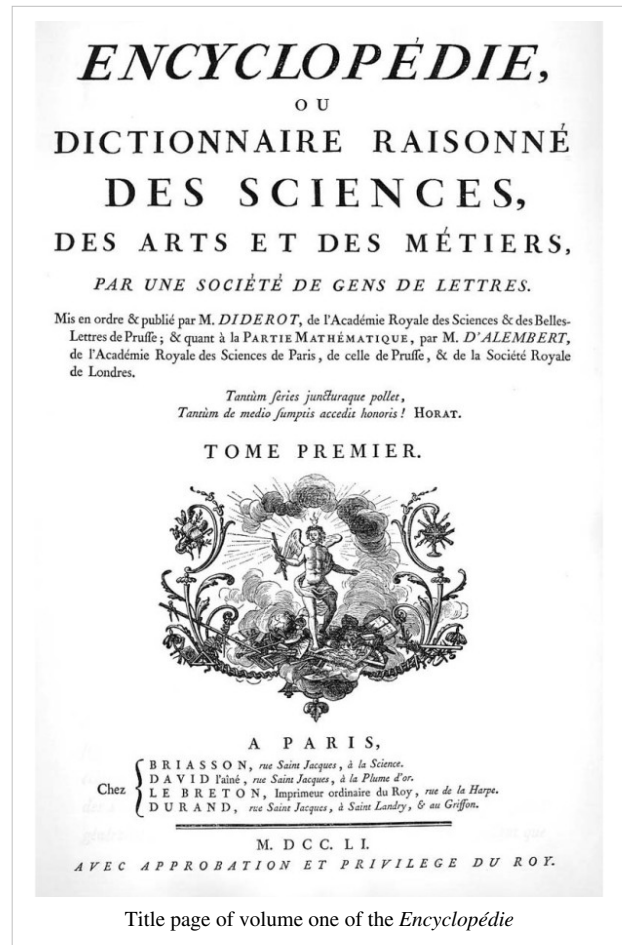
The **Age of Enlightenment** (or simply the **Enlightenment** or **Age of Reason**) was an elite cultural movement of intellectuals in 18th century Europe that sought to mobilize the power of reason in order to reform society and advance knowledge. It promoted intellectual interchange and opposed intolerance and abuses in church and state. Originating about 1650–1700, it was sparked by philosophers Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), John Locke (1632–1704), Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), mathematician Isaac Newton (1643–1727) and Voltaire (1694–1778). Ruling princes often endorsed and fostered figures and even attempted to apply their ideas of government. The Enlightenment flourished until about 1790–1800, after which the emphasis on reason gave way to Romanticism's emphasis on emotion and a Counter-Enlightenment gained force.

The centre of the Enlightenment was France, where it was based in the salons and culminated in the great *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) edited by Denis Diderot (1713–1784) with contributions by hundreds of leading philosophes (intellectuals) such as Voltaire (1694–1778), Rousseau (1712–1778) and Montesquieu (1689–1755). Some 25,000 copies of the 35 volume set were sold, half of them outside France. The new intellectual forces spread to urban centres across Europe, notably England, Scotland, the German states, the Netherlands, Russia, Italy, Austria, and Spain, then jumped the Atlantic into the European colonies, where it influenced Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, among many others, and played a major role in the American Revolution. The political ideals influenced the American Declaration of Independence, the United States Bill of Rights, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and the Polish–Lithuanian Constitution of May 3, 1791.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Use of the term

The term 'Enlightenment' came into use in English during the mid-18th century,<sup>[2]</sup> with particular reference to French philosophy, as the equivalent of the French term 'Lumières' (used first by Dubos 1733 and already well established by 1751). From Immanuel Kant's 1784 essay "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" the German term became 'Aufklärung'. The German term synonymous with 'Lumières' and 'Enlightenment' is 'Erleuchtung'. 'Aufklärung' has a quite different meaning: a clearing up. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, Kant's choice of 'Aufklärung' was an intentional correction of the French and English terminology.

According to Kant, The Enlightenment was "Mankind's final coming of age, the emancipation of the human consciousness from an immature state of ignorance and error." According to historian Roy Porter, the thesis of the liberation of the human mind from the dogmatic state of ignorance that he argues was prevalent at the time is the epitome of what the age of enlightenment was trying to capture.<sup>[3]</sup> According to Bertrand Russell, however, the enlightenment was a phase in a progressive development, which began in antiquity, and that reason and challenges to



Title page of volume one of the *Encyclopédie*

the established order were constant ideals throughout that time. Russell argues that the enlightenment was ultimately born out of the Protestant reaction against the Catholic counter-reformation, when the philosophical views of the past two centuries crystallized into a coherent world view. He argues that many of the philosophical views, such as affinity for democracy against monarchy, originated among Protestants in the early 16th century to justify their desire to break away from the pope and the Catholic Church. Though many of these philosophical ideals were picked up by Catholics, Russell argues, by the 18th century the Enlightenment was the principal manifestation of the schism that began with Martin Luther.<sup>[4]</sup>

Chartier (1991) argues that the Enlightenment was only invented after the fact for a political goal. He claims the leaders of the French Revolution created an Enlightenment canon of basic text, by selecting certain authors and identifying them with The Enlightenment in order to legitimize their republican political agenda.<sup>[5]</sup>

Historian Jonathan Israel dismisses the post-modern interpretation of the Enlightenment and the attempts of modern historians to link social and economical reasons for the revolutionary aspect of the period. He instead focuses on the history of ideas in the period from 1650 to the end of the 18th century, and claims that it was the ideas themselves that caused the change that eventually led to the revolutions of the later half of the 18th century and the early 19th century.<sup>[6]</sup> Israel argues that until the 1650s Western civilization "was based on a largely shared core of faith, tradition and authority".<sup>[7]</sup> Up until this date most intellectual debates revolved around "confessional" - that is Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist), or Anglican issues", and the main aim of these debates was to establish which bloc of faith ought to have the "monopoly of truth and a God-given title to authority".<sup>[8]</sup> After this date everything thus previously rooted in tradition was questioned and often replaced by new concepts in the light of philosophical reason. After the second half of the 17th century and during the 18th century a "general process of rationalization and secularization set in which rapidly overthrew theology's age-old hegemony in the world of study", and that confessional disputes was reduced to a secondary status in favor of the "escalating contest between faith and incredulity".<sup>[8]</sup> This period saw the shaping of two distinct lines of enlightenment thought:<sup>[9]</sup> <sup>[10]</sup> Firstly the *radical enlightenment*, largely inspired by the one-substance philosophy of Spinoza, which in its political form adhered to: "democracy; racial and sexual equality; individual liberty of lifestyle; full freedom of thought, expression, and the press; eradication of religious authority from the legislative process and education; and full separation of church and state".<sup>[11]</sup> Secondly the *moderate enlightenment*, which in a number of different philosophical systems, like those in writings of Descartes, John Locke, Isaac Newton or Christian Wolff, expressed some support for critical review and renewal of the old modes of thought, but in other parts sought reform and accommodation with the old systems of power and faith.<sup>[12]</sup> These two lines of thought were again met by the conservative counter enlightenment, encompassing the thinkers which held unto the traditional belief-based systems of thought.

## Timespan

There is little consensus on the precise beginning of the age of Enlightenment; the beginning of the 18th century (1701) or the middle of the 17th century (1650) are often used as an approximate starting point.<sup>[13]</sup> If taken back to the mid-17th century, the Enlightenment would trace its origins to Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, published in 1637. Others define the Enlightenment as beginning in Britain's Glorious Revolution of 1688 or with the publication of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* in 1687. Jonathan Israel argues, "after 1650, everything, no matter how fundamental or deeply rooted, was questioned in the light of philosophic reason".<sup>[14]</sup> Israel makes the detailed case that, from 1650 to 1750, Spinoza was "the chief challenger of the fundamentals of revealed religion, received ideas, tradition, morality, and what was everywhere regarded, in absolutist and non-absolutist states alike, as divinely constituted political authority."<sup>[15]</sup>

As to its end, most scholars use the last years of the century – often choosing the French Revolution of 1789 or the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars (1804–15) as a convenient point in time with which to date the end of the Enlightenment.<sup>[16]</sup>

## National variations

The Enlightenment operated in most countries, but often with a specific local emphasis. For example in France it became associated with anti-government and anti-Church radicalism, while in Germany it reached deep into the middle classes and expressed a spiritualistic and nationalistic tone without threatening governments or established churches.<sup>[17]</sup> Government responses varied widely. In France the government was hostile, and the philosophes fought against its censorship. They were sometimes imprisoned or hounded into exile. The British government generally ignored the Enlightenment's leaders in England and Scotland, although it did give Isaac Newton a knighthood and a very lucrative government office in charge of the mint.

## Enlightened absolutism

In several nations, powerful rulers – called "enlightened despots" by historians – welcomed leaders of the Enlightenment at court and had them help design laws and programs to reform the system, typically to build stronger national states.<sup>[18]</sup> The most prominent of those rulers were Frederick the Great of Prussia, Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia from 1762 to 1796, and Joseph II, Emperor of Austria 1780–1790. Joseph was over-enthusiastic, announcing so many reforms that had so little support, that revolts broke out and his regime became a comedy of errors and nearly all his programs were reversed.<sup>[19]</sup> Senior ministers Pombal in Portugal and Struensee in Denmark governed according to Enlightenment ideals.

## Germany

Before 1750 the German upper classes looked to France for intellectual, cultural and architectural leadership; French was the language of high society. By the mid-18th century the German Enlightenment in music, philosophy, science and literature emerged as an intellectual force independent of France. Frederick the Great (1712–86), the king of Prussia 1740–1786, saw himself as a leader of the Enlightenment and patronized philosophers and scientists at his court in Berlin. He was an enthusiast for French ideas as he ridiculed German culture and was unaware of the remarkable advances it was undergoing. Voltaire, who had been imprisoned and maltreated by the French government, was eager to accept Frederick's invitation to live at his palace. Frederick explained, "My principal occupation is to combat ignorance and prejudice ... to enlighten minds, cultivate morality, and to make people as happy as it suits human nature, and as the means at my disposal permit."<sup>[20]</sup> Other rulers were supportive, such as Karl Friedrich, Grand Duke of Baden, who ruled Baden for 73 years (1738–1811).<sup>[21]</sup>

Christian Wolff (1679–1754) was the pioneer as a writer who expounded the Enlightenment to German readers; he legitimized German as a philosophic language.<sup>[22]</sup>

Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) broke new ground in philosophy and poetry, specifically in the Sturm und Drang movement of proto-Romanticism.

Weimar Classicism ("Weimarer Klassik") was a cultural and literary movement based in Weimar that sought to establish a new humanism by synthesizing Romantic, classical and Enlightenment ideas. The movement, from 1772 until 1805, involved Herder as well as polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), a poet and historian. Herder argued that every folk had its own particular identity, which was expressed in its language and culture. This legitimized the

promotion of German language and culture and helped shape the development of German nationalism. Schiller's plays expressed the restless spirit of his generation, depicting the hero's struggle against social pressures and the force of destiny.<sup>[23]</sup>

German music, sponsored by the upper classes, came of age under composers Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791).<sup>[24]</sup>

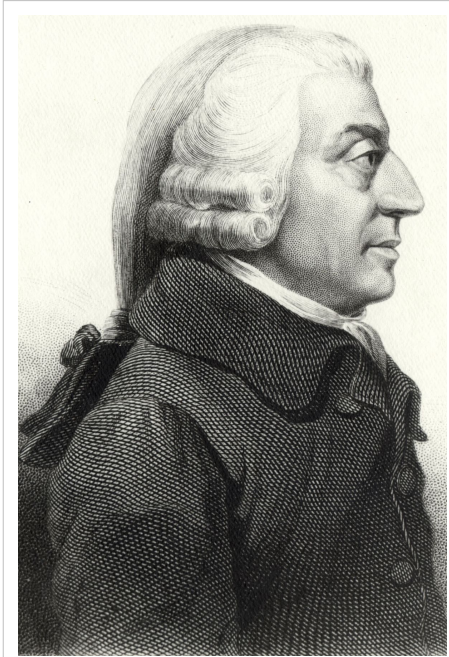
In remote Königsberg philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) tried to reconcile rationalism and religious belief, individual freedom and political authority. Kant's work contained basic tensions that would continue to shape German thought – and indeed all of European philosophy – well into the 20th century.<sup>[25]</sup>

The German Enlightenment won the support of princes, aristocrats and the middle classes and permanently reshaped the culture.<sup>[26]</sup>



*Weimar's Courtyard of the Muses* demonstrates the importance of Weimar. Schiller is reading; on the far left (seated) Wieland and Herder, Goethe standing on the right in front of the pillar. 1860 painting by Theobald von Oer

## Scotland



One leader of the Scottish Enlightenment was Adam Smith, the father of modern economic science

The 18th-century Scottish Enlightenment, embodied by such world-class influential thinkers as Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith and David Hume, paved the way for the modernization of Scotland and the entire Atlantic world. Hutcheson, the father of the Scottish Enlightenment, championed political liberty and the right of popular rebellion against tyranny. Smith, in his monumental *Wealth of Nations* (1776), advocated liberty in the sphere of commerce and the global economy. Hume developed philosophical concepts that directly influenced James Madison and thus the U.S. Constitution. In 19th-century Britain, the Scottish Enlightenment, as popularized by Dugald Stewart, became the basis of classical liberalism.<sup>[27]</sup>

Scientific progress was led by James Hutton and William Thomson, 1st Baron Kelvin. James Watt (instrument maker to the University of Glasgow), who perfected the crucial technology of the Industrial Revolution: the steam engine.<sup>[28]</sup>

## Russia

In Russia Enlightenment of the mid-eighteenth century saw the government begin to actively encourage the proliferation of arts and sciences. This era produced the first Russian university, library, theatre, public museum, and independent press. Like other enlightened despots, Catherine the Great played a key role in fostering the arts, sciences, and education. She used her own interpretation of Enlightenment ideals, assisted by notable international experts such as Voltaire (by correspondence) and, in residence, world class scientists such as Leonhard Euler, Peter Simon Pallas, Fedor Ivanovich Iankovich de Mirievo (also spelled Teodor Janković-Mirijeovski), and Anders Johan Lexell. The national Enlightenment differed from its Western European counterpart in that it promoted further Modernization of all aspects of Russian life and was concerned with attacking the institution of serfdom in Russia. Historians argue that the Russian enlightenment centered on the individual instead of societal enlightenment and encouraged the living of an enlightened life.<sup>[29]</sup>

## Spain

Charles III, king of Spain from 1759 to 1788, tried to rescue his empire from decay through far-reaching reforms such as weakening the Church and its monasteries, promoting science and university research, facilitating trade and commerce, modernizing agriculture, and avoiding wars. He was unable to control budget deficits, and borrowed more and more. Spain relapsed after his death.<sup>[30]</sup>

## Poland

The Age of Enlightenment reached Poland later than in Germany or Austria, as szlachta (nobility) culture (Sarmatism) together with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth political system (Golden Freedoms) were in deep crisis. The period of Polish Enlightenment began in the 1730s–40s, peaked in the reign of Poland's last king, Stanisław August Poniatowski (second half of the 18th century), went into decline with the Third Partition of Poland (1795), and ended in 1822, replaced by Romanticism in Poland. The model constitution of 1791 expressed Enlightenment ideals but was in effect for only one year as the nation was partitioned among its neighbors. More enduring were the cultural achievements, which created a nationalist spirit in Poland.<sup>[31]</sup>

## Goals

No brief summary can do justice to the diversity of enlightened thought in 18th-century Europe. Because it was a value system rather than a set of shared beliefs, there are many contradictory trains to follow. As Outram notes, The Enlightenment comprised "many different paths, varying in time and geography, to the common goals of progress, of tolerance, and the removal of abuses in Church and state."<sup>[32]</sup>

In his famous essay "What is Enlightenment?" (1784), Immanuel Kant described it simply as freedom to use one's own intelligence.<sup>[33]</sup> More broadly, the Enlightenment period is marked by increasing empiricism, scientific rigor, and reductionism, along with increasing questioning of religious orthodoxy.

Historian Peter Gay asserts the Enlightenment broke through "the sacred circle,"<sup>[34]</sup> whose dogma had circumscribed thinking. The Sacred Circle is a term he uses to describe the interdependent relationship between the hereditary aristocracy, the leaders of the church and the text of the Bible. This interrelationship manifests itself as kings invoking the doctrine "Divine Right of Kings" to rule. Thus church sanctioned the rule of the king and the king defended the church in return.

Zafirovski, (2010) argues that The Enlightenment is the source of critical ideas, such as the centrality of freedom, democracy, and reason as primary values of society – as opposed to the divine right of kings or traditions as the ruling authority.<sup>[35]</sup> This view argues that the establishment of a contractual basis of rights would lead to the market mechanism and capitalism, the scientific method, religious tolerance, and the organization of states into self-governing republics through democratic means. In this view, the tendency of the *philosophes* in particular to apply rationality to every problem is considered the essential change.<sup>[36]</sup> Later critics of The Enlightenment, such as the Romantics of the 19th century, contended that its goals for rationality in human affairs were too ambitious to ever be achieved.<sup>[37]</sup>

A variety of 19th-century movements, including liberalism and neo-classicism, traced their intellectual heritage back to the Enlightenment.<sup>[38]</sup>

## Social and cultural interpretation

In opposition to the intellectual historiographical approach of the Enlightenment, which examines the various currents, or discourses of intellectual thought within the European context during the 17th and 18th centuries, the cultural (or social) approach examines the changes that occurred in European society and culture. Under this approach, the Enlightenment is less a collection of thought than a process of changing sociabilities and cultural practices – both the "content" and the processes by which this content was spread are now important. Roger Chartier describes it as follows:

This movement [from the intellectual to the cultural/social] implies casting doubt on two ideas: first, that practices can be deduced from the discourses that authorize or justify them; second, that it is possible to translate into the terms of an explicit ideology the latent meaning of social mechanisms.<sup>[39]</sup>

One of the primary elements of the cultural interpretation of the Enlightenment is the rise of the public sphere in Europe. Jürgen Habermas has influenced thinking on the public sphere more than any other, though his model is increasingly called into question. The essential problem that Habermas attempted to answer concerned the conditions necessary for "rational, critical, and genuinely open discussion of public issues". Or, more simply, the social conditions required for Enlightenment ideas to be spread and discussed. His response was the formation in the late 17th century and 18th century of the "bourgeois public sphere", a "realm of communication marked by new arenas of debate, more open and accessible forms of urban public space and sociability, and an explosion of print culture".<sup>[40]</sup> More specifically, Habermas highlights three essential elements of the public sphere:

1. it was egalitarian;
2. it discussed the domain of "common concern";
3. argument was founded on reason.<sup>[41]</sup>



James Van Horn Melton provides a good summary of the values of this bourgeois public sphere: its members held reason to be supreme; everything was open to criticism (the public sphere is critical); and its participants opposed secrecy of all sorts.<sup>[42]</sup> This helps explain what Habermas meant by the domain of "common concern". Habermas uses the term to describe those areas of political/social knowledge and discussion that were previously the exclusive territory of the state and religious authorities, now open to critical examination by the public sphere.

Habermas credits the creation of the bourgeois public sphere to two long-term historical trends: the rise of the modern nation state and the rise of capitalism. The modern nation state in its consolidation of public power created by counterpoint a private realm of society independent of the state – allowing for the public sphere. Capitalism likewise increased society's autonomy and self-awareness, along with creating an increasing need for the exchange of information. As the nascent public sphere expanded, it embraced a large variety of institutions; the most commonly cited being coffee houses and cafés, salons and the literary public sphere, figuratively localized in the Republic of Letters.<sup>[43]</sup>

Dorinda Outram provides further description of the rise of the public sphere. The context of the rise of the public sphere was the economic and social change commonly grouped under the effects of the Industrial Revolution: "economic expansion, increasing urbanisation, rising population and improving communications in comparison to the stagnation of the previous century". Rising efficiency in production techniques and communication lowered the prices of consumer goods at the same time as it increased the amount and variety of goods available to consumers (including the literature essential to the public sphere). Meanwhile, the colonial experience (most European states had colonial Empires in the 18th century) began to expose European society to extremely heterogeneous cultures. Outram writes that the end result was the breaking down of "barriers between cultural systems, religious divides, gender differences and geographical areas". In short, the social context was set for the public sphere to come into existence.<sup>[44]</sup>

A reductionist view of the Habermasian model has been used as a springboard to showcase historical investigations into the development of the public sphere. There are many examples of noble and lower class participation in areas such as the coffeehouses and the freemasonic lodges, demonstrating that the bourgeois-era public sphere was enriched by cross-class influences. A rough depiction of the public sphere as independent and critical of the state is contradicted by the diverse cases of government-sponsored public institutions and government participation in debate, along with the cases of private individuals using public venues to promote the status quo.

### **Exclusivity of the public sphere**

The word "public" implies the highest level of inclusivity – the public sphere by definition should be open to all. However, as the analysis of many "public" institutions of the Enlightenment will show, this sphere was only public to relative degrees. Indeed, as Roger Chartier emphasizes, Enlightenment thinkers frequently contrasted their conception of the "public" with that of the people: Chartier cites Condorcet, who contrasted "opinion" with populace; Marmontel with "the opinion of men of letters" versus "the opinion of the multitude"; and d'Alembert, who contrasted the "truly enlightened public" with "the blind and noisy multitude".<sup>[45]</sup> As Mona Ozouf underlines, public opinion was defined in opposition to the opinion of the greater population. While the nature of public opinion during the Enlightenment is as difficult to define as it is today, it is nonetheless clear that the body that held it (i.e. the public sphere) was exclusive rather than inclusive. This observation will become more apparent during the descriptions of the institutions of the public sphere, most of which excluded both women and the lower classes.

## Social and cultural implications in music

Because of the focus on reason over superstition, the Enlightenment cultivated the arts.<sup>[46]</sup> Emphasis on learning, art and music became more widespread, especially with the growing middle class. Areas of study such as literature, philosophy, science, and the fine arts increasingly explored subject matter that the general public in addition to the previously more segregated professionals and patrons could relate to.<sup>[47]</sup>

As musicians depended more and more on public support, public concerts became increasingly popular and helped supplement performers and composers incomes. The concerts also helped them to reach a wider audience. Handel, for example, epitomized this with his highly public musical activities in London. He gained considerable fame there with performances of his operas and oratorios. The music of Handel and Mozart, with their Viennese Classical styles, are usually regarded as being the most in line with the Enlightenment ideals.<sup>[48]</sup>

Another important text that came about as a result of Enlightenment values was Charles Burney's *A General History of Music: From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, originally published in 1776. This text was a historical survey and an attempt to rationalize elements in music systematically over time.<sup>[49]</sup>

As the economy and the middle class expanded, there were an increasing number of amateur musicians. One manifestation of this involves women; this movement allowed women to become more involved with music on a social level. Though women were not yet in professional roles (except for singers), they contributed to the amateur performers scene, especially with keyboard music.<sup>[50]</sup>

The desire to explore, record and systematize knowledge had a meaningful impact on music publications. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique* (published 1767 in Geneva and 1768 in Paris) was a leading text in the late 18th century.<sup>[48]</sup> This widely-available dictionary gave short definitions of words like genius and taste, and was clearly influenced by the Enlightenment movement. Additionally, music publishers began to cater to amateur musicians, putting out music that they could understand and play. The majority of the works that were published were for keyboard, voice and keyboard, and chamber ensemble.<sup>[50]</sup> After these initial genres were popularized, from the mid-century on, amateur groups sang choral music, which then became a new trend for publishers to capitalize on. The increasing study of the fine arts, as well as access to amateur-friendly published works, led to more people becoming interested in reading and discussing music. Music magazines, reviews, and critical works which suited amateurs as well as connoisseurs began to surface.<sup>[50]</sup>

Although the ideals of the Enlightenment were rejected in postmodernism, they held fast in modernism and have extended well beyond the 18th century even to the present. Recently, musicologists have shown renewed interest in the ideas and consequences of the Enlightenment. For example, Rose Rosengard Subotnik's *Deconstructive Variations* (subtitled *Music and Reason in Western Society*) compares Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) using the Enlightenment and Romantic perspectives, and concludes that the work is "an ideal musical representation of the Enlightenment".<sup>[49]</sup>

## Dissemination of ideas

The philosophes spent a great deal of energy disseminating their ideas among educated men and women in cosmopolitan cities. They used many venues, some of them quite new.

## Schools and universities

In Germany and Scotland, the Enlightenment leaders were based in universities.<sup>[51]</sup> However, in general the universities and schools of France and most of Europe were bastions of traditionalism and were not hospitable to the Enlightenment. In France the major exception was the medical university at Montpellier.<sup>[52]</sup>

## Learned academies

The history of Academies in France during the Enlightenment begins with the Academy of Science, founded in 1666 in Paris. It was closely tied to the French state, acting as an extension of a government seriously lacking in scientists. It helped promote and organize new disciplines, and it trained new scientists. It also contributed to the enhancement of scientists' social status, considered them to be the "most useful of all citizens". Academies demonstrate the rising interest in science along with its increasing secularization, as evidenced by the small number of clerics who were members (13 percent).<sup>[53]</sup>

The presence of the French academies in the public sphere cannot be attributed to their membership; although the majority of their members were bourgeois, the exclusive institution was only open to elite Parisian scholars. They did perceive themselves to be "interpreters of the sciences for the people". Indeed, it was with this in mind that academicians took it upon themselves to disprove the popular pseudo-science of mesmerism.<sup>[54]</sup>

However, the strongest case for the French Academies being part of the public sphere comes the concours académiques (roughly translated as academic contests) they sponsored throughout France. As Jeremy L. Caradonna argues in a recent article in the *Annales*, "Prendre part au siècle des Lumières: Le concours académique et la culture intellectuelle au XVIIIe siècle", these academic contests were perhaps the most public of any institution during the Enlightenment.

*L'Académie française* revived a practice dating back to the Middle Ages when it revived public contests in the mid-17th century. The subject matter was generally religious and/or monarchical, and featured essays, poetry, and painting. By roughly 1725, however, this subject matter had radically expanded and diversified, including "royal propaganda, philosophical battles, and critical ruminations on the social and political institutions of the Old Regime." Controversial topics were not always avoided: Caradonna cites as examples the theories of Newton and Descartes, the slave trade, women's education, and justice in France.<sup>[55]</sup>

More importantly, the contests were open to all, and the enforced anonymity of each submission guaranteed that neither gender nor social rank would determine the judging. Indeed, although the "vast majority" of participants belonged to the wealthier strata of society ("the liberal arts, the clergy, the judiciary, and the medical profession"), there were some cases of the popular classes submitting essays, and even winning.<sup>[56]</sup>

Similarly, a significant number of women participated – and won – the competitions. Of a total of 2 300 prize competitions offered in France, women won 49 – perhaps a small number by modern standards, but very significant in an age in which most women did not have any academic training. Indeed, the majority of the winning entries were for poetry competitions, a genre commonly stressed in women's education.<sup>[57]</sup>

In England, the Royal Society of London also played a significant role in the public sphere and the spread of Enlightenment ideas. In particular, it played a large role in spreading Robert Boyle's experimental philosophy around Europe, and acted as a clearinghouse for intellectual correspondence and exchange.<sup>[58]</sup> As Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer have argued, Robert Boyle was "a founder of the experimental world in which scientists now live and operate". Boyle's method based knowledge on experimentation, which had to be witnessed to provide proper empirical legitimacy. This is where the Royal Society came into play: witnessing had to be a "collective act", and the Royal Society's assembly rooms were ideal locations for relatively public demonstrations.<sup>[59]</sup> However, not just any witness was considered to be credible; "Oxford professors were accounted more reliable witnesses than Oxfordshire peasants." Two factors were taken into account: a witness's knowledge in the area; and a witness's "moral constitution". In other words, only civil society were considered for Boyle's public.<sup>[60]</sup>

## The book industry

The increased consumption of reading materials of all sorts was one of the key features of the "social" Enlightenment. Developments in the Industrial Revolution allowed consumer goods to be produced in greater quantities at lower prices, encouraging the spread of books, pamphlets, newspapers and journals – "media of the transmission of ideas and attitudes". Commercial development likewise increased the demand for information, along with rising populations and increased urbanisation.<sup>[61]</sup> However, demand for reading material extended outside of the realm of the commercial, and outside the realm of the upper and middle classes, as evidenced by the *Bibliothèque Bleue*. Literacy rates are difficult to gauge, but Robert Darnton writes that, in France at least, the rates doubled over the course of the 18th century.<sup>[62]</sup>

Reading underwent serious changes in the 18th century. In particular, Rolf Engelsing has argued for the existence of a "reading revolution". Until 1750, reading was done "intensively: people tended to own a small number of books and read them repeatedly, often to small audience. After 1750, people began to read "extensively", finding as many books as they could, increasingly reading them alone.<sup>[63]</sup> On the other hand, as Jonathan Israel writes, Gabriel Naudé was already campaigning for the "universal" library in the mid-17th century. And if this was an ideal only realistic for state institutions and the very wealthy (and indeed, an ideal that was seldom achieved), there are records for extremely large private and state-run libraries throughout Europe in the 17th and 18th-centuries.<sup>[64]</sup>

Of course, the vast majority of the reading public could not afford to own a private library. And while most of the state-run "universal libraries" set up in the 17th and 18th centuries were open to the public, they were not the only sources of reading material.

On one end of the spectrum was the *Bibliothèque Bleue*, a collection of cheaply produced books published in Troyes, France. Intended for a largely rural and semi-literate audience these books included almanacs, retellings of medieval romances and condensed versions of popular novels, among other things. While historians, such as Roger Chartier and Robert Darnton, have argued against the Enlightenment's penetration into the lower classes, the *Bibliothèque Bleue*, at the very least, represents a desire to participate in Enlightenment sociability, whether or not this was actually achieved.<sup>[65]</sup>

Moving up the classes, a variety of institutions offered readers access to material without needing to buy anything. Libraries that lent out their material for a small price started to appear, and occasionally bookstores would offer a small lending library to their patrons. Coffee houses commonly offered books, journals and sometimes even popular novels to their customers. *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, two influential periodicals sold from 1709 to 1714, were closely associated with coffee house culture in London, being both read and produced in various establishments in the city.<sup>[66]</sup> Indeed, this is an example of the triple or even quadruple function of the coffee house: reading material was often obtained, read, discussed and even produced on the premises.<sup>[67]</sup>

As Darnton describes in *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*, it is extremely difficult to determine what people actually read during the Enlightenment. For example, examining the catalogs of private libraries not only gives an image skewed in favor of the classes wealthy enough to afford libraries, it also ignores censored works unlikely to be publicly acknowledged. For this reason, Darnton argues that a study of publishing would be much more fruitful for discerning reading habits.<sup>[68]</sup>

All across continental Europe, but in France especially, booksellers and publishers had to negotiate censorship laws of varying strictness. The *Encyclopédie*, for example, narrowly escaped seizure and had to be saved by Malesherbes, the man in charge of the French censure. Indeed, many publishing companies were conveniently located outside of France so as to avoid overzealous French censors. They would smuggle their merchandise – both pirated copies and censored works – across the border, where it would then be transported to clandestine booksellers or small-time peddlers.<sup>[69]</sup>

Darnton provides a detailed record of one clandestine bookseller's (one de Mauvelain) business in the town of Troyes. At the time, the town's population was 22,000. It had one masonic lodge and an "important" library, even though the literacy rate seems to have been less than 50 percent. Mauvelain's records give us a good representation

of what literate Frenchmen might have truly read, since the clandestine nature of his business provided a less restrictive product choice. The most popular category of books was political (319 copies ordered). This included five copies of D'Holbach's *Système social*, but around 300 libels and pamphlets. Readers were far more interested in sensationalist stories about criminals and political corruption than they were in political theory itself. The second most popular category, "general works" (those books "that did not have a dominant motif and that contained something to offend almost everyone in authority") likewise betrayed the high demand for generally low-brow subversive literature. These works, however, like the vast majority of work produced by Darnton's "grub street hacks", never became part of literary canon, and are largely forgotten today as a result.<sup>[70]</sup>

Nevertheless, the Enlightenment was not the exclusive domain of illegal literature, as evidenced by the healthy, and mostly legal, publishing industry that existed throughout Europe. "Mostly legal" because even established publishers and book sellers occasionally ran afoul of the law. The *Encyclopédie*, for example, condemned not only by the King but also by Clement XII, nevertheless found its way into print with the help of the aforementioned Malesherbes and creative use of French censorship law.<sup>[71]</sup>

But many works were sold without running into any legal trouble at all. Borrowing records from libraries in England, Germany and North America indicate that more than 70 percent of books borrowed were novels; that less than 1 percent of the books were of a religious nature supports a general trend of declining religiosity.<sup>[72]</sup>

## Natural history

A genre that greatly rose in importance was that of scientific literature. Natural history in particular became increasingly popular among the upper classes. Works of natural history include René-Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur's *Histoire naturelle des insectes* and Jacques Gautier d'Agoty's *La Myologie complète, ou description de tous les muscles du corps humain* (1746). However, as François-Alexandre Aubert de La Chesnaye des Bois's *Dictionnaire de la Noblesse* (1770) indicates, natural history was very often a political affair. As E. C. Spary writes, the classifications used by naturalists "slipped between the natural world and the social ... to establish not only the expertise of the naturalists over the natural, but also the dominance of the natural over the social".<sup>[73]</sup> From this basis, naturalists could then develop their own social ideals based on their scientific works.<sup>[74]</sup>

The target audience of natural history was French polite society, evidenced more by the specific discourse of the genre than by the generally high prices of its works. Naturalists catered to polite society's desire for erudition – many texts had an explicit instructive purpose. But the idea of taste (*le goût*) was the real social indicator: to truly be able to categorize nature, one had to have the proper taste, an ability of discretion shared by all members of polite society. In this way natural history spread many of the scientific development of the time, but also provided a new source of legitimacy for the dominant class.<sup>[75]</sup>

## Scientific and literary journals

The many scientific and literary journals (predominantly composed of book reviews) that were published during this time are also evidence of the intellectual side of the Enlightenment. In fact, Jonathan Israel argues that the learned journals, from the 1680s onwards, influenced European intellectual culture to a greater degree than any other "cultural innovation".<sup>[76]</sup>

The first journal appeared in 1665– the Parisian *Journal des Scavants* – but it was not until 1682 that periodicals began to be more widely produced. French and Latin were the dominant languages of publication, but there was also a steady demand for material in German and Dutch. There was generally low demand for English publications on the Continent, which was echoed by England's similar lack of desire for French works. Languages commanding less of an international market – such as Danish, Spanish and Portuguese – found journal success more difficult, and more often than not, a more international language was used instead. Although German did have an international quality to it, it was French that slowly took over Latin's status as the *lingua franca* of learned circles. This in turn gave precedence to the publishing industry in Holland, where the vast majority of these French language periodicals were

produced.<sup>[77]</sup>

Israel divides the journals' intellectual importance into four elements. First was their role in shifting the attention of the "cultivated public" away from "established authorities" to "what was new, innovative, or challenging." Secondly, they did much to promote the "'enlightened' ideals of toleration and intellectual objectivity." Thirdly, the journals were an implicit critique of existing notions of universal truth monopolized by monarchies, parliaments, and religious authorities. The journals suggested a new source of knowledge – through science and reason – that undermined these sources of authority. And finally, they advanced the "Christian Enlightenment", a notion of Enlightenment that, despite its advocacy for new knowledge sources, upheld "the legitimacy of God-ordained authority."<sup>[78]</sup>

## The Republic of Letters

The term "Republic of Letters" was coined by Pierre Bayle in 1664, in his journal *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*. Towards the end of the 18th century, the editor of *Histoire de la République des Lettres en France*, a literary survey, described the Republic of Letters as being:

In the midst of all the governments that decide the fate of men; in the bosom of so many states, the majority of them despotic ... there exists a certain realm which holds sway only over the mind ... that we honour with the name Republic, because it preserves a measure of independence, and because it is almost its essence to be free. It is the realm of talent and of thought.<sup>[72]</sup>

The ideal of the Republic of Letters was the sum of a number of Enlightenment ideals: an egalitarian realm governed by knowledge that could act across political boundaries and rival state power.<sup>[72]</sup> It was a forum that supported "free public examination of questions regarding religion or legislation".<sup>[79]</sup> Immanuel Kant considered written communication essential to his conception of the public sphere; once everyone was a part of the "reading public", then society could be said to be enlightened.<sup>[80]</sup> The people who participated in the Republic of Letters, such as Diderot and Voltaire, are frequently known today as important Enlightenment figures. Indeed, the men who wrote Diderot's *Encyclopédie* arguably formed a microcosm of the larger "republic".<sup>[81]</sup>

Dena Goodman has argued that women played a major role in French salons – *salonnières* to complement the male *philosophes*. Discursively, she bases the Republic of Letters in polite conversation and letter writing; its principal social institution was the salon.<sup>[82]</sup>

Robert Darnton's *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* was the first major historical work to critique this ideal model.<sup>[83]</sup> He argues that, by the mid-18th century, the established men of letters (*gens de lettres*) had fused with the elites (*les grands*) of French society. Consider the definition of "Goût" (taste) as written by Voltaire in the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (taken from Darnton): "Taste is like philosophy. It belongs to a very small number of privileged souls ... It is unknown in bourgeois families, where one is constantly occupied with the care of one's fortune". In the words of Darnton, Voltaire "thought that the Enlightenment should begin with the *grands*".<sup>[84]</sup> The historian cites similar opinions from d'Alembert and Louis Sébastien Mercier.<sup>[85]</sup>

## Grub Street

Darnton argues that the result of this "fusion of *gens de lettres* and *grands*" was the creation of an oppositional literary sphere, Grub Street, the domain of a "multitude of versifiers and would-be authors".<sup>[86]</sup> These men, lured by the glory of the Republic of Letters, came to Paris to become authors, only to discover that their dreams of literary success were little more than chimeras. The literary market simply could not support large numbers of writers, who, in any case, were very poorly remunerated by the publishing-bookselling guilds.<sup>[87]</sup> The writers of Grub Street, the Grub Street Hacks, were left feeling extremely bitter about the relative success of their literary cousins, the men of letters.<sup>[88]</sup>

This bitterness and hatred found an outlet in the literature the Grub Street Hacks produced, typified by the *libelle*. Written mostly in the form of pamphlets, the *libelles* "slandered the court, the Church, the aristocracy, the academies,

the salons, everything elevated and respectable, including the monarchy itself".<sup>[89]</sup> Darnton designates *Le Gazetier cuirassé* by Charles Théveneau de Morande as the prototype of the genre. Consider:

The devout wife of a certain Maréchal de France (who suffers from an imaginary lung disease), finding a husband of that species too delicate, considers it her religious duty to spare him and so condemns herself to the crude caresses of her butler, who would still be a lackey if he hadn't proven himself so robust.

or,

The public is warned that an epidemic disease is raging among the girls of the Opera, that it has begun to reach the ladies of the court, and that it has even been communicated to their lackeys. This disease elongates the face, destroys the complexion, reduces the weight, and causes horrible ravages where it becomes situated. There are ladies without teeth, others without eyebrows, and some are completely paralyzed.<sup>[90]</sup>

It was Grub Street literature that was most read by the reading public during the Enlightenment.<sup>[91]</sup> More importantly, Darnton argues, the Grub Street hacks inherited the "revolutionary spirit" once displayed by the *philosophes*, and paved the way for the Revolution by desacralizing figures of political, moral and religious authority in France.<sup>[92]</sup>

## Coffee houses

The first English coffeehouse opened in Oxford in 1650. Brian Cowan argues that Oxford coffeehouses developed into "penny universities", offering a locus of learning that was less formal than structured institutions. These penny universities occupied a significant position in Oxford academic life, as they were frequented by virtuosi, who conducted their research on the premises. According to Cowan, "the coffeehouse was a place for like-minded scholars to congregate, to read, as well as learn from and to debate with each other, but was emphatically not a university institution, and the discourse there was of a far different order than any university tutorial."<sup>[93]</sup>

Francesco Procopio dei Coltelli – François Procope – established the first café in Paris, the Café Procope, in 1686; by the 1720s there were around 400 cafés in the city. The Café Procope in particular became a centre of Enlightenment, welcoming such celebrities as Voltaire and Rousseau. The Café Procope was where Diderot and D'Alembert decided to create the *Encyclopédie*.<sup>[94]</sup> Robert Darnton in particular has studied Parisian café conversation in great detail. He describes how the cafés were one of the various "nerve centers" for *bruits publics*, public noise or rumour. These *bruits* were allegedly a much better source of information than were the actual newspapers available at the time.<sup>[95]</sup>

## Debating societies

[96]

The Debating Societies that rapidly came into existence in 1780 London present an almost perfect example of the public sphere during the Enlightenment. Donna T Andrew provides four separate origins:

- Clubs of fifty or more men who, at the beginning of the 18th century, met in pubs to discuss religious issues and affairs of state.
- Mooting clubs, set up by law students to practice rhetoric.
- Spouting clubs, established to help actors train for theatrical roles.
- John Henley's Oratory, which mixed outrageous sermons with even more absurd questions, like "Whether Scotland be anywhere in the world?"<sup>[97]</sup>



An example of a French Salon

In any event, popular debating societies began, in the late 1770s, to move into more "genteel", or respectable rooms, a change which helped establish a new standard of sociability: "order, decency, and liberality", in the words of the

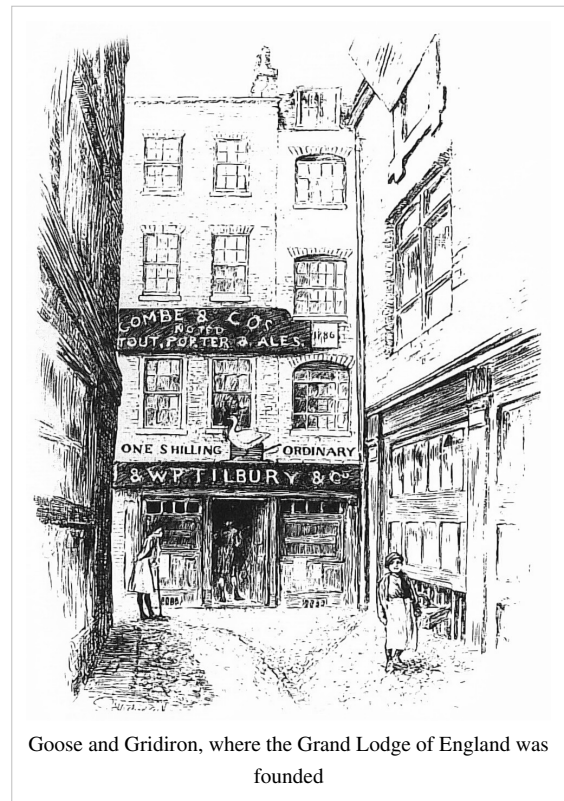
Religious Society of Old Portugal Street.<sup>[98]</sup> Respectability was also encouraged by the higher admissions prices (ranging from 6d. to 3s.), which also contributed to the upkeep of the newer establishments. The backdrop to these developments was what Andrew calls "an explosion of interest in the theory and practice of public elocution". The debating societies were commercial enterprises that responded to this demand, sometimes very successfully. Indeed, some societies welcomed from 800 to 1200 spectators a night.<sup>[99]</sup> These societies discussed an extremely wide range of topics. One broad area was women: societies debated over "male and female qualities", courtship, marriage, and the role of women in the public sphere. Societies also discussed political issues, varying from recent events to "the nature and limits of political authority", and the nature of suffrage. Debates on religion rounded out the subject matter. It is important to note, however, that the critical subject matter of these debates did not necessarily translate into opposition to the government. In other words, the results of the debate quite frequently upheld the status quo.<sup>[100]</sup>

From a historical standpoint, one of the most important features of the debating society was their openness to the public; women attended and even participated in almost every debating society, which were likewise open to all classes providing they could pay the entrance fee. Once inside, spectators were able to participate in a largely egalitarian form of sociability that helped spread "Enlightening ideas".<sup>[101]</sup>

### Freemasonic lodges

Historians have recently been debating the extent to which Freemasonry was part of, or even a main factor in the Enlightenment. On the one hand, historians agree that the famous leaders of the Enlightenment included Freemasons such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Pope, Horace Walpole, Sir Robert Walpole, Mozart, Goethe, Frederick the Great, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington.<sup>[102]</sup> On the other side, historians such as Robert Roswell Palmer concluded that even in France, Masons were politically "innocuous if not ridiculous" and did not act as a group.<sup>[103]</sup> American historians, while noting that Benjamin Franklin and George Washington were indeed active Masons, have downplayed the importance of Freemasonry in the era of the American Revolution because the movement was non-political and included both Patriots and their enemy the Loyalists.<sup>[104]</sup> Regarding the movement's influence on the European continent, German historian Reinhart Koselleck claimed that "On the Continent there were two social structures that left a decisive imprint on the Age of Enlightenment: the Republic of Letters and the Masonic lodges."<sup>[105]</sup> while professor at University of Glasgow Thomas Munck argues that "although the Masons did promote international and cross-social contacts which were essentially non-religious and broadly in agreement with enlightened values, they can hardly be described as a major radical or reformist network in their own right."<sup>[106]</sup>

Freemasonic lodges originated from English and Scottish stonemasonic guilds in the 17th century.<sup>[107]</sup> In the 18th century, they expanded into an extremely widespread collection of interconnected (to varying degrees) men's, and occasionally women's, associations which Margaret Jacob contends had their own mythologies and special codes of conduct - including a communal understanding of liberty and equality inherited from guild sociability - "liberty, fraternity, and equality"<sup>[108]</sup> The remarkable similarity between these values, which were generally common in



Goose and Gridiron, where the Grand Lodge of England was founded



Britain as on the Continent, and the French Revolutionary slogan of "Liberté, égalité, fraternité" spawned many conspiracy theories. Notably, Abbé Barruel traced the origins of the Jacobins – and hence the Revolution – to the French freemasons.

Freemasonry was officially established on the continent of Europe in 1734, when a lodge was set up in The Hague, although the first "fully formed lodge" appears to have met in 1721 in Rotterdam. Similarly, there are records of a Parisian lodge meeting in 1725 or 1726.<sup>[109]</sup> As Daniel Roche writes, freemasonry was particularly prevalent in France – by 1789, there were perhaps as many as 100,000 French Masons, making Freemasonry the most popular of all Enlightenment associations.<sup>[110]</sup> Freemasonry does not appear to have been confined to Western Europe, however, as Margaret Jacob writes of lodges in Saxony in 1729 and in Russia in 1731.<sup>[111]</sup>

Conspiracy theories aside, it is likely that masonic lodges had an effect on society as a whole. Jacob argues that they "reconstituted the polity and established a constitutional form of self-government, complete with constitutions and laws, elections and representatives". In other words, the micro-society set up within the lodges constituted a normative model for society as a whole. This was especially true on the Continent: when the first lodges began to appear in the 1730s, their embodiment of British values was often seen as threatening by state authorities. For example, the Parisian lodge that met in the mid 1720s was composed of English Jacobite exiles.<sup>[112]</sup>

Furthermore, freemasons all across Europe made reference to the Enlightenment in general in the 18th century. In French lodges, for example, the line "As the means to be enlightened I search for the enlightened" was a part of their initiation rites. British lodges assigned themselves the duty to "initiate the unenlightened". This did not necessarily link lodges to the irreligious, but neither did this exclude them from the occasional heresy. In fact, many lodges praised the Grand Architect, the masonic terminology for the divine being who created a scientifically ordered universe.<sup>[113]</sup>

On the other hand, Daniel Roche contests freemasonry's claims for egalitarianism, writing that "the real equality of the lodges was elitist", only attracting men of similar social backgrounds.<sup>[114]</sup> This lack of real equality was made explicit by the constitution of the Lausanne Switzerland lodge (1741):

The order of freemasons is a society of confraternity and equality, and to this end is represented under the emblem of a level ... a brother renders to another brother the honour and deference that is justly due him in proportion to his rank in the civil society.<sup>[115]</sup>

Elitism was beneficial for some members of society. The presence, for example, of noble women in the French "lodges of adoption" that formed in the 1780s was largely due to the close ties shared between these lodges and aristocratic society.<sup>[116]</sup> <sup>[117]</sup>

## A historiographical overview

Enlightenment historiography began in the period itself, from what "Enlightenment figures" said about their work. A dominant element was the intellectual angle they took. D'Alembert's *Preliminary Discourse of l'Encyclopédie* provides a history of the Enlightenment which comprises a chronological list of developments in the realm of knowledge – of which the *Encyclopédie* forms the pinnacle.<sup>[118]</sup> A more philosophical example of this was the 1783 essay contest (in itself an activity typical of the Enlightenment) announced by the Berlin newspaper *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, which asked that very question: "What is Enlightenment?" Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn was among those who responded, referring to Enlightenment as a process by which man was educated in the use of reason (*Jerusalem*, 1783).<sup>[119]</sup> Immanuel Kant also wrote a response, referring to Enlightenment as "man's release from his self-incurred tutelage", tutelage being "man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another".<sup>[120]</sup> This intellectual model of interpretation has been adopted by many historians since the 18th century, and is perhaps the most commonly used interpretation today.

Dorinda Outram provides a good example of a standard, intellectual definition of the Enlightenment:

Enlightenment was a desire for human affairs to be guided by rationality rather than by faith, superstition, or revelation; a belief in the power of human reason to change society and liberate the individual from the restraints of custom or arbitrary authority; all backed up by a world view increasingly validated by science rather than by religion or tradition.

Like the French Revolution, the Enlightenment has long been hailed as the foundation of modern Western political and intellectual culture.<sup>[121]</sup> It has been frequently linked to the French Revolution of 1789. However, as Roger Chartier points out, it was perhaps the Revolution that "invented the Enlightenment by attempting to root its legitimacy in a corpus of texts and founding authors reconciled and united ... by their preparation of a rupture with the old world".<sup>[122]</sup> In other words, the revolutionaries elevated to heroic status those philosophers, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, who could be used to justify their radical break with the Ancien Régime. In any case, two 19th-century historians of the Enlightenment, Hippolyte Taine and Alexis de Tocqueville, did much to solidify this link of Enlightenment causing revolution and the intellectual perception of the Enlightenment itself.

In his *l Régime* (1876), Hippolyte Taine traced the roots of the French Revolution back to French Classicism. However, this was not without the help of the scientific view of the world [of the Enlightenment], which wore down the "monarchical and religious dogma of the old regime".<sup>[123]</sup> In other words then, Taine was only interested in the Enlightenment insofar as it advanced scientific discourse and transmitted what he perceived to be the intellectual legacy of French classicism.

Alexis de Tocqueville painted a more elaborate picture of the Enlightenment in *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (1850). For de Tocqueville, the Revolution was the inevitable result of the radical opposition created in the 18th century between the monarchy and the men of letters of the Enlightenment. These men of letters constituted a sort of "substitute aristocracy that was both all-powerful and without real power". This illusory power came from the rise of "public opinion", born when absolutist centralization removed the nobility and the bourgeoisie from the political sphere. The "literary politics" that resulted promoted a discourse of equality and was hence in fundamental opposition to the monarchical regime.<sup>[124]</sup>

From a historiographical point of view, de Tocqueville presents an interesting case. He was primarily concerned with the workings of political power under the Ancien Régime and the philosophical principles of the men of letters. However, there is a distinctly social quality to his analysis. In the words of Chartier, de Tocqueville "clearly designates ... the cultural effects of transformation in the forms of the exercise of power".<sup>[125]</sup> Nevertheless, for a serious cultural approach, one has to wait another century for the work of historians such as Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie, 1775–1800* (1979).

In the meantime, though, intellectual history remained the dominant historiographical trend. The German scholar Ernst Cassirer is typical, writing in his *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (1932/1951) that the Enlightenment was "a part and a special phase of that whole intellectual development through which modern philosophic thought gained its characteristic self-confidence and self-consciousness". Borrowing from Kant, Cassirer states that Enlightenment is the process by which the spirit "achieves clarity and depth in its understanding of its own nature and destiny, and of its own fundamental character and mission".<sup>[126]</sup> In short, the Enlightenment was a series of philosophical, scientific and otherwise intellectual developments that took place mostly in the 18th century – the birthplace of intellectual modernity.

## Recent work

Only in the 1970s did interpretation of the Enlightenment allow for a more heterogeneous and even extra-European vision. A. Owen Aldridge demonstrated how Enlightenment ideas spread to Spanish colonies and how they interacted with indigenous cultures, while Franco Venturi explored how the Enlightenment took place in normally unstudied areas – Italy, Greece, the Balkans, Poland, Hungary, and Russia.<sup>[127]</sup>

Robert Darnton's cultural approach launched a new dimension of studies. He said, :

"Perhaps the Enlightenment was a more down-to-earth affair than the rarefied climate of opinion described by textbook writers, and we should question the overly highbrow, overly metaphysical view of intellectual life in the eighteenth century."<sup>[128]</sup>

Darnton examines the underbelly of the French book industry in the 18th century, examining the world of book smuggling and the lives of those writers (the "Grub Street Hacks") who never met the success of their *philosophe* cousins. In short, rather than concerning himself with Enlightenment canon, Darnton studies "what Frenchmen wanted to read", and who wrote, published and distributed it.<sup>[129]</sup> Similarly, in *The Business of Enlightenment. A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie 1775–1800*, Darnton states that there is no need to further study the encyclopædia itself, as "the book has been analyzed and anthologized dozen of times: to recapitulate all the studies of its intellectual content would be redundant".<sup>[130]</sup> He instead, as the title of the book suggests, examines the social conditions that brought about the production of the *Encyclopédie*. This is representative of the social interpretation as a whole – an examination of the social conditions that brought about Enlightenment ideas rather than a study of the ideas themselves.

The work of German philosopher Jürgen Habermas was central to this emerging social interpretation; his seminal work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (published under the title *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* in 1962) was translated into English in 1989. The book outlines the creation of the "bourgeois public sphere" in 18th century Europe. Essentially, this public sphere describes the new venues and modes of communication allowing for rational exchange that appeared in the 18th century. Habermas argued that the public sphere was bourgeois, egalitarian, rational, and independent from the state, making it the ideal venue for intellectuals to critically examine contemporary politics and society, away from the interference of established authority.

Habermas's work, though influential, has come under criticism on all fronts. While the public sphere is generally an integral component of social interpretations of the Enlightenment, numerous historians have brought into question whether the public sphere was bourgeois, oppositional to the state, independent from the state, or egalitarian.<sup>[131]</sup>

These historiographical developments have done much to open up the study of Enlightenment to a multiplicity of interpretations. In *A Social History of Truth* (1994), for example, Steven Shapin makes the largely sociological argument that, in 17th-century England, the mode of sociability known as civility became the primary discourse of truth; for a statement to have the potential to be considered true, it had to be expressed according to the rules of civil society.

Feminist interpretations have also appeared, with Dena Goodman being one notable example. In *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (1994), Goodman argues that many women in fact played an essential part in the French Enlightenment, due to the role they played as *salonnières* in Parisians salons. These salons "became the civil working spaces of the project of Enlightenment" and women, as *salonnières*, were "the legitimate governors of [the] potentially unruly discourse" that took place within.<sup>[132]</sup> On the other hand, Carla Hesse, in *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (2001), argues that "female participation in the public cultural life of the Old Regime was ... relatively marginal".<sup>[133]</sup> It was instead the French Revolution, by destroying the old cultural and economic restraints of patronage and corporatism (guilds), that opened French society to female participation, particularly in the literary sphere.

All this is not to say that intellectual interpretations no longer exist. Jonathan Israel, for example, in *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670–1752* (2006), constructs an argument that is

primarily intellectual in scope. Like many historians before him, he sets the Enlightenment within the context of the French Revolution to follow. Israel argues that only an intellectual interpretation can adequately explain the radical break with Ancien Régime society.<sup>[134] [135]</sup>

## Important intellectuals

- Thomas Abbt (1738–1766) German. Author of "Vom Tode für's Vaterland" (On dying for one's nation).
- Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717–1783) French. Mathematician and physicist, one of the editors of Encyclopédie.
- Francis Bacon (1561–1626) English philosopher who started the revolution in empirical thought that characterized much of the enlightenment.<sup>[136]</sup>
- Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) French. Literary critic known for his newsletter "Nouvelles de la république des lettres" and his powerful *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, and one of the earliest influences on the Enlightenment thinkers to advocate tolerance between the difference religious beliefs.
- Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794) Italian. criminal law reformer, best known for his treatise *On Crimes and Punishments* (1764).
- Balthasar Bekker (1634–1698) Dutch, a key figure in the Early Enlightenment. In his book *De Philosophia Cartesiana* (1668) Bekker argued that theology and philosophy each had their separate terrain and that Nature can no more be explained from Scripture than can theological truth be deduced from Nature.
- George Berkeley (1685–1753) Irish. Philosopher and mathematician famous for developing the theory of subjective idealism.
- Justus Henning Boehmer (1674–1749), German ecclesiastical jurist, one of the first reformer of the church law and the civil law which was basis for further reforms and maintained until the 20th century.
- James Boswell (1740–1795) Scottish. Biographer of Samuel Johnson, helped established the norms for writing biography in general.
- G.L. Buffon (1707–1788) French biologist. Author of *L'Histoire Naturelle* considered Natural Selection and the similarities between humans and apes.
- Edmund Burke (1729–1797) Irish. Parliamentarian and political philosopher, best known for pragmatism, considered important to both Enlightenment and conservative thinking.
- Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757)
- Dimitrie Cantemir (1673–1723) Romanian. Philosopher, historian, composer, musicologist, linguist, ethnographer, and geographer.
- Francisco Javier Clavijero (1731–1787) Mexican. Historian, best known for his *Antique History of Mexico*.
- Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794) French. Philosopher, mathematician, and early political scientist who devised the concept of a Condorcet method.
- James Cook (1728–1779) – British naval captain. Explored much of the Pacific including New Zealand, Australia, New Caledonia and Hawaii.
- Ekaterina Dashkova (1743–1810) Russian. Director of the Imperial Academy of Arts and Sciences (known now as the Russian Academy of Sciences).
- Denis Diderot (1713–1784) French. Founder of the Encyclopédie, speculated on free will and attachment to material objects, contributed to the theory of literature.
- French Encyclopédistes (1700s)



Voltaire at age 70

- Denis Fonvizin (1744–1792) Russian. Writer and playwright.
- José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (1766–1840) Paraguayan. First president of Paraguay. Introduced radical political ideas never-before seen in South America to Paraguay, making his country prosperous and more secure than any other in South-America.
- Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) American. Statesman, scientist, political philosopher, author. As a philosopher known for his writings on nationality, economic matters, aphorisms published in Poor Richard's Almanac and polemics in favor of American Independence. Involved with writing the United States Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of 1787.
- Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) English. Historian best known for his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) is closely identified with Enlightenment values, progressing from *Sturm und Drang* ("Storm and Stress"); leader in Weimar Classicism.
- Olympe de Gouges (1748–1793), French playwright and activist who championed feminist politics.
- Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804) American. Economist, political theorist and politician. A major protagonist for the Constitution of the United States, and the single greatest contributor to the Federalist Papers, advocating for the constitution's ratification through detailed examinations of its construction, philosophical and moral basis, and intent.
- Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) Austrian composer who revolutionized the symphonic form.
- Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715–1771)
- Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) German. Theologian and linguist. Proposed that language determines thought, introduced concepts of ethnic study and nationalism, influential on later Romantic thinkers. Early supporter of democracy and republican self rule.
- Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) English philosopher, who wrote *Leviathan*, a key text in political philosophy. While Hobbes justifies absolute monarchy, this work is the first to posit that the temporal power of a monarch comes about, not because God has ordained that he be monarch, but because his subjects have freely yielded their own power and freedom to him - in other words, Hobbes replaces the divine right of kings with an early formulation of the social contract. Hobbes' work was condemned by reformers for its defense of absolutism, and by traditionalists for its claim that the power of government derives from the power of its subjects rather than the will of God.
- Baron d'Holbach (1723–1789) French. Author, encyclopaedist and Europe's first outspoken atheist. Roused much controversy over his criticism of religion as a whole in his work *The System of Nature*.
- Robert Hooke (1635–1703) English, probably the leading experimenter of his age, Curator of Experiments for the Royal Society. Performed the work which quantified such concepts as Boyle's Law and the inverse-square nature of gravitation, father of the science of microscopy.
- David Hume (1711–1776) Scottish. Historian, philosopher and economist. Best known for his empiricism and rational skepticism, advanced doctrines of naturalism and material causes. Influenced Kant and Adam Smith.
- Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) German. Philosopher and physicist. Established critical philosophy on a systematic basis, proposed a material theory for the origin of the solar system, wrote on ethics and morals. Prescribed a politics of Enlightenment in *What is Enlightenment?* (1784). Influenced by Hume and Isaac Newton. Important figure in German Idealism, and important to the work of Fichte and Hegel.
- Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) American. Statesman, political philosopher, educator. As a philosopher best known for the United States Declaration of Independence (1776), especially "All men are created equal," and his support of democracy in theory and practice. A polymath, he promoted higher education as a way to uplift the entire nation .
- Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos (1744–1811), Main figure of the Spanish Enlightenment. Preeminent statesman.
- Hugo Kołłątaj (1750–1812) Polish. He was active in the Commission for National Education and the Society for Elementary Textbooks, and reformed the Kraków Academy, of which he was rector in 1783–86. He co-authored the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's Constitution of May 3, 1791, and founded the Assembly of Friends of the

- Government Constitution to assist in the document's implementation.
- Ignacy Krasicki (1735–1801): Polish. Leading poet of the Polish Enlightenment.
  - Antoine Lavoisier (1743–1794) French; a founder of modern chemistry; executed in the French Revolution for his politics
  - Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) German philosopher & mathematician; rival of Newton.
  - Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) German. Dramatist, critic, political philosopher. Created theatre in the German language
  - Carl von Linné (Carl Linnaeus) (1707–1778) Swedish botanist, physician, and zoologist, who laid the foundations for the modern scheme of binomial nomenclature. He is known as the father of modern taxonomy
  - John Locke (1632–1704) English Philosopher. Important empiricist who expanded and extended the work of Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes. Seminal thinker in the realm of the relationship between the state and the individual, the contractual basis of the state and the rule of law. Argued for personal liberty emphasizing the rights of property.
  - Mikhail Lomonosov (1711–1765) Russian. Polymath, scientist and writer, who made important contributions to literature, education, and science.
  - James Madison (1751–1836) American. Statesman and political philosopher. Played a key role in the writing of the United States Constitution and providing a theoretical justification for it in his contributions to the Federalist Papers; author of the American Bill of Rights.
  - Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) German. Philosopher of Jewish Enlightenment in Prussia (Haskalah), honoured by his friend Lessing in his drama as *Nathan the Wise*.
  - James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714–1799) Scottish. Philosopher, jurist, pre-evolutionary thinker and contributor to linguistic evolution. See Scottish Enlightenment
  - Josef Vratislav Monse (1733–1793) Czech. Professor of Law at University of Olomouc, leading figure of Enlightenment in the Habsburg Monarchy
  - Benito Jerónimo Feijóo y Montenegro (1676–1764) Spanish, was the most prominent promoter of the critical empiricist attitude at the dawn of the Spanish Enlightenment. See also the Spanish Martín Sarmiento (1695–1772)
  - Montesquieu (1689–1755) French political thinker. He is famous for his articulation of the theory of separation of powers, taken for granted in modern discussions of government and implemented in many constitutions all over the world. Political scientist, Donald Lutz, found that Montesquieu was the most frequently quoted authority on government in colonial America.<sup>[137]</sup>
  - Leandro Fernández de Moratín (1760–1828) Spanish. Dramatist and translator, support of republicanism and free thinking. Transitional figure to Romanticism.
  - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) Austrian. A leading composer of the era.
  - José Celestino Mutis (1755–1808), Spanish botanist; lead the first botanic expeditions to South America, and built a major collection of plants.
  - Nikolay Novikov (1744–1818) Russian. Philanthropist and journalist who sought to raise the culture of Russian readers and publicly argued with the Empress. See Russian Enlightenment.
  - Zaharije Orfelin (1726–1785) Serbian. Polymath-poet, writer, historian, translator, engraver, editor, publisher, etc.
  - Dositej Obradović (1739–1811) Serbian. Writer, linguist and influential proponent of Serbian cultural nationalism.
  - Thomas Paine (1737–1809) English/American pamphleteer, most famous for *Common Sense* (1776) calling for American independence as the most rational solution
  - William Paley (1743–1805) English theologian known for his exposition of the teleological argument and rational religion.
  - Marquis of Pombal (1699–1782) Portuguese statesman notable for his swift and competent leadership in the aftermath of the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. He also implemented sweeping economic policies to regulate commercial activity and standardize quality throughout the country.
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- Stanisław August Poniatowski (1732–98), the last king of independent Poland, a leading light of the Enlightenment in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and co-author of one of the world's first modern constitutions, the Constitution of May 3, 1791.
- François Quesnay (1694–1774) French economist of the Physiocratic school. \* Alexander Radishchev (1749–1802) Russian. Writer and philosopher. He brought the tradition of radicalism in Russian literature to prominence.
- Thomas Reid (1710–1796) Scottish. Philosopher who developed Common Sense Realism.
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) Swiss political philosopher; influenced many Enlightenment figures but did not himself believe in primacy of reason and is closer to Romanticism.
- Adam Smith (1723–1790) Scottish economist and philosopher. He wrote *The Wealth of Nations*, in which he argued that wealth was not money in itself, but wealth was derived from the added value in manufactured items produced by both invested capital and labour. He is sometimes considered to be the founding father of the laissez-faire economic theory, but in fact argues for some degree of government control in order to maintain equity. Just prior to this he wrote *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, explaining how it is humans function and interact through what he calls sympathy, setting up important context for *The Wealth of Nations*.
- Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) Dutch philosopher who helped lay the groundwork for the 18th-century Enlightenment.
- Alexander Sumarokov (1717–1777) Russian. Poet and playwright who created classical theatre in Russia
- Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) Natural philosopher and theologian whose search for the operation of the soul in the body led him to construct a detailed metaphysical model for spiritual-natural causation.
- Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet) (1694–1778) French. Highly influential writer, historian and philosopher. He promoted Newtonianism and denounced organized religion as pernicious.
- Adam Weishaupt (1748–1830) German who founded the Order of the Illuminati.
- Christian Wolff (1679–1754) German philosopher.
- Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) British writer, and pioneer feminist.

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## Science in the Age of Enlightenment

The scientific history of the Age of Enlightenment traces developments in science and technology during the Age of Reason, when Enlightenment ideas and ideals were being disseminated across Europe and North America. Generally, the period spans from the final days of the 16th and 17th-century Scientific revolution until roughly the 19th century, after the French Revolution (1789) and the Napoleonic era (1799–1815). The scientific revolution saw the creation of the first scientific societies, the rise of Copernicanism, and the displacement of Aristotelian natural philosophy and Galen's ancient medical doctrine. By the 18th century, scientific authority began to displace religious authority, and the disciplines of alchemy and astrology lost scientific credibility.

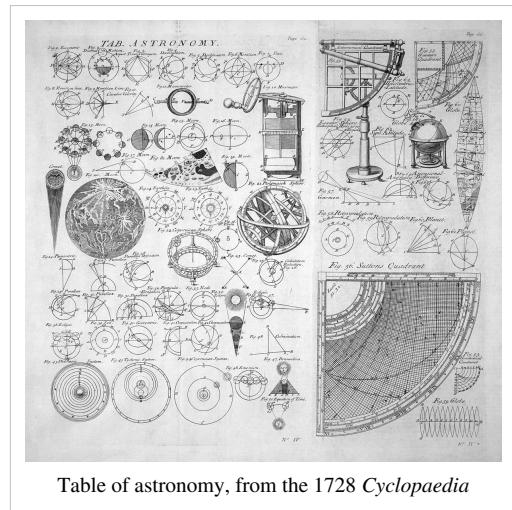


Table of astronomy, from the 1728 *Cyclopaedia*

While the Enlightenment cannot be pigeonholed into a specific doctrine or set of dogmas, science came to play a leading role in Enlightenment discourse and thought. Many Enlightenment writers and thinkers had backgrounds in the sciences and associated scientific advancement with the overthrow of religion and traditional authority in favour of the development of free speech and thought. Broadly speaking, Enlightenment science greatly valued empiricism and rational thought, and was embedded with the Enlightenment ideal of advancement and progress. As with most Enlightenment views, the benefits of science were not seen universally; Jean-Jacques Rousseau criticized the sciences for distancing man from nature and not operating to make people happier.<sup>[1]</sup>

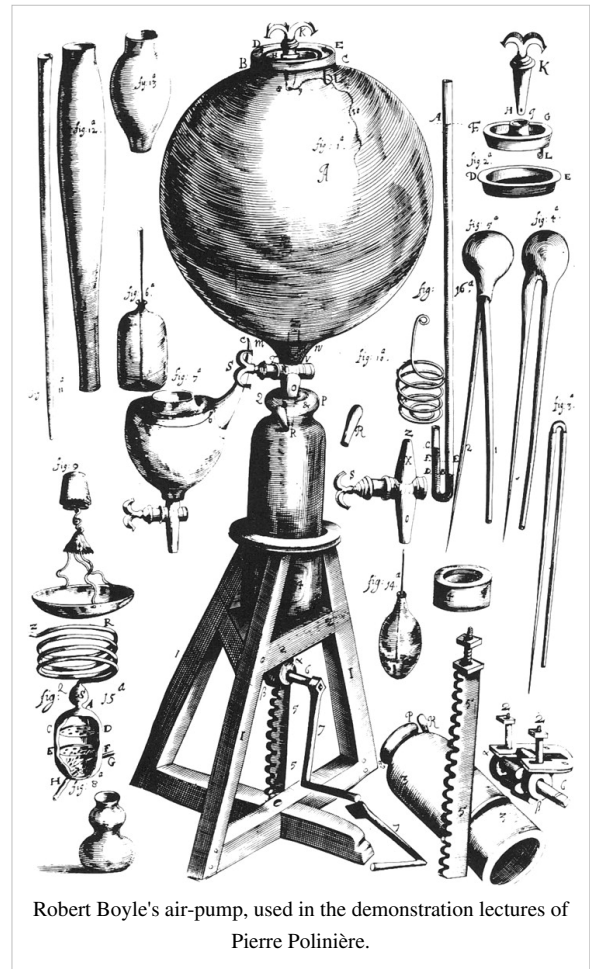
Science during the Enlightenment was dominated by scientific societies and academies, which had largely replaced universities as centres of scientific research and development. Societies and academies were also the backbone of the maturation of the scientific profession. Another important development was the popularization of science among an increasingly literate population. Philosophes introduced the public to many scientific theories, most notably through the *Encyclopédie* and the popularization of Newtonianism by Voltaire as well as by Emilie du Chatelet, the French translator of Newton's *Principia*. Some historians have marked the 18th century as a drab period in the history of science;<sup>[2]</sup> however, the century saw significant advancements in the practice of medicine, mathematics, and physics;



Before the 18th century, science courses were taught almost exclusively through formal lectures. The structure of courses began to change in the first decades of the 18th century, when physical demonstrations were added to lectures. Pierre Polinière and Jacques Rohault were among the first individuals to provide demonstrations of physical principles in the classroom. Experiments ranged from swinging a bucket of water at the end of a rope, demonstrating that centrifugal force would hold the water in the bucket, to more impressive experiments involving the use of an air-pump.<sup>[8]</sup> One particularly dramatic air-pump demonstration involved placing an apple inside the glass receiver of the air-pump, and removing air until the resulting vacuum caused the apple to explode.<sup>[9]</sup> Polinière's demonstrations were so impressive that he was granted an invitation to present his course to Louis XV in 1722.<sup>[10]</sup>

Some attempts at reforming the structure of the science curriculum were made during the 18th-century and the first decades of the 19th century. Beginning around 1745, the Hats party in Sweden made propositions to reform the university system by separating natural philosophy into two separate faculties of physics and mathematics. The propositions were never put into action, but they represent the growing calls for institutional reform in the later part of the 18th century.<sup>[11]</sup> In 1777, the study of arts at Cracow and Vilna in Poland was divided into the two new faculties of moral philosophy and physics. However, the reform did not survive beyond 1795 and the Third Partition. During the French Revolution, all colleges and universities in France were abolished and reformed in 1808 under the single institution of the *Université impériale*. The *Université* divided the arts and sciences into separate faculties, something that had never before been done before in Europe. The state of Belgium-Holland employed the same system in 1815. However, the other countries of Europe did not adopt a similar division of the faculties until the mid-19th century.<sup>[12]</sup>

Universities in France tended to serve a downplayed role in the development of science during the Enlightenment; that role was dominated by the scientific academies, such as the French Academy of Sciences. The contributions of universities in Britain were mixed. On the one hand, the University of Cambridge began teaching Newtonianism early in the Enlightenment, but failed to become a central force behind the advancement of science. On the other end of the spectrum were Scottish universities, which had strong medical faculties and became centres of scientific development.<sup>[13]</sup> Under Frederick II, German universities began to promote the sciences. Christian Wolff's unique blend of Cartesian-Leibnizian physics began to be adopted



Robert Boyle's air-pump, used in the demonstration lectures of Pierre Polinière.



The old entrance to the University of Göttingen

in universities outside of Halle. The University of Göttingen, founded in 1734, was far more liberal than its counterparts, allowing professors to plan their own courses and select their own textbooks. Göttingen also emphasized research and publication.<sup>[14]</sup> A further influential development in German universities was the abandonment of Latin in favour of the German vernacular.<sup>[15]</sup>

In the 17th century, the Netherlands had played a significant role in the advancement of the sciences, including Isaac Beeckman's mechanical philosophy and Christiaan Huygens' work on the calculus and in astronomy.<sup>[16]</sup> Professors at universities in the Dutch Republic were among the first to adopt Newtonianism. From the University of Leiden, Willem 's Gravesande's students went on to spread Newtonianism to Harderwijk and Franeker, among other Dutch universities, and also to the University of Amsterdam.<sup>[17]</sup>

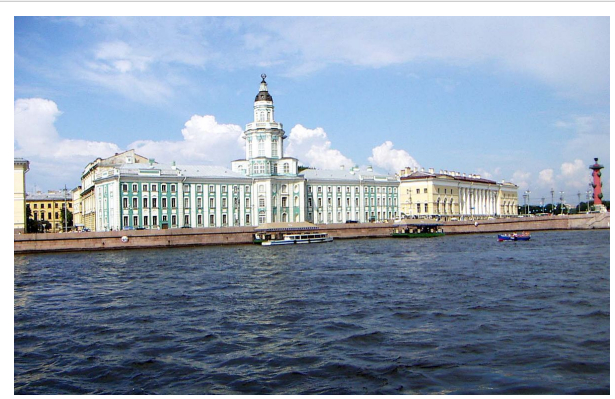
While the number of universities did not dramatically increase during the Enlightenment, new private and public institutions added to the provision of education. Most of the new institutions emphasized mathematics as a discipline, making them popular with professions that required some working knowledge of mathematics, such as merchants, military and naval officers, and engineers.<sup>[18]</sup> Universities, on the other hand, maintained their emphasis on the classics, Greek, and Latin, encouraging the popularity of the new institutions with individuals who had not been formally educated.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Societies and Academies

Scientific academies and societies grew out of the Scientific Revolution as the creators of scientific knowledge in contrast to the scholasticism of the university.<sup>[19]</sup> During the Enlightenment, some societies created or retained links to universities. However, contemporary sources distinguished universities from scientific societies by claiming that the university's utility was in the transmission of knowledge, while societies functioned to create knowledge.<sup>[20]</sup> As the role of universities in institutionalized science began to diminish, learned societies became the cornerstone of organized science. After 1700 a tremendous number of official academies and societies were founded in Europe and by 1789 there were over seventy official scientific societies. In reference to this growth, Bernard de Fontenelle coined the term "the Age of Academies" to describe the 18th century.<sup>[21]</sup>

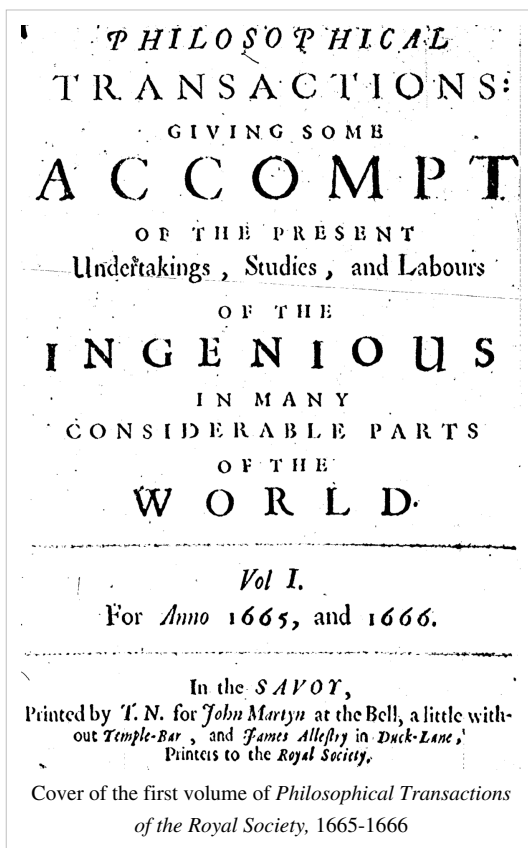
National scientific societies were founded throughout the Enlightenment era in the urban hotbeds of scientific development across Europe. In the 17th century the Royal Society of London (1662), the Paris *Académie Royale des Sciences* (1666), and the Berlin *Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1700) were founded. At the turn of the century, the *Academia Scientiarum Imperialis* (1724) in St. Petersburg, and the *Kungliga Vetenskapsakademien* (Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences) (1739) were created. Regional and provincial societies emerged out of the 18th century in Bologna, Bordeaux, Copenhagen, Dijon, Lyons, Montpellier and Uppsala. Following this initial period of growth, societies were founded between 1752 and 1785 in Barcelona, Brussels, Dublin, Edinburgh, Göttingen, Mannheim, Munich, Padua and Turin. The development of unchartered societies, such as the private the *Naturforschende Gesellschaft* of Danzig (1743) and Lunar Society of Birmingham (1766–1791), occurred alongside the growth of national, regional and provincial societies.<sup>[22]</sup>

Official scientific societies were chartered by the state in order to provide technical expertise.<sup>[23]</sup> This advisory capacity offered scientific societies the most direct contact between the scientific community and government bodies available during the Enlightenment.<sup>[24]</sup> State sponsorship was beneficial to the societies as it brought finance and recognition, along with a measure of freedom in management. Most societies were granted permission to oversee their own publications, control the election of new members, and the administration of the society.<sup>[25]</sup> Membership in academies and societies was therefore highly selective. In some societies, members were required to pay an annual fee to participate. For example, the Royal Society depended on contributions from its members, which excluded a wide range of artisans and mathematicians on account of the expense.<sup>[26]</sup> Society activities included research, experimentation, sponsoring essay prize contests, and collaborative projects between societies. A dialogue of formal communication also developed between societies and society in general through the publication of scientific journals. Periodicals offered society members the opportunity to publish, and for their ideas to be consumed by other scientific societies and the literate public. Scientific journals, readily accessible to members of learned societies, became the most important form of publication for scientists during the Enlightenment.<sup>[27]</sup>



Original headquarters of the Imperial Academy of Sciences - the Kunstkammer in Saint Petersburg.

## Periodicals



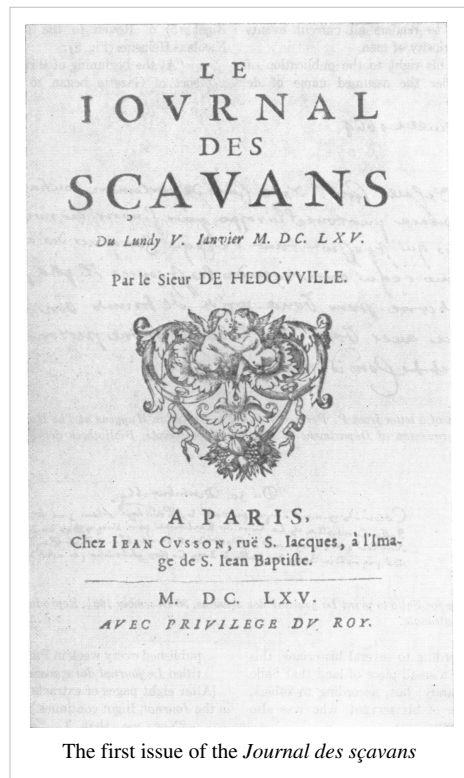
Cover of the first volume of *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 1665-1666

Academies and societies served to disseminate Enlightenment science by publishing the scientific works of their members, as well as their proceedings. At the beginning of the 18th century, the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, published by the Royal Society of London, was the only scientific periodical being published on a regular, quarterly basis. The Paris Academy of Sciences, formed in 1666, began publishing in volumes of memoirs rather than a quarterly journal, with periods between volumes sometimes lasting years. While some official periodicals may have published more frequently, there was still a long delay from a paper's submission for review to its actual publication. Smaller periodicals, such as *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, were only published when enough content was available to complete a volume.<sup>[28]</sup> At the Paris Academy, there was an average delay of three years for publication. At one point the period extended to seven years.<sup>[29]</sup> The Paris Academy processed submitted articles through the *Comité de Librairie*, which had the final word on what would or would not be published.<sup>[30]</sup> In 1703, the mathematician Antoine Parent began a periodical, *Recherches in Physique and Mathematics*, specifically to publish papers that had been rejected by the *Comité*.<sup>[28]</sup>



The limitations of such academic journals left considerable space for the rise of independent periodicals. Some eminent examples include Johann Ernst Immanuel Walch's *Der Naturforscher* (The Natural Investigator) (1725–1778), *Journal des sçavans* (1665–1792), the Jesuit *Mémoires de Trévoux* (1701–1779), and Leibniz's *Acta Eruditorum* (Reports/Acts of the Scholars) (1682–1782). Independent periodicals were published throughout the Enlightenment and excited scientific interest in the general public.<sup>[31]</sup> While the journals of the academies primarily published scientific papers, independent periodicals were a mix of reviews, abstracts, translations of foreign texts, and sometimes derivative, reprinted materials.<sup>[28]</sup> Most of these texts were published in the local vernacular, so their continental spread depended on the language of the readers.<sup>[32]</sup> For example, in 1761 Russian scientist Mikhail Lomonosov correctly attributed the ring of light around Venus, visible during the planet's transit, as the planet's atmosphere; however, because few scientists understood Russian outside of Russia, his discovery was not widely credited until 1910.<sup>[33]</sup>

Some changes in periodicals occurred during the course of the Enlightenment. First, they increased in number and size. There was also a move away from publishing in Latin in favour of publishing in the vernacular. Experimental descriptions became more detailed and began to be accompanied by reviews.<sup>[28]</sup> In the late 18th century, a second change occurred when a new breed of periodical began to publish monthly about new developments and experiments in the scientific community. The first of this kind of journal was François Rozier's *Observations sur la physiques, sur l'histoire naturelle et sur les arts*, commonly referred to as "Rozier's journal", which was first published in 1772. The journal allowed new scientific developments to be published relatively quickly compared to annuals and quarterlies. A third important change was the specialization seen in the new development of disciplinary journals. With a wider audience and ever increasing publication material, specialized journals such as Curtis' *Botanical Magazine* (1787) and the *Annals de Chimie* (1789) reflect the growing division between scientific disciplines in the Enlightenment era.<sup>[34]</sup>



The first issue of the *Journal des sçavans*

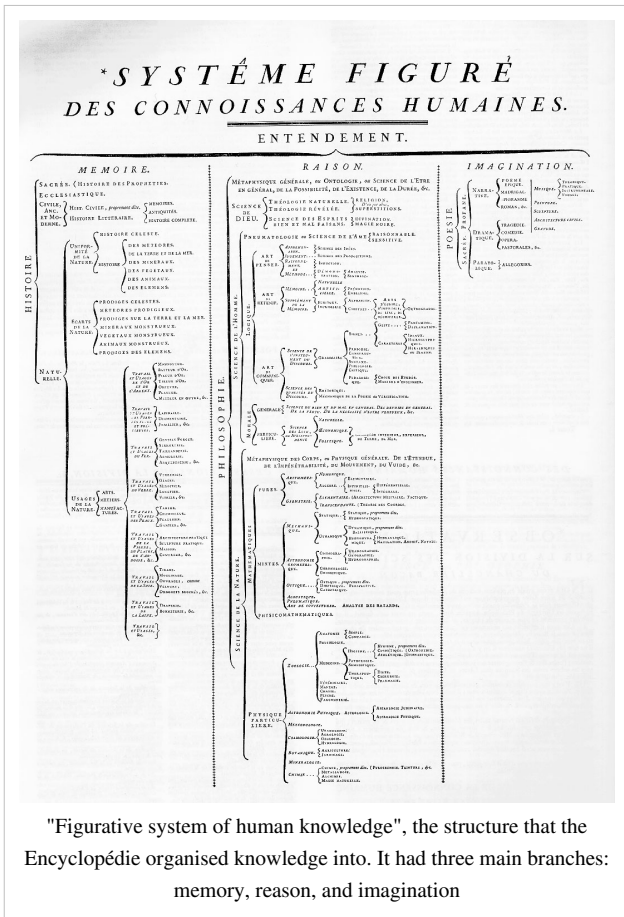
## Encyclopedias and dictionaries

Although the existence of dictionaries and encyclopedias spanned into ancient times, and would be nothing new to Enlightenment readers, the texts changed from simply defining words in a long running list to far more detailed discussions of those words in 18th-century encyclopedic dictionaries.<sup>[35]</sup> The works were part of an Enlightenment movement to systematize knowledge and provide education to a wider audience than the educated elite. As the 18th century progressed, the content of encyclopedias also changed according to readers' tastes. Volumes tended to focus more strongly on secular affairs, particularly science and technology, rather than matters of theology.

Along with secular matters, readers also favoured an alphabetical ordering scheme over cumbersome works arranged along thematic lines.<sup>[36]</sup> The historian Charles Porset, commenting on alphabetization, has said that "as the zero degree of taxonomy, alphabetical order authorizes all reading strategies; in this respect it could be considered an emblem of the Enlightenment." For Porset, the avoidance of thematic and hierarchical systems thus allows free interpretation of the works and becomes an example of egalitarianism.<sup>[37]</sup> Encyclopedias and dictionaries also became more popular during the Age of Reason as the number of educated consumers who could afford such texts began to multiply.<sup>[38]</sup> In the later half of the 18th century, the number of dictionaries and encyclopedias published by decade increased from 63 between 1760 and 1769 to approximately 148 in the decade proceeding the French

Revolution (1780–1789).<sup>[39]</sup> Along with growth in numbers, dictionaries and encyclopedias also grew in length, often having multiple print runs that sometimes included in supplemented editions.<sup>[40]</sup>

The first technical dictionary was drafted by John Harris and entitled *Lexicon Technicum: Or, An Universal English Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*. Harris' book avoided theological and biographical entries; instead it concentrated on science and technology. Published in 1704, the *Lexicon technicum* was the first book to be written in English that took a methodical approach to describing mathematics and commercial arithmetic along with the physical sciences and navigation. Other technical dictionaries followed Harris' model, including Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* (1728), which included five editions, and was a substantially larger work than Harris'. The folio edition of the work even included foldout engravings. The *Cyclopaedia* emphasized Newtonian theories, Lockean philosophy, and contained thorough examinations of technologies, such as engraving, brewing, and dyeing.



"Figurative system of human knowledge", the structure that the Encyclopédie organised knowledge into. It had three main branches: memory, reason, and imagination

In Germany, practical reference works intended for the uneducated majority became popular in the 18th century. The *Marperger Curieuses Natur-, Kunst-, Berg-, Gewerkund Handlungs-Lexicon* (1712) explained terms that usefully described the trades and scientific and commercial education. *Jablonski Allgemeines Lexicon* (1721) was better known than the *Handlungs-Lexicon*, and underscored technical subjects rather than scientific theory. For example, over five columns of text were dedicated to wine, while geometry and logic were allocated only twenty-two and seventeen lines, respectively. The first edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1771) was modelled along the same lines as the German lexicons.<sup>[41]</sup>

However, the prime example of reference works that systematized scientific knowledge in the age of Enlightenment were universal encyclopedias rather than technical dictionaries. It was the goal of universal encyclopedias to record all human knowledge in a comprehensive reference work.<sup>[42]</sup> The most well-known of these works is Dennis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*.

The work, which began publication in 1751, was composed of thirty-five volumes and over 71 000 separate entries. A great number of the entries were dedicated to describing the sciences and crafts in detail. In d'Alembert's *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, the work's massive goal to record the extent of human knowledge in the arts and sciences is outlined:

As an Encyclopédie, it is to set forth as well as possible the order and connection of the parts of human knowledge. As a Reasoned Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts, and Trades, it is to contain the general principles that form the basis of each science and each art, liberal or mechanical, and the most essential facts that make up the body and substance of each.

[43]

The massive work was arranged according to a "tree of knowledge." The tree reflected the marked division between the arts and sciences, which was largely a result of the rise of empiricism. Both areas of knowledge were united by philosophy, or the trunk of the tree of knowledge. The Enlightenment's desacrilization of religion was pronounced in the tree's design, particularly where theology accounted for a peripheral branch, with black magic as a close

neighbour.<sup>[44]</sup> As the *Encyclopédie* gained popularity, it was published in quarto and octavo editions after 1777. The quarto and octavo editions were much less expensive than previous editions, making the *Encyclopédie* more accessible to the non-elite. Robert Darnton estimates that there were approximately 25 000 copies of the *Encyclopédie* in circulation throughout France and Europe before the French Revolution.<sup>[45]</sup> The extensive, yet affordable encyclopedia came to represent the transmission of Enlightenment and scientific education to an expanding audience.<sup>[46]</sup>

## Popularization of science

One of the most important developments that the Enlightenment era brought to the discipline of science was its popularization. An increasingly literate population seeking knowledge and education in both the arts and the sciences drove the expansion of print culture and the dissemination of scientific learning. The new literate population was due to a high rise in the availability of food. This enabled many people to rise out of poverty, and instead of paying more for food, they had money for education.<sup>[47]</sup> Popularization was generally part of an overarching Enlightenment ideal that endeavoured “to make information available to the greatest number of people.”<sup>[48]</sup> As public interest in natural philosophy grew during the 18th century, public lecture courses and the publication of popular texts opened up new roads to money and fame for amateurs and scientists who remained on the periphery of universities and academies.<sup>[49]</sup>

## British coffeehouses

An early example of science emanating from the official institutions into the public realm was the British coffeehouse. With the establishment of coffeehouses, a new public forum for political, philosophical and scientific discourse was created. In the mid-16th century, coffeehouses cropped up around Oxford, where the academic community began to capitalize on the unregulated conversation that the coffeehouse allowed.<sup>[50]</sup> The new social space began to be used by some scholars as a place to discuss science and experiments outside of the laboratory of the official institution.<sup>[51]</sup> Coffeehouse patrons were only required to purchase a dish of coffee to participate, leaving the opportunity for many, regardless of financial means, to benefit from the conversation. Education was a central theme and some patrons began offering lessons and lectures to others. The chemist Peter Staehl provided chemistry lessons at Tiliard’s coffeehouse in the early 1660s. As coffeehouses developed in London, customers heard lectures on scientific subjects, such as astronomy and mathematics, for an exceedingly low price.<sup>[52]</sup> Notable Coffeehouse enthusiasts included John Aubrey, Robert Hooke, James Brydges, and Samuel Pepys.<sup>[53]</sup>

## Public lectures

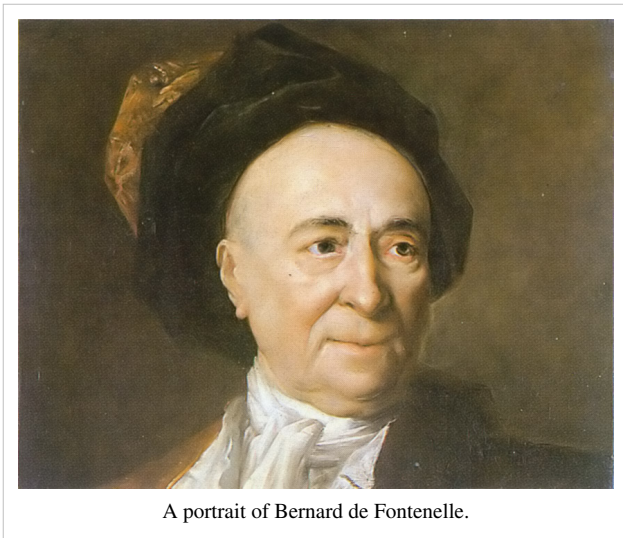
Public lecture courses offered some scientists who were unaffiliated with official organizations a forum to transmit scientific knowledge, at times even their own ideas, and the opportunity to carve out a reputation and, in some instances, a living. The public, on the other hand, gained both knowledge and entertainment from demonstration lectures.<sup>[54]</sup> Between 1735 and 1793, there were over seventy individuals offering courses and demonstrations for public viewers in experimental physics. Class sizes ranged from one hundred to four or five hundred attendees.<sup>[55]</sup> Courses varied in duration from one to four weeks, to a few months, or even the entire academic year. Courses were offered at virtually any time of day; the latest occurred at 8:00 or 9:00 at night. One of the most popular start times was 6:00 pm, allowing the working population to participate and signifying the attendance of the nonelite.<sup>[56]</sup> Barred from the universities and other institutions, women were often in attendance at demonstration lectures and constituted a significant number of auditors.<sup>[57]</sup>

The importance of the lectures was not in teaching complex mathematics or physics, but rather in demonstrating to the wider public the principles of physics and encouraging discussion and debate. Generally, individuals presenting the lectures did not adhere to any particular brand of physics, but rather demonstrated a combination of different theories.<sup>[58]</sup> New advancements in the study of electricity offered viewers demonstrations that drew far more

inspiration among the laity than scientific papers could hold. An example of a popular demonstration used by Jean-Antoine Nollet and other lecturers was the ‘electrified boy’. In the demonstration, a young boy would be suspended from the ceiling, horizontal to the floor, with silk chords. An electrical machine would then be used to electrify the boy. Essentially becoming a magnet, he would then attract a collection of items scattered about him by the lecturer. Sometimes a young girl would be called from the auditors to touch or kiss the boy on the cheek, causing sparks to shoot between the two children in what was dubbed the ‘electric kiss’.<sup>[59]</sup> Such marvels would certainly have entertained the audience, but the demonstration of physical principles also served an educational purpose. One 18th-century lecturer insisted on the utility of his demonstrations, stating that they were “useful for the good of society.”<sup>[60]</sup>

### Popular science in print

Increasing literacy rates in Europe during the course of the Enlightenment enabled science to enter popular culture through print. More formal works included explanations of scientific theories for individuals lacking the educational background to comprehend the original scientific text. Sir Isaac Newton’s celebrated *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* was published in Latin and remained inaccessible to readers without education in the classics until Enlightenment writers began to translate and analyze the text in the vernacular. The first French introduction to Newtonianism and the *Principia* was *Eléments de la philosophie de Newton*, published by Voltaire in 1738.<sup>[61]</sup> Émilie du Châtelet’s translation of the *Principia*, published after her death in 1756, also helped to spread Newton’s theories beyond scientific academies and the university.<sup>[62]</sup>



A portrait of Bernard de Fontenelle.

However, science took an ever greater step towards popular culture before Voltaire’s introduction and Châtelet’s translation. The publication of Bernard de Fontenelle’s *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* (1686) marked the first significant work that expressed scientific theory and knowledge expressly for the laity, in the vernacular, and with the entertainment of readers in mind. The book was produced specifically for women with an interest in scientific writing and inspired a variety of similar works.<sup>[63]</sup> These popular works were written in a discursive style, which was laid out much more clearly for the reader than the complicated articles, treatises, and books published by the academies and scientists. Charles Leadbetter’s

*Astronomy* (1727) was advertised as “a Work entirely New” that would include “short and easie [*sic*] Rules and Astronomical Tables.”<sup>[64]</sup> Francesco Algarotti, writing for a growing female audience, published *Il Newtonianism per le dame*, which was a tremendously popular work and was translated from Italian into English by Elizabeth Carter. A similar introduction to Newtonianism for women was produced by Henry Pemberton. His *A View of Sir Isaac Newton’s Philosophy* was published by subscription. Extant records of subscribers show that women from a wide range of social standings purchased the book, indicating the growing number of scientifically inclined female readers among the middling class.<sup>[65]</sup> During the Enlightenment, women also began producing popular scientific works themselves. Sarah Trimmer wrote a successful natural history textbook for children entitled *The Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature* (1782), which was published for many years after in eleven editions.<sup>[66]</sup>

The influence of science also began appearing more commonly in poetry and literature during the Enlightenment. Some poetry became infused with scientific metaphor and imagery, while other poems were written directly about scientific topics. Sir Richard Blackmore committed the Newtonian system to verse in *Creation, a Philosophical Poem in Seven Books* (1712). After Newton’s death in 1727, poems were composed in his honour for decades.<sup>[67]</sup>

James Thomson (1700–1748) penned his “Poem to the Memory of Newton,” which mourned the loss of Newton, but also praised his science and legacy:

Thy swift career is with whirling orbs,  
Comparing things with things in rapture loft,  
And grateful adoration, for that light,  
So plenteous ray'd into thy mind below.<sup>[68]</sup>

While references to the sciences were often positive, there were some Enlightenment writers who criticized scientists for what they viewed as their obsessive, frivolous careers. Other antiscience writers, including William Blake, chastised scientists for attempting to use physics, mechanics and mathematics to simplify the complexities of the universe, particularly in relation to God. The character of the evil scientist was invoked during this period in the romantic tradition. For example, the characterization of the scientist as a nefarious manipulator in the work of Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann.<sup>[67]</sup>

## Women in science

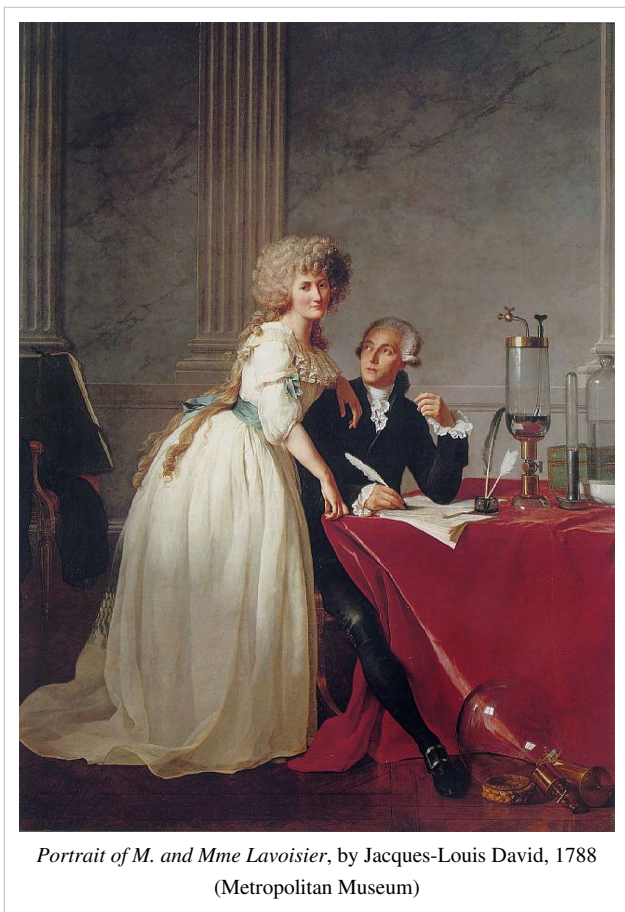
During the Enlightenment era, women were excluded from scientific societies, universities and learned professions. Women were educated, if at all, through self-study, tutors, and by the teachings of more open-minded fathers. With the exception of daughters of craftsmen, who sometimes learned their father's profession by assisting in the workshop, learned women were primarily part of elite society.<sup>[69]</sup> A consequence of the exclusion of women from societies and universities that prevented much independent research was their inability to access scientific instruments, such as the microscope. In fact, restrictions were so severe in the 18th century that women, including midwives, were forbidden to use forceps.<sup>[70]</sup> That particular restriction exemplified the increasingly constrictive, male-dominated medical community. Over the course of the 18th century, male surgeons began to assume the role of midwives in gynaecology. Some male satirists also ridiculed scientifically minded women, describing them as neglectful of their domestic role.<sup>[71]</sup> The negative view of women in the sciences reflected the sentiment apparent in some Enlightenment texts that women need not, nor ought to be educated; the opinion is exemplified by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Émile*:



A portrait of Yekaterina Romanovna Vorontsova-Dashkova by Dmitry Levitzky.

“A woman's education must... be planned in relation to man. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught while she is young.”

[72]



Portrait of M. and Mme Lavoisier, by Jacques-Louis David, 1788  
(Metropolitan Museum)

Despite these limitations, there was support for women in the sciences among some men, and many made valuable contributions to science during the 18th century. Two notable women who managed to participate in formal institutions were Laura Bassi and the Russian Princess Yekaterina Dashkova. Bassi was an Italian physicist who received a PhD from the University of Bologna and began teaching there in 1732. Dashkova became the director of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg in 1783. Her personal relationship with Czarina Catherine the Great (r. 1762-1796) allowed her to obtain the position, which marked in history the first appointment of a woman to the directorship of a scientific academy.<sup>[71]</sup>

More commonly, women participated in the sciences through an association with a male relative or spouse. Caroline Herschel began her astronomical career, although somewhat reluctantly at first, by assisting her brother William Herschel. Caroline Herschel is most remembered for her discovery of eight comets and her *Index to Flamsteed's Observations of the Fixed Stars* (1798). On August 1, 1786, Herschel discovered her

first comet, much to the excitement of scientifically minded women. Fanny Burney commented on the discovery, stating that "the comet was very small, and had nothing grand or striking in its appearance; but it is the first lady's comet, and I was very desirous to see it."<sup>[73]</sup> Marie-Anne Pierette Paulze worked collaboratively with her husband, Antoine Lavoisier. Aside from assisting in Lavoisier's laboratory research, she was responsible for translating a number of English texts into French for her husband's work on the new chemistry. Paulze also illustrated many of her husband's publications, such as his *Treatise on Chemistry* (1789). Eva Ekeblad became the first woman inducted into the Royal Swedish Academy of Science (1748).

Many other women became illustrators or translators of scientific texts. In France, Madeleine Françoise Basseporte was employed by the Royal Botanical Garden as an illustrator. Englishwoman Mary Delany developed a unique method of illustration. Her technique involved using hundreds of pieces of coloured-paper to recreate lifelike renditions of living plants. Noblewomen sometimes cultivated their own botanical gardens, including Mary Somerset and Margaret Harley. Scientific translation sometimes required more than a grasp on multiple languages. Besides translating Newton's *Principia* into French, Émilie du Châtelet expanded Newton's work to include recent progress made in mathematical physics after his death.<sup>[71]</sup>

## Disciplines

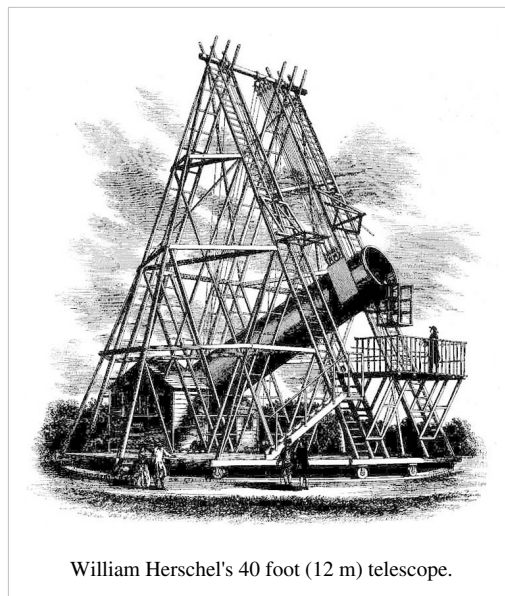
### Astronomy

Building on the body of work forwarded by Copernicus, Kepler and Newton, 18th-century astronomers refined telescopes, produced star catalogues, and worked towards explaining the motions of heavenly bodies and the consequences of universal gravitation.<sup>[74]</sup> Among the prominent astronomers of the age was Edmund Halley. In 1705 Halley correctly linked historical descriptions of particularly bright comets to the reappearance of just one, which would later be named Halley's Comet, based on his computation of the orbits of comets.<sup>[75]</sup> Halley also changed the

theory of the Newtonian universe, which described the fixed stars. When he compared the ancient positions of stars to their contemporary positions, he found that they had shifted.<sup>[76]</sup> James Bradley, while attempting to document stellar parallax, realized that the unexplained motion of stars he had early observed with Samuel Molyneux was caused by the aberration of light. The discovery was proof of a heliocentric model of the universe, since it is the revolution of the earth around the sun that causes an apparent motion in the observed position of a star. The discovery also led Bradley to a fairly close estimate to the speed of light.<sup>[77]</sup>

Observations of Venus in the 18th century became an important step in describing atmospheres. During the 1761 transit of Venus, the Russian scientist Mikhail Lomonosov observed a ring of light around the planet. Lomonosov attributed the ring to the refraction of sunlight, which he correctly hypothesized was caused by the atmosphere of Venus. Further evidence of Venus' atmosphere was gathered in observations by Johann Hieronymus Schröter in 1779.<sup>[78]</sup> The planet also offered Alexis Claude de Clairaut an opportunity to work his considerable mathematical skills when he computed the mass of Venus through complex mathematical calculations.<sup>[79]</sup>

However, much astronomical work of the period becomes shadowed by one of the most dramatic scientific discoveries of the 18th-century. On 13 March 1781, amateur astronomer William Herschel spotted a new planet with his powerful reflecting telescope. Initially identified as a comet, the celestial body later came to be accepted as a planet.<sup>[80]</sup> Soon after, the planet was named *Georgium Sidus* by Herschel and was called Herschelium in France. The name Uranus, as proposed by Johann Bode, came into widespread usage after Herschel's death.<sup>[81]</sup> On the theoretical side of astronomy, the English natural philosopher John Michell first proposed the existence of dark stars in 1783. Michell postulated that if the density of a stellar object became great enough, its attractive force would become so large that even light could not escape.<sup>[82]</sup> He also surmised that the location of a dark star could be determined by the strong gravitational force it would exert on surrounding stars. While differing somewhat from a black hole, the dark star can be understood as a predecessor to the black holes resulting from Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity.<sup>[83]</sup>



William Herschel's 40 foot (12 m) telescope.

## Chemistry

The chemical revolution was a period in the 18th century marked by significant advancements in the theory and practice of chemistry. Despite the maturity of most of the sciences during the scientific revolution, by the mid-18th century chemistry had yet to outline a systematic framework or theoretical doctrine. Elements of alchemy still permeated the study of chemistry, and the belief that the natural world was composed of the classical elements of earth, water, air and fire remained prevalent.<sup>[84]</sup> The key achievement of the chemical revolution has traditionally been viewed as the abandonment of phlogiston theory in favour of Antoine Lavoisier's oxygen theory of combustion;<sup>[85]</sup> however, more recent studies attribute a wider range of factors as contributing forces behind the chemical revolution.<sup>[86]</sup>

Developed under Johann Joachim Becher and Georg Ernst Stahl, phlogiston theory was an attempt to account for products of combustion.<sup>[87]</sup> According to the theory, a substance called phlogiston was released from inflammable materials through burning. The resulting product was termed *calx*, which was considered a 'dephlogisticated' substance in its 'true' form.<sup>[88]</sup> The first strong evidence against phlogiston theory came from pneumatic chemists in Britain during the later half of the 18th century. Joseph Black, Joseph Priestly and Henry Cavendish all identified different gases that composed air; however, it was not until Antoine Lavoisier discovered in the fall of 1772 that, when burned, sulphur and phosphorus "gain[ed] in weight"<sup>[87]</sup> that the phlogiston theory began to unravel.

Lavoisier subsequently discovered and named oxygen, described its role in animal respiration<sup>[89]</sup> and the calcination of metals exposed to air (1774–1778). In 1783, Lavoisier found that water was a compound of oxygen and hydrogen.<sup>[90]</sup> Lavoisier's years of experimentation formed a body of work that contested phlogiston theory. After reading his "Reflections on Phlogiston" to the Academy in 1785, chemists began dividing into camps based on the old phlogiston theory and the new oxygen theory.<sup>[91]</sup> A new form of chemical nomenclature, developed by Louis Bernard Guyton de Morveua, with assistance from Lavoisier, classified elements binomially into a genus and a species. For example, burned lead was of the genus oxide and species lead.<sup>[92]</sup> Transition to and acceptance of Lavoisier's new chemistry varied in pace across Europe. The new chemistry was established in Glasgow and Edinburgh early in the 1790s, but was slow to become established in Germany.<sup>[93]</sup> Eventually the oxygen-based theory of combustion drowned out the phlogiston theory and in the process created the basis of modern chemistry.<sup>[94]</sup>

## Notes

- [1] Burns (2003), entry: 7,103.
- [2] see Hall (1954), iii; Mason (1956), 223.
- [3] Porter (2003), 44.
- [4] Porter (2003), 52.
- [5] Porter (2003), 45.
- [6] Porter (2003), 79-80.
- [7] Burns (2003), entry: 239.
- [8] Sutton, (1995), p. 195.)
- [9] Sutton, (1995), p. 199.
- [10] Sutton, (1995), p. 195.
- [11] Porter, (2003), p. 54.
- [12] Porter, (2003), p. 55.
- [13] Burns, (2003), entry: 239.
- [14] Porter, (2003), p. 57.
- [15] Butts, (1955), p. 29.
- [16] Jacob, (1988), pp.52-53.
- [17] Jacob, (1988), pp. 182-187.
- [18] Porter, (2003), p. 73.
- [19] Gillispie, (1980), p. xix.
- [20] James E. McClellan III, "Learned Societies," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Alan Charles Kors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) <http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/HistoryWorld/Modern/?view=usa&ci=9780195104301> (accessed on June 8, 2008).
- [21] Porter, (2003), p. 90.
- [22] Porter, (2003), pp. 90-91.
- [23] Porter, (2003), p. 91.
- [24] Gillispie, (1980), p. xxiii.
- [25] See Gillispie, (1980), "Conclusion."
- [26] Daston, (1998), p. 71
- [27] Gillispie, (1980), p. xxi.
- [28] Burns, (2003), entry: 199.
- [29] Porter, (2003), p.95.
- [30] McClellan, (2003), pp. 11-18
- [31] Lynn, (2006), p.16
- [32] Porter, (2003), p. 195
- [33] Schectman, (2003), p. xxxvii.
- [34] Porter, (2003), p.96.
- [35] Headrick, (2000), p. 144.
- [36] Headrick, (2000), p. 172.
- [37] Porter, (2003), pp. 249-50.
- [38] Headrick, (2000), p. 144
- [39] Headrick, (2000), p. 168)
- [40] Headrick, (2000), p. 172



- [41] Headrick, (2000), pp. 150-152.
- [42] Headrick, (2000), p. 153.
- [43] d'Alembert, p. 4.
- [44] Darnton, (1979), p. 7.
- [45] Darnton, (1979), p. 37.
- [46] Darnton, (1979), p. 6.
- [47] Jacob, (1988), p. 191; Melton, (2001), pp. 82-83
- [48] Headrick, (2000), p. 15
- [49] Headrick, (2000), p. 19.
- [50] Cowen, (2005), p. 91.
- [51] Cowen, (2005), p. 106.
- [52] Cowen, (2005), p. 99.
- [53] Cowen, (2005), pp. 96-109.
- [54] For a detailed analysis of public lectures, see Geoffrey Sutton, *Science for a Polite Society: Gender, Culture, and the Demonstration of Enlightenment* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1995). Margaret Jacob offers a more specific analysis of lecturers in Holland and England in *The Cultural Meaning of the Scientific Revolution* ( New York: Knopf, 1988).
- [55] Headrick, (2000), p. 19
- [56] Headrick, (2000), pp. 26-27
- [57] Headrick, (2000), p. 18
- [58] Headrick, (2000), pp. 29-31
- [59] Sutton, (1995), pp. 304-305.
- [60] Headrick, (2000), p. 34
- [61] Porter, (2003), p. 300.
- [62] Porter, (2003), p. 101.
- [63] Phillips, (1991), pp. 85, 90
- [64] Phillips, (1991), p. 90.
- [65] Phillips, (1991), p. 92.
- [66] Phillips, (1991), p. 107.
- [67] Burns, (2003), entry: 158.
- [68] Thomson, (1786), p. 203.
- [69] Kors, (2003), "Education"
- [70] Whitehead, (1991), p. 227.
- [71] Burns, (2003), entry: 253.
- [72] Kors, (2003), "Education."
- [73] Phillips, (1991), p. 161.
- [74] Porter, (2003), p. 328.
- [75] Turner, (1963), p. 88.
- [76] Hoskin, (1999), p. 174.
- [77] Mason, (1962), p. 297.
- [78] Schectman, (2003), pp. xxxvii, xl.
- [79] Schectman, (2003), p. xxxvi.
- [80] Schectman, (2003), p. xlii.
- [81] Littmann, (2004), p. 11.
- [82] Parker, (1991), p. 4.
- [83] Silver, (1998), p. 460.
- [84] Olby, (1990), p. 265.
- [85] See H. Butterfield, "Chapter 11" of *The Origins of Modern Science: 1300-1800* (New York: Macmillan, 1957) for this traditional view.
- [86] Perrin, (1988), pp. 32-81.
- [87] Idhe, (1964), p. 61
- [88] Conant, (1950), p. 14.
- [89] Idhe, (1964), pp. 68-69
- [90] Conant, (1950), p. 12.
- [91] Olby, (1990), p. 273.
- [92] Olby, (1990), p. 264.
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- [94] McClellan, (2006) p. 301

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## American Enlightenment

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The **American Enlightenment** is the intellectual thriving period in America in the mid-to-late 18th century, especially as it relates to American Revolution on the one hand and the European Enlightenment on the other. Influenced by the scientific revolution of the 17th century and the humanist period during the Renaissance, the Enlightenment took scientific reasoning and applied it to human nature, society and religion. Politically the age is distinguished by an emphasis upon liberty, democracy, republicanism and religious tolerance – culminating in the drafting of the United States Declaration of Independence and Constitution. Attempts to reconcile science and religion resulted in a rejection of prophecy, miracle and revealed religion, often in preference for Deism. Historians have considered how the ideas of John Locke and Republicanism merged together to form Republicanism in the United States. The most important leaders of the American Enlightenment include Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson.

### Sources

The Americans closely followed English and Scottish political ideas, as well as some French thinkers such as Montesquieu.<sup>[1]</sup> They paid little attention to Voltaire or Rousseau or to German theorists. John Locke was especially influential.<sup>[2]</sup> In addition the Americans paid very close attention to the ideas of the "country party" in England, which attacked the Court party that was in power. From the Country Party the Americans picked up republicanism, which became a major component of American political values.

### Liberalism and Republicanism: Government of the People, by the People, for the People

Since the 1960s historians have debated the Enlightenment's role in the American Revolution. Before 1960 the consensus was that liberalism, especially that of John Locke, was paramount and that republicanism had a distinctly secondary role.<sup>[3]</sup> The new interpretations were pioneered by J.G.A. Pocock who argued in *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975) that, at least in the early eighteenth-century, republican ideas were just as important as liberal ones. Pocock's view is now widely accepted.<sup>[4]</sup> Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood pioneered the argument that the Founding Fathers of the United States were more influenced by republicanism than they were by liberalism. Cornell

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University Professor Isaac Kramnick, on the other hand, argues that Americans have always been highly individualistic and therefore Lockean.<sup>[5]</sup>

In the decades before the American Revolution (1776), the intellectual and political leaders of the colonies studied history intently, looking for guides or models for good (and bad) government. They especially followed the development of republican ideas in England.<sup>[6]</sup> Pocock explained the intellectual sources in America:<sup>[7]</sup>

"The Whig canon and the neo-Harringtonians, John Milton, James Harrington and Sidney, Trenchard, Gordon and Bolingbroke, together with the Greek, Roman, and Renaissance masters of the tradition as far as Montesquieu, formed the authoritative literature of this culture; and its values and concepts were those with which we have grown familiar: a civic and patriot ideal in which the personality was founded in property, perfected in citizenship but perpetually threatened by corruption; government figuring paradoxically as the principal source of corruption and operating through such means as patronage, faction, standing armies (opposed to the ideal of the militia), established churches (opposed to the Puritan and deist modes of American religion) and the promotion of a monied interest — though the formulation of this last concept was somewhat hindered by the keen desire for readily available paper credit common in colonies of settlement. A neoclassical politics provided both the ethos of the elites and the rhetoric of the upwardly mobile, and accounts for the singular cultural and intellectual homogeneity of the Founding Fathers and their generation."

The commitment of most Americans to these republican values made inevitable the American Revolution, for Britain was increasingly seen as corrupt and hostile to republicanism, and a threat to the established liberties the Americans enjoyed.<sup>[8]</sup>

Leopold von Ranke 1848 claims that American republicanism played a crucial role in the development of European liberalism,<sup>[9]</sup>:

By abandoning English constitutionalism and creating a new republic based on the rights of the individual, the North Americans introduced a new force in the world. Ideas spread most rapidly when they have found adequate concrete expression. Thus republicanism entered our Romanic/Germanic world.... Up to this point, the conviction had prevailed in Europe that monarchy best served the interests of the nation. Now the idea spread that the nation should govern itself. But only after a state had actually been formed on the basis of the theory of representation did the full significance of this idea become clear. All later revolutionary movements have this same goal.... This was the complete reversal of a principle. Until then, a king who ruled by the grace of God had been the center around which everything turned. Now the idea emerged that power should come from below.... These two principles are like two opposite poles, and it is the conflict between them that determines the course of the modern world. In Europe the conflict between them had not yet taken on concrete form; with the French Revolution it did.

## Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

Many historians<sup>[10]</sup> find the origins of the famous phrase derives from Locke's position that "no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions."<sup>[11]</sup> Others suggest that Jefferson took the phrase comes from Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.<sup>[12]</sup> Others note that William Wollaston's 1722 book *The Religion of Nature Delineated* describes the "truest definition" of "natural religion" as being "*The pursuit of happiness by the practice of reason and truth.*"<sup>[13]</sup>

The Virginia Declaration of Rights adopted by the Virginia Convention of Delegates on June 12, 1776, adopted a few days before Jefferson's draft but written earlier, and written by George Mason, is:

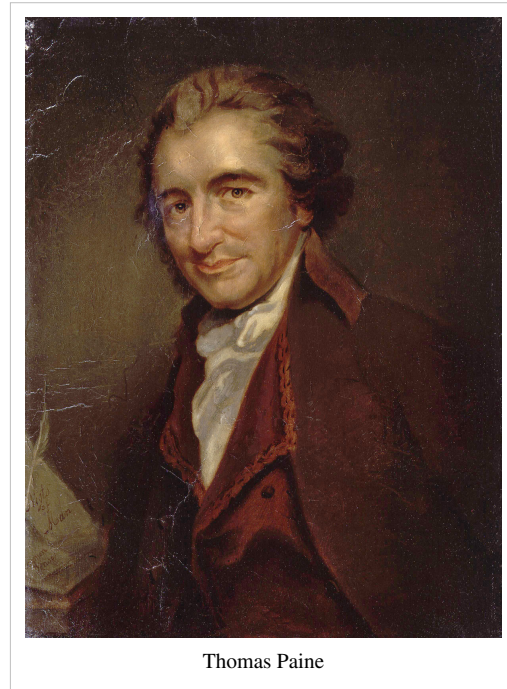
That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

The United States Declaration of Independence, which was primarily written by Jefferson, was adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. The text of the second section of the Declaration of Independence reads:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

## Deism

Both the Moderate Enlightenment and a Radical or Revolutionary Enlightenment were reactions against the authoritarianism, irrationality and obscurantism of the established churches. Philosophes such as Voltaire depicted organized Christianity as a tool of tyrants and oppressors and as being used to defend monarchism, it was seen as hostile to the development of reason and the progress of science and incapable of verification. An alternative religion was Deism, the philosophical belief in a deity based on reason, rather than religious revelation or dogma. It was a popular perception among the *philosophes*, who adopted deistic attitudes to varying degrees. Deism greatly influenced the thought of intellectuals and Founding Fathers, including John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, [and George Washington and, especially, Thomas Jefferson.<sup>[14]</sup> The most articulate exponent was Thomas Paine, whose *The Age of Reason* was written in France in the early 1790s, and soon reached America. Paine was highly controversial; when Jefferson was attacked for his Deism in the 1800 election, Republican politicians took pains to distance their candidate from him.<sup>[15]</sup>



Thomas Paine

## Religious Tolerance

Enlightened Founding Fathers, especially Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and George Washington, fought for and eventually attained religious freedom for minority denominations. According to the founding fathers, America should be a country where peoples of all faiths, including Catholics, could live in peace and mutual benefit. James Madison summed up this ideal in 1792 saying, "Conscience is the most sacred of all property."<sup>[16]</sup>

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these powers acting as second causes.<sup>[11]</sup>

Perhaps the first use of the term *deist* is in Pierre Viret's *Instruction Chrétienne en la doctrine de la foi et de l'Évangile (Christian teaching on the doctrine of faith and the Gospel)* (1564), reprinted in Bayle's *Dictionnaire* entry *Viret*. Viret, a Calvinist, regarded Deism as a new form of Italian heresy.<sup>[12]</sup> Viret wrote, as translated following from the original French:

There are many who confess that while they believe like the Turks and the Jews that there is some sort of God and some sort of deity, yet with regard to Jesus Christ and to all that to which the doctrine of the Evangelists and the Apostles testify, they take all that to be fables and dreams... I have heard that there are of this band those who call themselves Deists, an entirely new word, which they want to oppose to Atheist. For in that atheist signifies a person who is without God, they want to make it understood that they are not at all without God, since they certainly believe there is some sort of God, whom they even recognize as creator of heaven and earth, as do the Turks; but as for Jesus Christ, they only know that he is and hold nothing concerning him nor his doctrine.<sup>[12]</sup>

In England, the term *deist* first appeared in Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).<sup>[13]</sup>

Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1633) is generally considered the "father of English Deism," and his book *De Veritate* (1633) the first major statement of Deism. Deism flourished in England between 1690 and 1740, at which time Matthew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730), also called "The Deist's Bible," gained much attention. Later Deism spread to France, notably through the work of Voltaire, to Germany, and to America.

## Features of deism

### Critical and constructive deism

The concept of deism covers a wide variety of positions on a wide variety of religious issues. Following Sir Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, most commentators agree that two features constituted the core of deism:

**Critical** elements of deist thought included:

- Rejection of all religions based on books that claim to contain the revealed word of God.
- Rejection of all religious dogma and demagoguery.
- Rejection of reports of miracles, prophecies and religious "mysteries".

**Constructive** elements of deist thought included:

- God exists, created and governs the universe.
- God gave humans the ability to reason.

Specific thoughts on aspects of the afterlife will vary. While there are those who maintain that God will punish or reward us according to our behavior on Earth, likewise there are those who assert that any punishment or reward that is due to us is given during our mortal stay on Earth.

Individual deists varied in the set of critical and constructive elements for which they argued. Some deists rejected miracles and prophecies but still considered themselves Christians because they believed in what they felt to be the pure, original form of Christianity – that is, Christianity as it existed before it was corrupted by additions of such superstitions as miracles, prophecies, and the doctrine of the Trinity. Some deists rejected the claim of Jesus' divinity but continued to hold him in high regard as a moral teacher (see, for example, Thomas Jefferson's famous Jefferson Bible and Matthew Tindal's 'Christianity as Old as the Creation'). Other, more radical deists rejected Christianity altogether and expressed hostility toward Christianity, which they regarded as pure superstition. In return, Christian writers often charged radical deists with atheism.

Note that the terms *constructive* and *critical* are used to refer to aspects of deistic thought, not sects or subtypes of deism – it would be incorrect to classify any particular deist author as "a constructive deist" or "a critical deist". As

Peter Gay notes:

All Deists were in fact both critical and constructive Deists. All sought to destroy in order to build, and reasoned either from the absurdity of Christianity to the need for a new philosophy or from their desire for a new philosophy to the absurdity of Christianity. Each Deist, to be sure, had his special competence. While one specialized in abusing priests, another specialized in rhapsodies to nature, and a third specialized in the skeptical reading of sacred documents. Yet whatever strength the movement had— and it was at times formidable— it derived that strength from a peculiar combination of critical and constructive elements.

—Peter Gay, *Deism: An Anthology*, p. 13'

It should be noted, however, that the constructive element of deism was not unique to deism. It was the same as the natural theology that was so prevalent in all English theology in the 17th and 18th centuries. What set deists apart from their more orthodox contemporaries were their critical concerns.

Defining the essence of English Deism is a formidable task. Like *priestcraft*, *atheism*, and *freethinking*, *Deism* was one of the dirty words of the age. Deists were stigmatized – often as atheists – by their Christian opponents. Yet some Deists claimed to be Christian, and as Leslie Stephen argued in retrospect, the Deists shared so many fundamental rational suppositions with their orthodox opponents... that it is practically impossible to distinguish between them. But the term *Deism* is nevertheless a meaningful one.... Too many men of letters of the time agree about the essential nature of English Deism for modern scholars to ignore the simple fact that what sets the Deists apart from even their most latitudinarian Christian contemporaries is their desire to lay aside scriptural revelation as rationally incomprehensible, and thus useless, or even detrimental, to human society and to religion. While there may possibly be exceptions, ... most Deists, especially as the eighteenth century wears on, agree that revealed Scripture is nothing but a joke or "well-invented flam." About mid-century, John Leland, in his historical and analytical account of the movement [*View of the Principal Deistical Writers*], squarely states that the rejection of revealed Scripture is *the* characteristic element of Deism, a view further codified by such authorities as Ephraim Chambers and Samuel Johnson. ... "DEISM," writes Stephens bluntly, "is a denial of all reveal'd Religion."

— James E. Force, *Introduction (1990) to An Account of the Growth of Deism in England (1696) by William Stephens'*

One of the remarkable features of deism is that the critical elements did not overpower the constructive elements. As E. Graham Waring observed,<sup>[14]</sup> "A strange feature of the [Deist] controversy is the apparent acceptance of all parties of the conviction of the existence of God." And Basil Willey observed<sup>[15]</sup>

M. Paul Hazard has recently described the Deists of this time 'as rationalists with nostalgia for religion': men, that is, who had allowed the spirit of the age to separate them from orthodoxy, but who liked to believe that the slope they had started upon was not slippery enough to lead them to atheism.

## Concepts of "reason"

"Reason" was the ultimate court of appeal for deists. Tindal presents a Lockean definition of reason, self-evident truth, and the light of nature:

By the rational faculties, then, we mean the natural ability a man has to *apprehend*, *judge*, and *infer*: The *immediate objects* of which faculties are not the things themselves, but the *ideas* the mind conceives of them.... Knowledge [is]... *the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas*. And any two of these, when joined together so as to be affirmed or denied of each other, make what we call a *proposition*... Knowledge accrues either immediately on the bare intuition of these two *ideas* or *terms* so joined, and is therefore styled *intuitive knowledge* or *self-evident truth*, or by the intervention of some other idea or ideas ..... this is called *demonstrative knowledge*...

If there were not some propositions which need not to be proved, it would be in vain for men to argue with one another [because there would be no basis for demonstrative reasoning] ... Those propositions which need no proof, we call self-evident; because by comparing the ideas signified by the terms of such propositions, we immediately discern their agreement, or disagreement: This is, as I said before, what we call intuitive knowledge.... [Intuitive knowledge] may, I think, be called *divine inspiration* as being immediately from God, and not acquired by any human deduction or drawing of consequences: This, certainly, is that divine, that uniform light, which shines in the minds of all men...

—Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation (II)*<sup>[16]</sup>

Deists did appeal to "the light of nature" to support the self-evident nature of their positive religious claims.

By natural religion, I understand the belief of the existence of a God, and the sense and practice of those duties which result from the knowledge we, by our reason, have of him and his perfections; and of ourselves, and our own imperfections, and of the relationship we stand in to him, and to our fellow-creatures; so that the religion of nature takes in everything that is founded on the reason and nature of things. I suppose you will allow that it is evident by the light of nature that there is a God, or in other words, a being absolutely perfect, and infinitely happy in himself, who is the source of all other beings....

—Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation (II)*<sup>[17]</sup>

Once a proposition is asserted to be a self-evident truth, there is not much more to say about it. Consequently, deist authors attempted to use reason as a critical tool for exposing and rejecting what they saw as nonsense. Here are two typical examples. The first is from John Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious*.<sup>[18]</sup>

I hope to make it appear that the use of reason is not so dangerous in religion as it is commonly represented. ... There is nothing that men make a greater noise about than the "mysteries of the Christian religion." The divines gravely tell us "we must adore what we cannot comprehend." Some of them say the "mysteries of the Gospel" are to be understood only in the sense of the "ancient fathers." ... [Some] contend [that] some mysteries may be, or at least seem to be, contrary to reason, and yet received by faith. [Others contend] that no mystery is contrary to reason, but that all are "above" it.<sup>[19]</sup>

On the contrary, we hold that reason is the only foundation of all certitude, and that nothing revealed, whether as to its manner or existence, is more exempted from its disquisitions than the ordinary phenomena of nature. Wherefore, we likewise maintain, according to the title of this discourse, that *there is nothing in the Gospel contrary to reason, nor above it; and that no Christian doctrine can be properly called a mystery.* ...

Now, as we are extremely subject to deception, we may without some infallible rule, often take a questionable proposition for an axiom, old wives' fables for moral certitude, and human impostures for divine revelation....

I take it to be very intelligible from the precedent section that what is evidently repugnant to clear and distinct ideas,<sup>[20]</sup> or to our common notions,<sup>[21]</sup> is contrary to reason. ... No Christian that I know of expressly says reason and the Gospel are contrary to one another. But very many affirm that ... according to our conceptions of them [i.e. reason and the Gospel] they seem directly to clash.

And that though we cannot reconcile them by reason of our corrupt and limited understandings, yet that from the authority of divine revelation we are bound to believe and acquiesce in them; or, as the fathers taught them to speak, to "adore what we cannot comprehend." This famous and admirable doctrine is the undoubted source of all the absurdities that ever were seriously vented among Christians. Without the pretense of it, we should never hear of transubstantiation, and other ridiculous fables of the Church of Rome. Nor should we be ever bantered with the Lutheran impanation....

The first thing I shall insist upon is that if any doctrine of the New Testament be contrary to reason, we have no manner of idea of it. To say, for instance, that a ball is white and black at once is to say just nothing, for these colors are so incompatible in the same subject as to exclude all possibility of a real positive idea or conception. So to say as the papists that children dying before baptism are damned without pain signifies

nothing at all.

—John Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious: or, a Treatise Shewing That There Is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor above It* (1696)

I have known some, who have alleged as a reason why they have forsaken the Christian faith, the impossibility of believing. Many doctrines (say these) are made necessary to salvation, which 'tis impossible to believe, because they are in their nature absurdities. I replied, that these things were *mysteries*, and so above our understanding. But he asked me to what end could an unintelligible doctrine be revealed? not to instruct, but to puzzle and amuse. What can be the effect of an unintelligible *mystery* upon our minds, but only an amusement? That which is only above reason must be above a rational belief, and must I be saved by an irrational belief? ... You all agree that the belief of your Trinity is absolutely necessary to salvation, and yet widely differ in *what* we must believe concerning it; whether three Minds or Modes, or Properties, or internal Relations, or economies, or Manifestations, or external Denominations; or else no more than a Holy Three, or Three Somewhats... If I should be persuaded that an explanation of the *Trinity* were necessary to save my soul, and see the Learned so widely differing and hotly disputing what it is I must believe concerning it, I should certainly run mad through despair of finding out the Truth...

—William Stephens, *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England* (1696), pp. 19–20'

### Arguments for the existence of God

Thomas Hobbes – a 17th century deist and important influence on subsequent deists – used the cosmological argument for the existence of God at several places in his writings.

The effects we acknowledge naturally, do include a power of their producing, before they were produced; and that power presupposeth something existent that hath such power; and the thing so existing with power to produce, if it were not eternal, must needs have been produced by somewhat before it, and that again by something else before that, till we come to an eternal, that is to say, the first power of all powers and first cause of all causes; and this is it which all men conceive by the name of God, implying eternity, incomprehensibility, and omnipotence.

—Thomas Hobbes, *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 59–60; quoted in John Orr, *English Deism*, p. 76

### History of religion and the deist mission

Most deists saw the religions of their day as corruptions of an original, pure religion that was simple and rational. They felt that this original pure religion had become corrupted by "priests" who had manipulated it for personal gain and for the class interests of the priesthood in general.

According to this world view, over time "priests" had succeeded in encrusting the original simple, rational religion with all kinds of superstitions and "mysteries" – irrational theological doctrines. Laymen were told by the priests that only the priests really knew what was necessary for salvation and that laymen must accept the "mysteries" on faith and on the priests' authority. This kept the laity baffled by the nonsensical "mysteries", confused, and dependent on the priests for information about the requirements for salvation. The priests consequently enjoyed a position of considerable power over the laity, which they strove to maintain and increase. Deists referred to this kind of manipulation of religious doctrine as "priestcraft", a highly derogatory term.

Deists saw their mission as the stripping away of "priestcraft" and "mysteries" from religion, thereby restoring religion to its original, true condition – simple and rational. In many cases, they considered true, original Christianity to be the same as this original natural religion. As Matthew Tindal put it:

It can't be imputed to any defect in the light of nature that the pagan world ran into idolatry, but to their being entirely governed by priests, who pretended communication with their gods, and to have thence their revelations, which they imposed on the credulous as divine oracles. Whereas the business of the Christian

dispensation was to destroy all those traditional revelations, and restore, free from all idolatry, the true primitive and natural religion implanted in mankind from the creation.

—Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (XIV)<sup>[22]</sup>

One implication of this deist creation myth was that primitive societies, or societies that existed in the distant past, should have religious beliefs that are less encrusted with superstitions and closer to those of natural theology. This became a point of attack for thinkers such as David Hume as they studied the "natural history of religion".

### Freedom and necessity

Enlightenment thinkers, under the influence of Newtonian science, tended to view the universe as a vast machine, created and set in motion by a creator being, that continues to operate according to natural law, without any divine intervention. This view naturally led to what was then usually called necessitarianism<sup>[23]</sup> (the modern term is determinism): the view that everything in the universe – including human behavior – is completely causally determined by antecedent circumstances and natural law. (See, for example, La Mettrie's *L'Homme machine*<sup>[24]</sup>.) As a consequence, debates about freedom versus "necessity" were a regular feature of Enlightenment religious and philosophical discussions.

Because of their high regard for natural law and for the idea of a universe without miracles, deists were especially susceptible to the temptations of determinism. Reflecting the intellectual climate of the time, there were differences among deists about freedom and determinism. Some, such as Anthony Collins, actually were necessitarians.<sup>[25]</sup>

### Beliefs about immortality of the soul

Deists hold a variety of beliefs about the soul. Some, such as Lord Herbert of Cherbury and William Wollaston,<sup>[26]</sup> held that souls exist, survive death, and in the afterlife are rewarded or punished by God for their behavior in life. Some, such as Benjamin Franklin, believed in reincarnation or resurrection. Others such as Thomas Paine were agnostic about the immortality of the soul:

I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the power that gave me existence is able to continue it, in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter than that I should have had existence, as I now have, before that existence began.

—Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason, Part I, Recapitulation*

Still others such as Anthony Collins,<sup>[27]</sup> Bolingbroke, Thomas Chubb, and Peter Annet were materialists and either denied or doubted the immortality of the soul.<sup>[28]</sup>

### Deist terminology

Deist authors – and 17th- and 18th-century theologians in general – referred to God using a variety of vivid circumlocutions such as:

- Supreme Being
- Divine Watchmaker
- Grand Architect of the Universe
- Nature's God – *used in the United States Declaration of Independence*
- Father of Lights – *Benjamin Franklin used this terminology when proposing that meetings of the Constitutional Convention begin with prayers*<sup>[29]</sup>

## Historical background

Deistic thinking has existed since ancient times. Among the Ancient Greeks, Heraclitus conceived of a logos, a supreme rational principle, and said the wisdom "by which all things are steered through all things" was "both willing and unwilling to be called Zeus (God)". Plato envisaged God as a Demiurge or 'craftsman'. Outside ancient Greece many other cultures have expressed views that resemble deism in some respects. However, the word "deism", as it is understood today, is generally used to refer to the movement toward natural theology or freethinking that occurred in 17th-century Europe, and specifically in Britain.

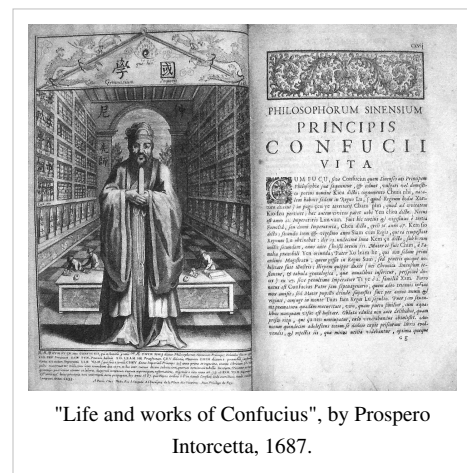
Natural theology is a facet of the revolution in world view that occurred in Europe in the 17th century. To understand the background to that revolution is also to understand the background of deism. Several cultural movements of the time contributed to the movement.<sup>[30]</sup>

## The discovery of diversity

The humanist tradition of the Renaissance included a revival of interest in Europe's classical past in Greece and Rome. The veneration of that classical past, particularly pre-Christian Rome, the new availability of Greek philosophical works, the successes of humanism and natural science along with the fragmentation of the Christian churches and increased understanding of other faiths, all helped erode the image of the church as the unique source of wisdom, destined to dominate the whole world.

In addition, study of classical documents led to the realization that some historical documents are less reliable than others, which led to the beginnings of biblical criticism. In particular, when scholars worked on biblical manuscripts, they began developing the principles of textual criticism and a view of the New Testament being the product of a particular historical period different from their own.

In addition to discovering diversity in the past, Europeans discovered diversity in the present. The voyages of discovery of the 16th and 17th centuries acquainted Europeans with new and different cultures in the Americas, in Asia, and in the Pacific. They discovered a greater amount of cultural diversity than they had ever imagined, and the question arose of how this vast amount of human cultural diversity could be compatible with the biblical account of Noah's descendants. In particular, the ideas of Confucius, translated into European languages by the Jesuits stationed in China, are thought to have had considerable influence on the deists and other philosophical groups of the Enlightenment who were interested by the integration of the system of morality of Confucius into Christianity.<sup>[31] [32]</sup>



"Life and works of Confucius", by Prospero Intorcetta, 1687.

In particular, cultural diversity with respect to religious beliefs could no longer be ignored. As Herbert wrote in *De Religione Laici* (1645),

Many faiths or religions, clearly, exist or once existed in various countries and ages, and certainly there is not one of them that the lawgivers have not pronounced to be as it were divinely ordained, so that the Wayfarer finds one in Europe, another in Africa, and in Asia, still another in the very Indies.

This new awareness of diversity led to a feeling that Christianity was just one religion among many, with no better claim than any other to correctness.

## **Religious conflict**

Europe had been plagued by vicious sectarian conflicts and religious wars since the beginning of the Reformation. In 1642, when Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *De Veritate* was published, the Thirty Years War had been raging on continental Europe for nearly 25 years. It was an enormously destructive war that (it is estimated) destroyed 15–20% of the population of Germany. At the same time, the English Civil War pitting King against Parliament was just beginning.

Such massive sectarian violence inspired a visceral rejection of the sectarianism that had led to the violence. It also led to a search for natural religious truths – truths that could be universally accepted, because they had been either "written in the book of Nature" or "engraved on the human mind" by God.

## **Advances in scientific knowledge**

The 17th century saw a remarkable advance in scientific knowledge: the scientific revolution. The work of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo set aside the old notion that the earth was the center of the universe. These discoveries posed a serious challenge to biblical authority and to the religious authorities, Galileo's condemnation for heresy being an especially visible example. In consequence the Bible came to be seen as authoritative on matters of faith and morals but no longer authoritative (or meant to be) on matters of science.

Isaac Newton's mathematical explanation of universal gravitation explained the behavior both of objects here on earth and of objects in the heavens in a way that promoted a world view in which the natural universe is controlled by laws of nature. This, in turn, suggested a theology in which God created the universe, set it in motion controlled by natural law and retired from the scene. (See the Watchmaker analogy.)

The new awareness of the explanatory power of universal natural law also produced a growing skepticism about such religious staples as miracles (that is, violations of natural law) and about books, such as the Bible, that reported them.

## The history of deism

### Precursors of deism

Early works of biblical criticism, such as Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* and Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise*, as well as works by lesser-known authors such as Richard Simon and Isaac La Peyrère, paved the way for the development of critical deism.

### Early deism

*For main article, see English and French Deism in the Eighteenth Century*

Lord Herbert of Cherbury (d. 1633) is generally considered the "father of English deism", and his book *De Veritate (On Truth, as It Is Distinguished from Revelation, the Probable, the Possible, and the False)* (1633) the first major statement of deism.<sup>[33]</sup> <sup>[34]</sup>

Like his contemporary Descartes, Herbert searched for the foundations of knowledge. In fact, the first two thirds of *De Veritate* are devoted to an exposition of Herbert's theory of knowledge. Herbert distinguished truths obtained through experience, and through reasoning about experience, from innate truths and from revealed truths. Innate truths are imprinted on our minds, and the evidence that they are so imprinted is that they are universally accepted. Herbert's term for universally accepted truths was *notitiae communes* – common notions.



Edward Herbert, portrait by Isaac Oliver (1560–1617)

In the realm of religion, Herbert believed that there were five common notions.<sup>[7]</sup>

- There is one Supreme God.
- He ought to be worshipped.
- Virtue and piety are the chief parts of divine worship.
- We ought to be sorry for our sins and repent of them
- Divine goodness doth dispense rewards and punishments both in this life and after it.

—Lord Herbert of Cherbury, *The Antient Religion of the Gentiles, and Causes of Their Errors*, pp. 3–4, quoted in *John Orr, English Deism*, p. 62

It is worth quoting Herbert at some length, to give the flavor of his writing. A sense of the importance that Herbert attributed to innate Common Notions will help in understanding how devastating Locke's attack on innate ideas was for Herbert's philosophy

No general agreement exists concerning the Gods, but there is universal recognition of God. Every religion in the past has acknowledged, every religion in the future will acknowledge, some sovereign deity among the Gods. ... Accordingly that which is everywhere accepted as the supreme manifestation of deity, by whatever name it may be called, I term God.

While there is no general agreement concerning the worship of Gods, sacred beings, saints, and angels, yet the Common Notion or Universal Consent tells us that adoration ought to be reserved for the one God. Hence divine religion— and no race, however savage, has existed without some expression of it— is found established among all nations. ...



The connection of Virtue with Piety, defined in this work as the right conformation of the faculties, is and always has been held to be, the most important part of religious practice. There is no general agreement concerning rites, ceremonies, traditions...; but there is the greatest possible consensus of opinion concerning the right conformation of the faculties. ... Moral virtue... is and always has been esteemed by men in every age and place and respected in every land...

There is no general agreement concerning the various rites or mysteries which the priests have devised for the expiation of sin.... General agreement among religions, the nature of divine goodness, and above all conscience, tell us that our crimes may be washed away by true penitence, and that we can be restored to new union with God. ... I do not wish to consider here whether any other more appropriate means exists by which the divine justice may be appeased, since I have undertaken in this work only to rely on truths which are not open to dispute but are derived from the evidence of immediate perception and admitted by the whole world.

...

The rewards that are eternal have been variously placed in heaven, in the stars, in the Elysian fields... Punishment has been thought to lie in metempsychosis, in hell,... or in temporary or everlasting death. But all religion, law, philosophy, and ... conscience, teach openly or implicitly that punishment or reward awaits us after this life. ... [T]here is no nation, however barbarous, which has not and will not recognise the existence of punishments and rewards. That reward and punishment exist is, then, a Common Notion, though there is the greatest difference of opinion as to their nature, quality, extent, and mode. ...

It follows from these considerations that the dogmas which recognize a sovereign Deity, enjoin us to worship Him, command us to live a holy life, lead us to repent our sins, and warn us of future recompense or punishment, proceed from God and are inscribed within us in the form of Common Notions. ...

Revealed truth exists; and it would be unjust to ignore it. But its nature is quite distinct from the truth [based on Common Notions] ... [T]he truth of revelation depends upon the authority of him who reveals it. We must, then, proceed with great care in discerning what actually is revealed.... [W]e must take great care to avoid deception, for men who are depressed, superstitious, or ignorant of causes are always liable to it. ...

—Lord Herbert of Cherbury, *De Veritate*

According to Gay, Herbert had relatively few followers, and it was not until the 1680s that Herbert found a true successor in Charles Blount (1654–1693). Blount made one special contribution to the deist debate: "by utilizing his wide classical learning, Blount demonstrated how to use pagan writers, and pagan ideas, against Christianity. ... Other Deists were to follow his lead."<sup>[35]</sup>

## John Locke

The publication of John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689, but dated 1690) marks a major turning point in the history of deism. Since Herbert's *De Veritate*, innate ideas had been the foundation of deist epistemology. Locke's famous attack on innate ideas in the first book of the *Essay* effectively destroyed that foundation and replaced it with a theory of knowledge based on experience. *Innatist* deism was replaced by *empiricist* deism. Locke himself was not a deist. He believed in both miracles and revelation, and he regarded miracles as the main proof of revelation.<sup>[36]</sup>

After Locke, constructive deism could no longer appeal to innate ideas for justification of its basic tenets such as the existence of God. Instead, under the influence of Locke and Newton, deists turned to natural theology and to arguments based on experience and Nature: the cosmological argument and the argument from design.

## The rise of British deism (1690–1740)

Peter Gay places the zenith of deism "from the end of the 1690s, when the vehement response to John Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696) started the deist debate, to the end of the 1740s when the tepid response to Middleton's *Free Inquiry* signalled its close."<sup>[37]</sup>

Among the Deists, only Anthony Collins (1676–1729) could claim much philosophical competence; only Conyers Middleton (1683–1750) was a really serious scholar. The best known Deists, notably John Toland (1670–1722) and Matthew Tindal (1656–1733), were talented publicists, clear without being deep, forceful but not subtle. ... Others, like Thomas Chubb (1679–1747), were self-educated freethinkers; a few, like Thomas Woolston (1669–1731), were close to madness.

—Peter Gay, *Deism: An Anthology*<sup>[37]</sup>

Other prominent British deists included William Wollastson, Charles Blount, Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (who did not think of himself as a deist, but shared so many attitudes with deists that Gay calls him "a Deist in fact, if not in name,"<sup>[38]</sup> ) and Henry St John, First Viscount Bolingbroke. (This last was a patron of Jonathan Swift, who regardless disagreed with his deist views by dint of being in holy orders in the Church of Ireland.)

After the writings of Woolston and Tindal, English Deism went into slow decline. ... By the 1730s, nearly all the arguments in behalf of Deism ... had been offered and refined; the intellectual caliber of leading Deists was none too impressive; and the opponents of Deism finally mustered some formidable spokesmen. The Deists of these decades, Peter Annet (1693–1769), Thomas Chubb (1679–1747), and Thomas Morgan (?–1743), are of significance to the specialist alone. ... It had all been said before, and better. .

—Peter Gay, *Deism: An Anthology*<sup>[39]</sup>

## Matthew Tindal



Dr. Matthew Tindal

the Use of Reason."

Especially noteworthy is Matthew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730), which "became, very soon after its publication, the focal center of the deist controversy. Because almost every argument, quotation, and issue raised for decades can be found here, the work is often termed 'the deist's Bible'."<sup>[40]</sup> Following Locke's successful attack on innate ideas, Tindal's "Deist Bible" redefined the foundation of deist epistemology as knowledge based on experience or human reason. This effectively widened the gap between traditional Christians and what he called "Christian Deists", since this new foundation required that "revealed" truth be validated through human reason. In *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, Tindal articulated a number of the basic tenets of deism:

- He argued against special revelation: "God designed all Mankind should at all times know, what he wills them to know, believe, profess, and practice; and has given them no other Means for this, but

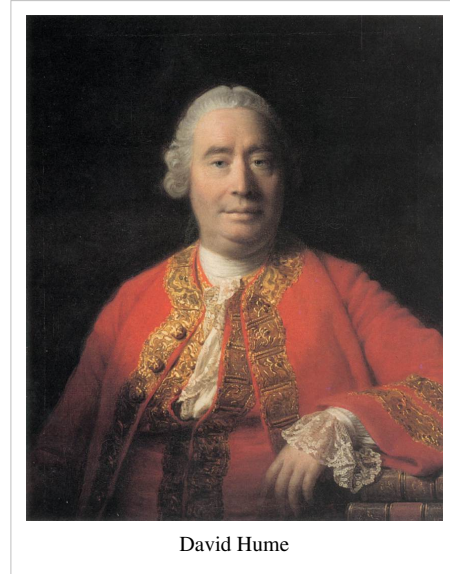
## David Hume

The writings of David Hume are sometimes credited with causing or contributing to the decline of deism. English deism, however, was already in decline before Hume's works on religion (1757,1779) were published.<sup>[39]</sup>

Furthermore, some writers maintain that Hume's writings on religion were not very influential at the time that they were published.<sup>[41]</sup>

Nevertheless, modern scholars find it interesting to study the implications of his thoughts for deism.

- Hume's skepticism about miracles makes him a natural ally of deism.
- His skepticism about the validity of natural religion cuts equally against deism and deism's opponents, who were also deeply involved in natural theology. But his famous *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* were not published until 1779, by which time deism had almost vanished in England.



David Hume

In its implications for deism, the *Natural History of Religion* (1757) may be Hume's most interesting work. In it, Hume contends that polytheism, not monotheism, was "the first and most ancient religion of mankind". In addition, contends Hume, the psychological basis of religion is not reason, but fear of the unknown.

The primary religion of mankind arises chiefly from an anxious fear of future events; and what ideas will naturally be entertained of invisible, unknown powers, while men lie under dismal apprehensions of any kind, may easily be conceived. Every image of vengeance, severity, cruelty, and malice must occur, and must augment the ghastliness and horror which oppresses the amazed religionist. ... And no idea of perverse wickedness can be framed, which those terrified devotees do not readily, without scruple, apply to their deity.

—David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion*, section XIII

As E. Graham Waring saw it;<sup>[42]</sup>

The clear reasonableness of natural religion disappeared before a semi-historical look at what can be known about uncivilized man— "a barbarous, necessitous animal," as Hume termed him. Natural religion, if by that term one means the actual religious beliefs and practices of uncivilized peoples, was seen to be a fabric of superstitions. Primitive man was no unspoiled philosopher, clearly seeing the truth of one God. And the history of religion was not, as the deists had implied, retrograde; the widespread phenomenon of superstition was caused less by priestly malice than by man's unreason as he confronted his experience.

Experts dispute whether Hume was a deist, an atheist, or something else. Hume himself was uncomfortable with the terms *deist* and *atheist*, and Hume scholar Paul Russell has argued that the best and safest term for Hume's views is *irreligion*.<sup>[43]</sup>

## Continental European deism



Voltaire at age 24  
by Nicolas de Largillière

English deism, in the words of Peter Gay, "travelled well. ... As Deism waned in England, it waxed in France and the German states."<sup>[44]</sup>

France had its own tradition of religious skepticism and natural theology in the works of Montaigne, Bayle, and Montesquieu. The most famous of the French deists was Voltaire, who acquired a taste for Newtonian science, and reinforcement of deistic inclinations, during a two-year visit to England starting in 1726.

French deists also included Maximilien Robespierre and Rousseau. For a short period of time during the French Revolution the Cult of the Supreme Being was the state religion of France.

Kant's identification with deism is controversial. An argument in favor of Kant as deist is Alan Wood's "Kant's Deism," in P. Rossi and M. Wreen (eds.), *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Re-examined* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); an argument against Kant as deist is Stephen Palmquist's "Kant's Theistic Solution" <sup>[45]</sup>.

## Deism in the United States

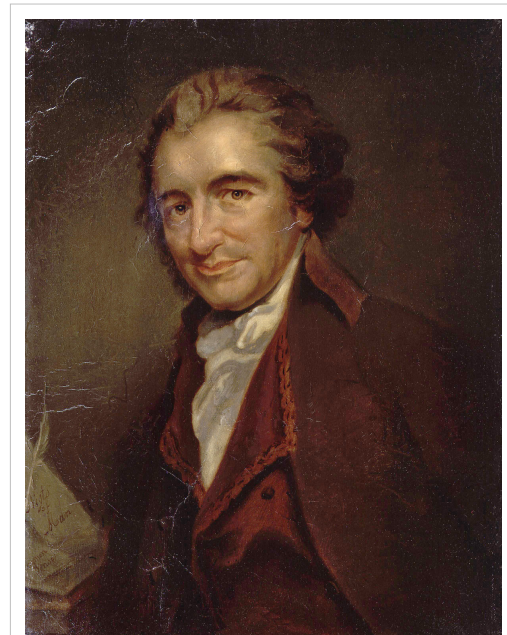
In the United States, Enlightenment philosophy (which itself was heavily inspired by deist ideals) played a major role in creating the principle of religious freedom, expressed in Thomas Jefferson's letters, and the principle of religious freedom expressed in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. American Founding Fathers, or Framers of the Constitution, who were especially noted for being influenced by such philosophy include Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Cornelius Harnett, Gouverneur Morris, and Hugh Williamson. Their political speeches show distinct deistic influence.

Other notable Founding Fathers may have been more directly deist. These include James Madison, possibly Alexander Hamilton, Ethan Allen,<sup>[46]</sup> and Thomas Paine (who published *The Age of Reason*, a treatise that helped to popularize deism throughout the USA and Europe).

A major contributor was Elihu Palmer (1764–1806), who wrote the "Bible" of American deism in his *Principles of Nature* (1801) and attempted to organize deism by forming the "Deistical Society of New York."

In the United States there is controversy over whether the Founding Fathers were Christians, deists, or something in between.<sup>[47]</sup> <sup>[48]</sup> Particularly heated is the debate over the beliefs of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington.<sup>[49]</sup> <sup>[50]</sup> <sup>[51]</sup>

Benjamin Franklin wrote in his autobiography, "Some books against Deism fell into my hands; they were said to be the substance of sermons preached at Boyle's lectures. It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them; for the arguments of the Deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me



Thomas Paine

much stronger than the refutations; in short, I soon became a thorough Deist. My arguments perverted some others, particularly Collins and Ralph; but each of them having afterwards wrong'd me greatly without the least compunction, and recollecting Keith's conduct towards me (who was another freethinker) and my own towards Vernon and Miss Read, which at times gave me great trouble, I began to suspect that this doctrine, tho' it might be true, was not very useful."<sup>[52]</sup> <sup>[53]</sup> Franklin also wrote that "the Deity sometimes interferes by his particular Providence, and sets aside the Events which would otherwise have been produc'd in the Course of Nature, or by the Free Agency of Man."<sup>[54]</sup> He later stated, in the Constitutional Convention, that "the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth -- that God governs in the affairs of men."<sup>[55]</sup>

For his part, Thomas Jefferson is perhaps one of the Founding Fathers with the most outspoken of Deist tendencies, though he is not known to have called himself a deist, generally referring to himself as a Unitarian. In particular, his treatment of the Biblical gospels which he titled *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, but which subsequently became more commonly known as the *Jefferson Bible*, exhibits a strong deist tendency of stripping away all supernatural and dogmatic references from the Christ story. However, one unpublished Ph.D. dissertation has described Jefferson as not a Deist but a "theistic rationalist", because Jefferson believed in God's continuing activity in human affairs.<sup>[56]</sup> The first-found usage of the term "theistic rationalist" is in the year 1856.<sup>[57]</sup> In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson stated that he "trembled" at the thought that "God is just," warning of eventual "supernatural influence" to abolish the scourge of slavery.<sup>[58]</sup>

## The decline of deism

Deism is generally considered to have declined as an influential school of thought by around 1800. It is probably more accurate, however, to say that deism evolved into, and contributed to, other religious movements. The term *deist* became rarely used, but deist beliefs, ideas, and influences did not. They can be seen in 19th-century liberal British theology and in the rise of Unitarianism, which adopted many of its beliefs and ideas. Even today, there are a number of deistic Web sites.

Several factors contributed to a general decline in the popularity of deism, including:

- the rise, growth, and spread of naturalism<sup>[59]</sup> and materialism, which were atheistic
- the writings of David Hume<sup>[59]</sup> <sup>[60]</sup> and Immanuel Kant<sup>[60]</sup> (and later, Charles Darwin), which increased doubt about the first cause argument and the argument from design, turning many (though not all) potential deists towards atheism instead
- criticisms (by writers such as Joseph-Marie de Maistre and Edmund Burke) of excesses of the French Revolution, and consequent rising doubts that reason and rationalism could solve all problems<sup>[60]</sup>
- deism became associated with pantheism, freethought, and atheism; all of which became associated with one another, and were so criticized by Christian apologists<sup>[59]</sup> <sup>[60]</sup>
- frustration with the determinism implicit in "This is the best of all possible worlds"
- deism remained a personal philosophy and had not yet become an organized movement (before the advent in the 20th century of organizations such as the World Union of Deists).
- with the rise of Unitarianism, based on deistic principles, people self-identified as Unitarians rather than as deists<sup>[60]</sup>
- an anti-deist and anti-reason campaign by some Christian clergymen and theologians such as Johann Georg Hamann to vilify deism
- Christian revivalist movements, such as Pietism or Methodism, which taught that a more personal relationship with a deity was possible<sup>[60]</sup>

## Deism today

Contemporary deism attempts to integrate classical deism with modern philosophy and the current state of scientific knowledge. This attempt has produced a wide variety of personal beliefs under the broad classification/category of belief of "deism". The Modern Deism web site includes one list of the unofficial tenets of modern deism.<sup>[61]</sup>

Classical deism held that a human's relationship with God was impersonal: God created the world and set it in motion but does not actively intervene in individual human affairs but rather through Divine Providence. What this means is that God will give humanity such things as reason and compassion but this applies to all and not individual intervention.

Some modern deists have modified this classical view and believe that humanity's relationship with God is transpersonal, which means that God transcends the personal/impersonal duality and moves beyond such human terms. Also, this means that it makes no sense to state that God intervenes or does not intervene, as that is a human characteristic which God does not contain. Modern deists believe that they must continue what the classical deists started and continue to use modern human knowledge to come to understand God, which in turn is why a human-like God that can lead to numerous contradictions and inconsistencies is no longer believed in and has been replaced with a much more abstract conception.

A modern definition<sup>[62]</sup> has been created and provided by the World Union of Deists (WUD) that provides a modern understanding of deism:

Deism is the recognition of a universal creative force greater than that demonstrated by mankind, supported by personal observation of laws and designs in nature and the universe, perpetuated and validated by the innate ability of human reason coupled with the rejection of claims made by individuals and organized religions of having received special divine revelation.

Because deism asserts God without accepting claims of divine revelation, it appeals to people from both ends of the religious spectrum. Antony Flew, for example, was a convert from atheism, and Raymond Fontaine<sup>[63]</sup> was a Roman Catholic priest for over 20 years.

The 2001 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) survey, which involved 50,000 participants, reported that the number of participants in the survey identifying themselves as deists grew at the rate of 717 percent between 1990 and 2001. If this were generalized to the US population as a whole, it would make deism the fastest-growing religious classification in the US for that period, with the reported total of 49,000 self-identified adherents representing about 0.02% of the US population at the time.<sup>[64] [65]</sup>

## Modern deistic organizations and websites

In 1993, Bob Johnson established the first Deist organization since the days of Thomas Paine and Elihu Palmer with the World Union of Deists<sup>[66]</sup>. The WUD offered the monthly hardcopy publication *THINK!*. Currently the WUD offers two online Deist publications, *THINKonline!* and *Deistic Thought & Action!* As well as using the Internet for spreading the Deist message, the WUD is also conducting a direct mail campaign.

1996 saw the first Web site dedicated to Deism with the WUD site Deism.com<sup>[66]</sup>. In 1998 Sullivan-County.com<sup>[67]</sup> was originally the Virginia/Tennessee affiliate of WUD and the second Deism site on the Web. It split from Deism.com to promote more traditional and historical Deist beliefs and history. From these effort, many other Deist sites and discussion groups have appeared on the Internet such as Positive Deism<sup>[68]</sup>, Deist Info<sup>[69]</sup>, Modern Deism<sup>[70]</sup> and many others. In the last few years, the Deist Alliance<sup>[71]</sup> was created so that many of the sites on the Internet could come together to support each other and advocate Deism. The Deist Alliance has its own quarterly newsletter that is written by members and readers.

In 2009 the World Union of Deists published a book on Deism, *Deism: A Revolution in Religion, A Revolution in You*<sup>[72]</sup> written by its founder and director, Bob Johnson. This book focuses on what Deism has to offer both individuals and society.

In 2010 the Church of Deism<sup>[73]</sup> was formed in an effort to extend the legal rights and privileges of more traditional religions to Deists while maintaining an absence of established dogma and ritual.

## Subcategories of deism

Modern deists hold a wide range of views on the nature of God and God's relationship to the world. The common area of agreement is the desire to use reason, experience, and nature as the basis of belief.

There are a number of subcategories of modern deism, including monodeism (this being the default standard concept of deism), polydeism, pandeism, panendeism, spiritual deism, process deism, Christian deism, scientific deism, and humanistic deism. Some deists see design in nature and purpose in the universe and in their lives (Prime Designer). Others see God and the universe in a co-creative process (Prime Motivator). Some deists view God in classical terms and see God as observing humanity but not directly intervening in our lives (Prime Observer), while others see God as a subtle and persuasive spirit (Prime Mover).

## Pandeism

Pandeism combines elements of deism with elements of pantheism, the belief that the universe is identical to God. Pandeism holds that God was a conscious and sentient force or entity that designed and created the universe, which operates by mechanisms set forth in the creation. God thus became an unconscious and nonresponsive being by *becoming* the universe. Other than this distinction (and the possibility that the universe will one day return to the state of being God), pandeistic beliefs are deistic. The earliest allusion to pandeism found to date is in 1787, in translator Gottfried Große's interpretation of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*:

Plinius, den man, wo nicht Svinozisten, doch einen **Pandeisten** nennen konnte, ist Natur oder Gott kein von der Welt getrenntes oder abgesondertes Wesen. Seine Natur ist die ganze Schöpfung im Konkreto, und eben so scheint es mit seiner Gottheit beschaffen zu seyn.<sup>[74]</sup>

Here Gottfried says that Pliny is not Spinozist, but 'could be called a Pandeist' whose nature-God 'is not separate from the world. It is nature, it is the whole creation, and it seems to be designed with divinity.' The term was used in 1859 by German philosophers and frequent collaborators Moritz Lazarus and Heymann Steinthal in *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*. They wrote:

Man stelle es also den Denkern frei, ob sie Theisten, Pan-theisten, Atheisten, Deisten (und warum nicht auch Pandeisten?)<sup>[75]</sup>

This is translated as:

So we should let these thinkers decide themselves whether they are theists, pan-theists, atheists, deists (and why not even pandeists?)

In the 1960s, theologian Charles Hartshorne scrupulously examined and rejected both deism and pandeism (as well as pantheism) in favor of a conception of God whose characteristics included "absolute perfection in some respects, relative perfection in all others" or "AR", writing that this theory "is able consistently to embrace all that is positive in either deism or pandeism", concluding that "panentheistic doctrine contains all of deism and pandeism except their arbitrary negations".<sup>[76]</sup>

## Panendeism

Panendeism combines deism with panentheism, the belief that the universe is part of God, but not all of God. A component of panendeism is "experiential metaphysics" – the idea that a mystical component exists within the framework of panendeism, allowing the seeker to *experience* a relationship to Deity through meditation, prayer or some other type of communion.<sup>[77]</sup> This is a major departure from Classical Deism.

A 1995 news article includes an early usage of the term by Jim Garvin, a Vietnam veteran who became a Trappist monk in the Holy Cross Abbey of Berryville, Virginia, and went on to lead the economic development of Phoenix, Arizona. Despite his Roman Catholic post, Garvin described his spiritual position as "pandeism" or 'pan-en-deism,' something very close to the Native American concept of the all-pervading Great Spirit...<sup>[78]</sup>

## Spiritual Deism

Spiritual Deism is the religious and philosophical belief in one indefinable, omnipresent god who is the cause and/or the substance of the universe. Spiritual Deists reject all divine revelation, religious dogma, and supernatural events and favor an ongoing personalized connection with the divine presence through intuition, communion with nature, meditation and contemplation. Generally, Spiritual Deists reject the notion that God consciously intervenes in human affairs.

Spiritual Deism is extremely general and is not bound by any ideology other than the belief in one indefinable god whose spiritual presence can be felt in nature. As such, Spiritual Deism is not infected by political principles or partisanship of any kind. Because of this, Spiritual Deists are extremely welcoming and tolerant to all except dogma, demagoguery, and intolerance itself. Therefore, most Spiritual Deists are more comfortable contemplating the universe as a mystery than they are in filling it with belief systems such as eternal reward, reincarnation, karma, etc.

Spiritual Deists are likely to label themselves "Spiritual But Not Religious."

## Opinions on prayer

Many classical deists were critical of some types of prayer. For example, in *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, Matthew Tindal argues against praying for miracles, but advocates prayer as both a human duty and a human need.<sup>[79]</sup>

Today, deists hold a variety of opinions about prayer:

- Some contemporary deists believe (with the classical deists) that God has created the universe perfectly, so no amount of supplication, request, or begging can change the fundamental nature of the universe.
- Some deists believe that God is not an entity that can be contacted by human beings through petitions for relief; rather, God can only be experienced through the nature of the universe.
- Some deists do not believe in divine intervention but still find value in prayer as a form of meditation, self-cleansing, and spiritual renewal. Such prayers are often appreciative (that is, "Thank you for ...") rather than supplicative (that is, "Please God grant me ...").<sup>[80]</sup>
- Some deists, usually referred to as Spiritual Deists, practice meditation and make frequent use of Affirmative Prayer, a non-supplicative form of prayer which is common in the New Thought movement.

## Recent discussion on role of deism

Recently, Charles Taylor, in his book on *Secular Age* showed the historical role of deism, leading to what he calls an exclusive humanism. This humanism invokes a moral order, whose ontic commitment, is wholly intra-human; not carrying reference to transcendence.<sup>[81]</sup> One of the special achievements of such deism-based humanism is that it discloses new, anthropocentric moral sources by which human beings are motivated and empowered to accomplish mutual benefit.<sup>[82]</sup> This is the province of a buffered self, disengaged, who is the locus of dignity, freedom,



discipline, and carrying a sense of human capability.<sup>[83]</sup> According to Taylor by the early 19th century, this deism-mediated exclusive humanism developed as an alternative to Christian faith in a personal God and an order of miracles and mystery.

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Anthologies of deist writings include:

- *Deism: An Anthology* by Peter Gay (Van Nostrand, 1968)
- *Deism and Natural Religion: A Source Book* by E. Graham Waring (Frederick Ungar, 1967)

## External links

### Informational links

- A Critical Examination at Deism (<http://www.sullivan-county.com/deism.htm>)
- Unified Deism (<http://www.unifieddeism.com>)
- The Origins of English Rationalism ([http://www.sullivan-county.com/deism/eng\\_rat.htm](http://www.sullivan-county.com/deism/eng_rat.htm))
- Deism (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi?id=dv1-77>) – *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*
- Deism in English (<http://en.deizm.net>)
- Church of Deism (<http://churchofdeism.org>)
- English Deism (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/d/deismeng.htm>) – Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
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- Deism (<http://www.religioustolerance.org/deism.htm>) – ReligiousTolerance.org
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- The Rise and Fall of English Deism (<http://ontruth.com/deism.html>)
- World Union of Deists (<http://www.deism.com>)
- Deist Links (<http://tvftm.com>)

### Works by Thomas Paine


- collection of essays (<http://www.deism.com/paine.htm>)
  - *The Age of Reason* (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/3743>) at Project Gutenberg
  - The Age of Reason, The Complete Edition ([http://www.deism.com/the\\_age\\_of\\_reason\\_paine.htm](http://www.deism.com/the_age_of_reason_paine.htm))
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# René Descartes

## René Descartes



Portrait after Frans Hals, 1648<sup>[1]</sup>

<b>Full name</b>	René Descartes
<b>Born</b>	31 March 1596 La Haye en Touraine, Touraine (present-day Descartes, Indre-et-Loire), France
<b>Died</b>	11 February 1650 (aged 53) Stockholm, Sweden
<b>Era</b>	17th-century philosophy
<b>Region</b>	Western Philosophy
<b>School</b>	Cartesianism, Rationalism, Foundationalism
<b>Main interests</b>	Metaphysics, Epistemology, Mathematics
<b>Notable ideas</b>	Cogito ergo sum, method of doubt, Cartesian coordinate system, Cartesian dualism, ontological argument for the existence of Christian God; Folium of Descartes
<b>Signature</b>	

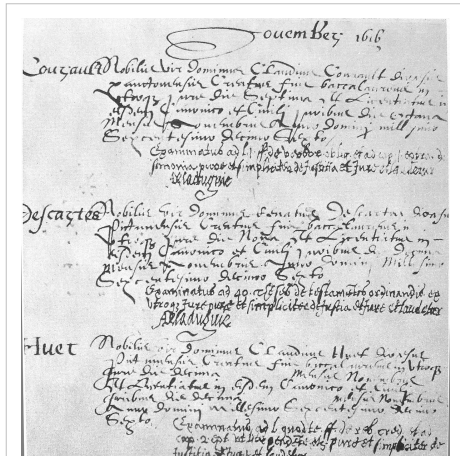
**René Descartes** French pronunciation: [ʁəne dekaʁt]; (31 March 1596 – 11 February 1650) (Latinized form: *Renatus Cartesius*; adjectival form: "Cartesian")<sup>[2]</sup> was a French philosopher and writer who spent most of his adult life in the Dutch Republic. He has been dubbed the 'Father of Modern Philosophy', and much subsequent Western philosophy is a response to his writings, which are studied closely to this day. In particular, his *Meditations on First Philosophy* continues to be a standard text at most university philosophy departments. Descartes' influence in mathematics is equally apparent; the Cartesian coordinate system — allowing algebraic equations to be expressed as geometric shapes, in a 2D coordinate system — was named after him. He is credited as the father of analytical geometry, the bridge between algebra and geometry, crucial to the discovery of infinitesimal calculus and analysis. Descartes was also one of the key figures in the Scientific Revolution.

Descartes frequently sets his views apart from those of his predecessors. In the opening section of the *Passions of the Soul*, a treatise on the Early Modern version of what are now commonly called emotions, Descartes goes so far as to assert that he will write on this topic "as if no one had written on these matters before". Many elements of his philosophy have precedents in late Aristotelianism, the revived Stoicism of the 16th century, or in earlier philosophers like St. Augustine. In his natural philosophy, he differs from the schools on two major points: First, he rejects the analysis of corporeal substance into matter and form; second, he rejects any appeal to ends—divine or natural—in explaining natural phenomena.<sup>[3]</sup> In his theology, he insists on the absolute freedom of God's act of creation.

Descartes was a major figure in 17th-century continental rationalism, later advocated by Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Leibniz, and opposed by the empiricist school of thought consisting of Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Hume. Leibniz, Spinoza and Descartes were all well versed in mathematics as well as philosophy, and Descartes and Leibniz contributed greatly to science as well.

He is perhaps best known for the philosophical statement "*Cogito ergo sum*" (French: *Je pense, donc je suis*; English: *I think, therefore I am*), found in part IV of *Discourse on the Method* (1637 – written in French but with inclusion of "*Cogito ergo sum*") and §7 of part I of *Principles of Philosophy* (1644 – written in Latin).

## Biography



Graduation registry for Descartes at the Collège Royal Henry-Le-Grand, La Flèche, 1616

Descartes was born in La Haye en Touraine (now Descartes), Indre-et-Loire, France. When he was one year old, his mother Jeanne Brochard died. His father Joachim was a member in the provincial parliament. At the age of eight, he entered the Jesuit Collège Royal Henry-Le-Grand at La Flèche.<sup>[4]</sup> After graduation, he studied at the University of Poitiers, earning a *Baccalauréat* and *Licence* in law in 1616, in accordance with his father's wishes that he should become a lawyer.<sup>[5]</sup>

"I entirely abandoned the study of letters. Resolving to seek no knowledge other than that of which could be found in myself or else in the great book of the world, I spent the rest of my youth traveling, visiting courts and armies, mixing with people of diverse temperaments and ranks, gathering various experiences, testing myself in the situations which fortune offered me, and at all times reflecting

upon whatever came my way so as to derive some profit from it." (Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*).

In 1618, Descartes was engaged in the army of Maurice of Nassau in the Dutch Republic, but as a truce had been established between Holland and Spain, Descartes used his spare time to study mathematics. In this way he became acquainted with Isaac Beeckman, principal of Dordrecht school. Beeckman had proposed a difficult mathematical problem, and to his astonishment, it was the young Descartes who found the solution. Both believed that it was necessary to create a method that thoroughly linked mathematics and physics.<sup>[6]</sup> While in the service of the Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, Descartes was present at the Battle of the White Mountain outside Prague, in November 1620.<sup>[7]</sup>

On the night of 10–11 November 1619, while stationed in Neuburg an der Donau, Germany, Descartes experienced a series of three powerful dreams or visions that he later claimed profoundly influenced his life. He concluded from these visions that the pursuit of science would prove to be, for him, the pursuit of true wisdom and a central part of his life's work.<sup>[8]</sup> Descartes also saw very clearly that all truths were linked with one another, so that finding a fundamental truth and proceeding with logic would open the way to all science. This basic truth, Descartes found quite soon: his famous "I think".<sup>[6]</sup>

In 1622 he returned to France, and during the next few years spent time in Paris and other parts of Europe. It was during a stay in Paris that he composed his first essay on method: *Regulae at Directionem Ingenii* (Rules for the Direction of the Mind).<sup>[6]</sup> He arrived in La Haye in 1623, selling all of his property to invest in bonds, which provided a comfortable income for the rest of his life. Descartes was present at the siege of La Rochelle by Cardinal Richelieu in 1627.

He returned to the Dutch Republic in 1628, where he lived until September 1649. In April 1629 he joined the University of Franeker, living at the Sjaerdemaslot, and the next year, under the name "Poitevin", he enrolled at the Leiden University to study mathematics with Jacob Golius and astronomy with Martin Hortensius.<sup>[9]</sup> In October

1630 he had a falling-out with Beeckman, whom he accused of plagiarizing some of his ideas. In Amsterdam, he had a relationship with a servant girl, Helena Jans van der Strom, with whom he had a daughter, Francine, who was born in 1635 in Deventer, at which time Descartes taught at the Utrecht University. Francine Descartes died in 1640 in Amersfoort, from Scarlet Fever.

While in the Netherlands he changed his address frequently, living among other places in Dordrecht (1628), Franeker (1629), Amsterdam (1629–30), Leiden (1630), Amsterdam (1630–32), Deventer (1632–34), Amsterdam (1634–35), Utrecht (1635–36), Leiden (1636), Egmond (1636–38), Santpoort (1638–1640), Leiden (1640–41), Endegeest (a castle near Oegstgeest) (1641–43), and finally for an extended time in Egmond-Binnen (1643–49).

Despite these frequent moves he wrote all his major work during his 20-plus years in the Netherlands, where he managed to revolutionize mathematics and philosophy. In 1633, Galileo was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church, and Descartes abandoned plans to publish *Treatise on the World*, his work of the previous four years. Nevertheless, in 1637 he published part of this work in three essays: *Les Météores* (The Meteors), *La Dioptrique* (Dioptrics) and *La Géométrie* (Geometry), preceded by an introduction, his famous *Discours de la Méthode* (Discourse on the Method). In it Descartes lays out four rules of thought, meant to ensure that our knowledge rests upon a firm foundation.

Descartes continued to publish works concerning both mathematics and philosophy for the rest of his life. In 1641 he published a metaphysics work, *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia* (Meditations on First Philosophy), written in Latin and thus addressed to the learned. It was followed, in 1644, by *Principia Philosophiæ* (Principles of Philosophy), a kind of synthesis of the Meditations and the Discourse. In 1643, Cartesian philosophy was condemned at the University of Utrecht, and Descartes began his long correspondence with Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, devoted mainly to moral and psychological subjects. Connected with this correspondence, in 1649 he published *Les Passions de l'âme* (Passions of the Soul), that he dedicated to the Princess. In 1647, he was awarded a pension by the King of France. Descartes was interviewed by Frans Burman at Egmond-Binnen in 1648.



René Descartes with Queen Christina of Sweden

A French translation of *Principia Philosophiæ*, prepared by Abbot Claude Picot, was published in 1647. This edition Descartes dedicated to Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia. In the preface Descartes praised true philosophy as a means to attain wisdom. He identifies four ordinary sources to reach wisdom, and finally says that there is a fifth, better and more secure, consisting in the search for first causes.<sup>[10]</sup>

René Descartes died on 11 February 1650 in Stockholm, Sweden, where he had been invited as a tutor for Queen Christina of Sweden. The cause of death was said to be pneumonia; accustomed to working in bed until noon, he may have suffered damage to his health from Christina's demands for early morning study (the lack of sleep could have severely compromised his immune system). Descartes stayed at the French ambassador Pierre Chanut. In his recent book, *Der rätselhafte Tod des René Descartes* (The Mysterious Death of René Descartes),<sup>[11]</sup> the German philosopher Theodor Ebert<sup>[12]</sup> asserts that Descartes died not through natural causes, but from an arsenic-laced communion wafer given to him by a Catholic priest. He believes that Jacques Viogué, a missionary working in Stockholm, administered the poison because he feared Descartes's radical theological ideas would derail an expected conversion to Roman Catholicism by the monarch of Protestant Lutheran Sweden.<sup>[13]</sup>

In 1663, the Pope placed his works on the Index of Prohibited Books.

As a Roman Catholic in a Protestant nation, he was interred in a graveyard used mainly for unbaptized infants in Adolf Fredriks kyrka in Stockholm. Later, his remains were taken to France and buried in the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris. Although the National Convention in 1792 had planned to transfer his remains to the Panthéon, they are, two centuries later, still resting between two other graves — those of the scholarly monks Jean Mabillon and Bernard de Montfaucon — in a chapel of the abbey. His memorial, erected in the 18th century, remains in the Swedish church.

## Philosophical work

Descartes is often regarded as the first thinker to provide a philosophical framework for the natural sciences as these began to develop.<sup>[14]</sup>

In his *Discourse on the Method*, he attempts to arrive at a fundamental set of principles that one can know as true without any doubt. To achieve this, he employs a method called hyperbolic/metaphysical doubt, also sometimes referred to as methodological skepticism: he rejects any ideas that can be doubted, and then reestablishes them in order to acquire a firm foundation for genuine knowledge.<sup>[15]</sup>

Initially, Descartes arrives at only a single principle: thought exists. Thought cannot be separated from me, therefore, I exist (*Discourse on the Method* and *Principles of Philosophy*). Most famously, this is known as *cogito ergo sum* (English: "I think, therefore I am"). Therefore, Descartes concluded, if he doubted, then something or someone must be doing the doubting, therefore the very fact that he doubted proved his existence. "The simple meaning of the phrase is that if one is skeptical of existence, that is in and of itself proof that he does exist."<sup>[16]</sup>

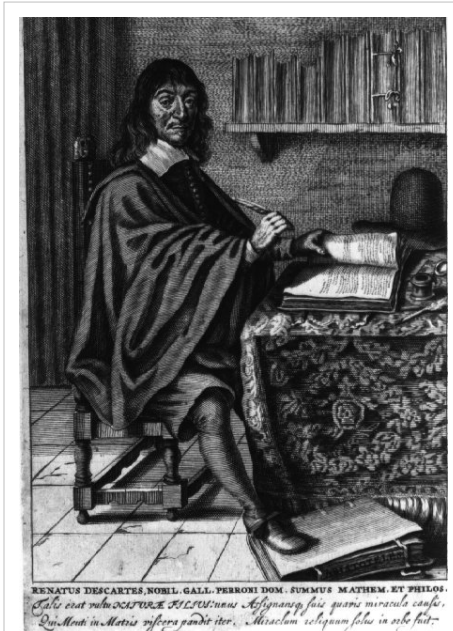
Descartes concludes that he can be certain that he exists because he thinks. But in what form? He perceives his body through the use of the senses; however, these have previously been unreliable. So Descartes determines that the only indubitable knowledge is that he is a *thinking thing*. Thinking is what he does, and his power must come from his essence. Descartes defines "thought" (*cogitatio*) as "what happens in me such that I am immediately conscious of it, insofar as I am conscious of it". Thinking is thus every activity of a person of which he is immediately conscious.<sup>[17]</sup>

To further demonstrate the limitations of the senses, Descartes proceeds with what is known as the *Wax Argument*. He considers a piece of wax; his senses inform him that it has certain characteristics, such as shape, texture, size, color, smell, and so forth. When he brings the wax towards a flame, these characteristics change completely. However, it seems that it is still the same thing: it is still the same piece of wax, even though the data of the senses inform him that all of its characteristics are different. Therefore, in order to properly grasp the nature of the wax, he should put aside the senses. He must use his mind. Descartes concludes:

“And so something which I thought I was seeing with my eyes is in fact grasped solely by the faculty of judgment which is in my mind.”



The tomb of Descartes (middle, with detail of the inscription), in the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris



René Descartes at work



In this manner, Descartes proceeds to construct a system of knowledge, discarding perception as unreliable and instead admitting only deduction as a method. In the third and fifth *Meditation*, he offers an ontological proof of a benevolent God (through both the ontological argument and trademark argument). Because God is benevolent, he can have some faith in the account of reality his senses provide him, for God has provided him with a working mind and sensory system and does not desire to deceive him. From this supposition, however, he finally establishes the possibility of acquiring knowledge about the world based on deduction *and* perception. In terms of epistemology therefore, he can be said to have contributed such ideas as a rigorous conception of foundationalism and the possibility that reason is the only reliable method of attaining knowledge.

Descartes also wrote a response to skepticism about the existence of the external world. He argues that sensory perceptions come to him involuntarily, and are not willed by him. They are external to his senses, and according to Descartes, this is evidence of the existence of something outside of his mind, and thus, an external world. Descartes goes on to show that the things in the external world are material by arguing that God would not deceive him as to the ideas that are being transmitted, and that God has given him the "propensity" to believe that such ideas are caused by material things.

## Dualism

Further information: Mind-body dichotomy and dualism

Descartes in his *Passions of the Soul* and *The Description of the Human Body* suggested that the body works like a machine, that it has the material properties of extension and motion, and that it follows the laws of nature. The mind (or soul), on the other hand, was described as a nonmaterial entity that lacks extension and motion, and does not follow the laws of nature. Descartes argued that only humans have minds, and that the mind interacts with the body at the pineal gland. This form of dualism or duality proposes that the mind controls the body, but that the body can also influence the otherwise rational mind, such as when people act out of passion. Most of the previous accounts of the relationship between mind and body had been uni-directional.

Descartes suggested that the pineal gland is "the seat of the soul" for several reasons. First, the soul is unitary, and unlike many areas of the brain the pineal gland appeared to be unitary (though subsequent microscopic inspection has revealed it is formed of two hemispheres). Second, Descartes observed that the pineal gland was located near the ventricles. He believed the cerebrospinal fluid of the ventricles acted through the nerves to control the body, and that the pineal gland influenced this process. Finally, although Descartes realized that both humans and animals have pineal glands (see *Passions of the Soul* Part One, Section 50, AT 369), he believed that only humans have minds. This led him to the belief that animals cannot feel pain, and Descartes's practice of vivisection (the dissection of live animals) became widely used throughout Europe until the Enlightenment. Cartesian dualism set the agenda for philosophical discussion of the mind–body problem for many years after Descartes's death.

## Mathematical legacy

Descartes's theory provided the basis for the calculus of Newton and Leibniz, by applying infinitesimal calculus to the tangent line problem, thus permitting the evolution of that branch of modern mathematics.<sup>[18]</sup> This appears even more astounding considering that the work was just intended as an *example* to his *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison, et chercher la vérité dans les sciences* (*Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Searching for Truth in the Sciences*, better known under the shortened title *Discours de la méthode*; English, *Discourse on the Method*).

Descartes' rule of signs is also a commonly used method to determine the number of positive and negative roots of a polynomial.

Descartes created analytic geometry, and discovered an early form of the law of conservation of momentum (the term momentum refers to the momentum of a force). He outlined his views on the universe in his *Principles of*

Philosophy.

Descartes also made contributions to the field of optics. He showed by using geometric construction and the law of refraction (also known as Descartes's law or more commonly Snell's law, who discovered it 16 years earlier) that the angular radius of a rainbow is 42 degrees (i.e., the angle subtended at the eye by the edge of the rainbow and the ray passing from the sun through the rainbow's centre is  $42^\circ$ ).<sup>[19]</sup> He also independently discovered the law of reflection, and his essay on optics was the first published mention of this law.<sup>[20]</sup>

One of Descartes most enduring legacies was his development of Cartesian geometry, which uses algebra to describe geometry. He "invented the convention of representing unknowns in equations by  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ , and knowns by  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$ ". He also "pioneered the standard notation" that uses superscripts to show the powers or exponents, for example the 4 used in  $x^4$  to indicate squaring of squaring.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Contemporary reception

Although Descartes was well known in academic circles towards the end of his life, the teaching of his works in schools was controversial. Henri de Roy (Henricus Regius, 1598–1679), Professor of Medicine at the University of Utrecht, was condemned by the Rector of the University, Gijbert Voet (Voetius), for teaching Descartes's physics.<sup>[22]</sup>

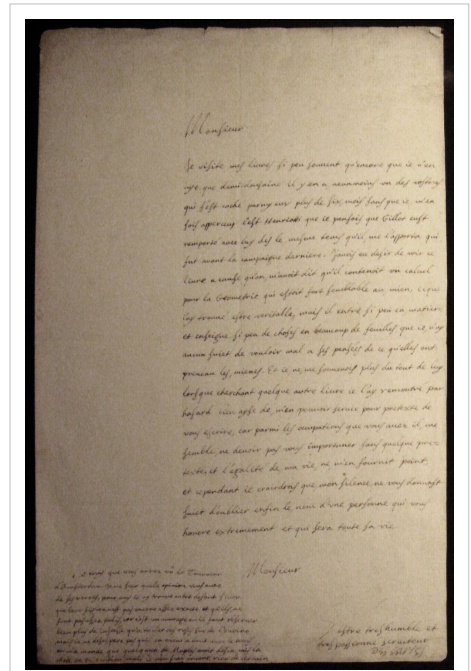
## Religious beliefs

The religious beliefs of René Descartes have been rigorously debated within scholarly circles. He claimed to be a devout Roman Catholic, claiming that one of the purposes of the *Meditations* was to defend the Christian faith. However, in his own era, Descartes was accused of harboring secret deist or atheist beliefs. Contemporary Blaise Pascal said that "I cannot forgive Descartes; in all his philosophy, Descartes did his best to dispense with God. But Descartes could not avoid prodding God to set the world in motion with a snap of his lordly fingers; after that, he had no more use for God."<sup>[23]</sup>

Stephen Gaukroger's biography of Descartes reports that "he had a deep religious faith as a Catholic, which he retained to his dying day, along with a resolute, passionate desire to discover the truth."<sup>[24]</sup> After Descartes died in Sweden, Queen Christina abdicated her throne to convert to Roman Catholicism (Swedish law required a Protestant ruler). The only Roman Catholic with whom she had prolonged contact was Descartes, who was her personal tutor.

## Writings

- 1618. *Compendium Musicae*. A treatise on music theory and the aesthetics of music written for Descartes's early collaborator Isaac Beeckman.
- 1626–1628. *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* (*Rules for the Direction of the Mind*). Incomplete. First published posthumously in 1684. The best critical edition, which includes an early Dutch translation, is edited by Giovanni Crapulli (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966).
- 1630–1633. *Le Monde* (*The World*) and *L'Homme* (*Man*). Descartes's first systematic presentation of his natural philosophy. *Man* was published posthumously in Latin translation in 1662; and *The World* posthumously in 1664.
- 1637. *Discours de la méthode* (*Discourse on the Method*). An introduction to the *Essais*, which include the *Dioptrique*, the *Météores* and the *Géométrie*.
- 1637. *La Géométrie* (*Geometry*). Descartes's major work in mathematics. There is an English translation by Michael Mahoney (New York: Dover, 1979).
- 1641. *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (*Meditations on First Philosophy*), also known as *Metaphysical Meditations*. In Latin; a French translation, probably done without Descartes's supervision, was published in 1647. Includes six Objections and Replies. A second edition, published the following year, included an additional objection and reply, and a *Letter to Dinet*.
- 1644. *Principia philosophiae* (*Principles of Philosophy*), a Latin textbook at first intended by Descartes to replace the Aristotelian textbooks then used in universities. A French translation, *Principes de philosophie* by Claude Picot, under the supervision of Descartes, appeared in 1647 with a letter-preface to Queen Christina of Sweden.
- 1647. *Notae in programma* (*Comments on a Certain Broadsheet*). A reply to Descartes's one-time disciple Henricus Regius.
- 1647. *The Description of the Human Body*. Published posthumously.
- 1648. *Responsiones Renati Des Cartes...* (*Conversation with Burman*). Notes on a Q&A session between Descartes and Frans Burman on 16 April 1648. Rediscovered in 1895 and published for the first time in 1896. An annotated bilingual edition (Latin with French translation), edited by Jean-Marie Beyssade, was published in 1981 (Paris: PUF).
- 1649. *Les passions de l'âme* (*Passions of the Soul*). Dedicated to Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia.
- 1656. *Musicae Compendium* (*Instruction in Music*). Posth. Publ.: Johannes Janssonius jun., Amsterdam
- 1657. *Correspondence*. Published by Descartes's literary executor Claude Clerselier. The third edition, in 1667, was the most complete; Clerselier omitted, however, much of the material pertaining to mathematics.



Handwritten letter by Descartes, December 1638.

In January 2010, a previously unknown letter from Descartes, dated 27 May 1641, was found by the Dutch philosopher Erik-Jan Bos when browsing through Google. Bos found the letter mentioned in a summary of autographs kept by Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania. The College was unaware that the letter had never been published. This was the third letter by Descartes found in the last 25 years.<sup>[25] [26]</sup>

## Notes

- [1] Russell Shorto. *Descartes' Bones*. (Doubleday, 2008) p. 218; see also The Louvre, Atlas Database, <http://cartelen.louvre.fr>
- [2] Colie, Rosalie L. (1957). *Light and Enlightenment*. Cambridge University Press. p. 58.
- [3] Carlson, Neil R. (2001). *Physiology of Behavior*. Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Pearson: Allyn & Bacon. p. 8. ISBN 0-205-30840-6.
- [4] Desmond, p. 24
- [5] Baird, Forrest E.; Walter Kaufmann (2008). *From Plato to Derrida*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall. pp. 373–377. ISBN 0-13-158591-6.
- [6] Guy Durandin, Introduction to Les Principes de la Philosophie, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 1970.
- [7] Battle of White Mountain (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/642395/Battle-of-White-Mountain>), Britannica Online Encyclopedia
- [8] Clarke, Desmond (2006). *Descartes: A biography*, pp. 58–59. Cambridge U. Press. <http://books.google.com/books?id=W3D9KGVyz6sC>
- [9] A.C. Grayling, *Descartes: The Life of Rene Descartes and Its Place in His Times*, Simon and Schuster, 2006, pp 151–152
- [10] Blom, John J., *Descartes. His Moral Philosophy and Psychology*. New York University Press, 1978. ISBN 0-8147-0999-0
- [11] Theodor Ebert, *Der rätselhafte Tod des René Descartes* (<http://www.science-shop.de/artikel/1012444>), 235 p., Alibri, 2009. ISBN 9783865690487
- [12] Prof. Dr. Theodor Ebert, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen-Nürnberg ([http://www.presse.uni-erlangen.de/infocenter/presse/pressemitteilungen/nachrichten\\_2004/01/3458ebert65.shtml](http://www.presse.uni-erlangen.de/infocenter/presse/pressemitteilungen/nachrichten_2004/01/3458ebert65.shtml)).
- [13] Lizzy Davies, *Descartes was 'poisoned by Catholic priest'* (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/feb/14/rene-descartes-poisoned-catholic-priest>), The Observer, Sunday, 14 February 2010.
- [14] Emily Grosholz (1991). *Cartesian method and the problem of reduction* (<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=2EtAVLU1eIAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1>). Oxford University Press. ISBN 0198242506. . "But contemporary debate has tended to...understand [Cartesian method] merely as the 'method of doubt'...I want to define Descartes's method in broader terms...to trace its impact on the domains of mathematics and physics as well as metaphysics."
- [15] Rebecca, Copenhaver. "Forms of skepticism" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20050108095032/http://www.lclark.edu/~rebeccac/forms.html>). Archived from the original (<http://www.lclark.edu/~rebeccac/forms.html>) on 8 January 2005. . Retrieved 15 August 2007.
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- [19] Tipler, P. A. and G. Mosca (2004). *Physics For Scientists And Engineers*. W. H. Freeman. ISBN 0-7167-4389-2.
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- [22] Cottingham, John, Dugald Murdoch, and Robert Stoothof. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1985. 293.
- [23] Think Exist on Blaise Pascal ([http://thinkexist.com/quotation/i\\_cannot\\_forgive\\_descartes\\_in\\_all\\_his\\_philosophy/153298.html](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/i_cannot_forgive_descartes_in_all_his_philosophy/153298.html)). Retrieved 12 February 2009.
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- [25] "Unknown letter from Descartes found" ([http://www.nrc.nl/international/article2492445.ece/Unknown\\_letter\\_from\\_Descartes\\_found](http://www.nrc.nl/international/article2492445.ece/Unknown_letter_from_Descartes_found))
- [26] (Dutch) "Hoe Descartes in 1641 op andere gedachten kwam – Onbekende brief van Franse filosoof gevonden" ([http://www.nrc.nl/wetenschap/article2491995.ece/Hoe\\_Descartes\\_in\\_1641\\_op\\_andere\\_gedachten\\_kwam](http://www.nrc.nl/wetenschap/article2491995.ece/Hoe_Descartes_in_1641_op_andere_gedachten_kwam))

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## External links

### Video

- *Bernard Williams interviewed about Descartes on "Men of ideas"* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44h9QuWcJYk>)
- René Descartes (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=8404>) at Find a Grave

### General

- Detailed biography of Descartes (<http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Mathematicians/Descartes.html>)
-  "René Descartes" in the 1913 *Catholic Encyclopedia*.
- Descartes featured on the 100 French Franc banknote from 1942. (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jbourj/money5.htm>)
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- Descartes Philosophical Writings tr. by Norman Kemp Smith (<http://www.archive.org/details/descartesphiloso010838mbp>) at archive.org
- Studies in the Cartesian philosophy (1902) by Norman Kemp Smith (<http://www.archive.org/details/studiesincartes00smitgoog>) at archive.org
- The Philosophical Works Of Descartes Volume II (1934) (<http://www.archive.org/details/philosophicalwor005524mbp>) at archive.org
- Works by or about René Descartes (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79-61201>) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)
- Free scores by René Descartes at the International Music Score Library Project
- René Descartes (1596—1650): Overview(IEP) (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/descarte/>)
- René Descartes:The Mind-Body Distinction(IEP) (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/descmind/>)
- Cartesian skepticism(DEP) (<http://philosophy.uwaterloo.ca/MindDict/cartesianskepticism.html>)

### Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

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- René Descartes (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes/>)
  - Descartes' Epistemology (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-epistemology/>)
  - Descartes' Ethics (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-ethics/>)
  - Descartes' Life and Works (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-works/>)
  - Descartes' Modal Metaphysics (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-modal/>)
  - Descartes' Ontological Argument (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-ontological/>)
  - Descartes and the Pineal Gland (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pineal-gland/>)
  - Descartes' Physics (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-physics/>)
  - Descartes' Theory of Ideas (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-ideas/>)
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# David Hume

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## David Hume



David Hume

<b>Born</b>	7 May 1711 Edinburgh, Scotland
<b>Died</b>	25 August 1776 (aged 65) Edinburgh, Scotland
<b>Era</b>	18th-century philosophy
<b>Region</b>	Western Philosophy
<b>School</b>	Scottish Enlightenment; Naturalism, Skepticism, Empiricism, Utilitarianism, Classical liberalism
<b>Main interests</b>	Epistemology, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind, Ethics, Political Philosophy, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Religion, Classical Economics
<b>Notable ideas</b>	Problem of causation, Bundle theory, Induction, Is–ought problem, Utility, Science of man

**David Hume** (7 May [O.S. 26 April] 1711 – 25 August 1776) was a Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist, known especially for his philosophical empiricism and skepticism. He was one of the most important figures in the history of Western philosophy and the Scottish Enlightenment. Hume is often grouped with John Locke, George Berkeley, and a handful of others as a British Empiricist.<sup>[1]</sup>

Beginning with his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), Hume strove to create a total naturalistic "science of man" that examined the psychological basis of human nature. In stark opposition to the rationalists who preceded him, most notably Descartes, he concluded that desire rather than reason governed human behaviour, saying: "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions." A prominent figure in the skeptical philosophical tradition and a strong empiricist, he argued against the existence of innate ideas, concluding instead that humans have knowledge only of things they directly experience. Thus he divides perceptions between strong and lively "impressions" or direct sensations and fainter "ideas," which are copied from impressions. He developed the position that mental behaviour is governed by "custom"; our use of induction, for example, is justified only by our idea of the "constant conjunction" of causes and effects. Without direct impressions of a metaphysical "self," he concluded that humans have no actual conception of the self, only of a bundle of sensations associated with the self. Hume advocated a compatibilist theory of free will that proved extremely influential on subsequent moral philosophy. He was also a sentimentalist who held that ethics are based on feelings rather than abstract moral principles. Hume also examined the normative is–ought problem. He held notoriously ambiguous views of Christianity,<sup>[2]</sup> but famously challenged the argument from design in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779).

Kant credited Hume with waking him up from his "dogmatic slumbers" and Hume has proved extremely influential on subsequent philosophy, especially on utilitarianism, logical positivism, William James, philosophy of science, early analytic philosophy, cognitive philosophy, and other movements and thinkers. The philosopher Jerry Fodor

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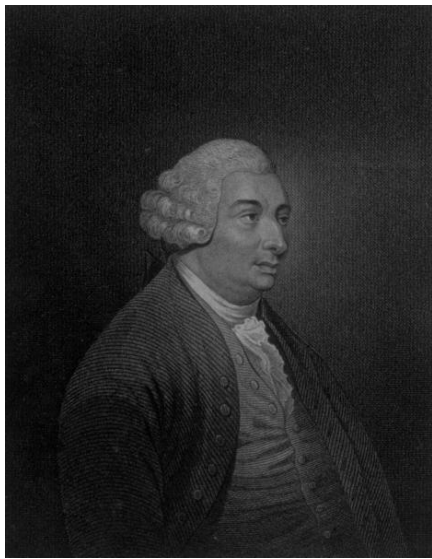


proclaimed Hume's *Treatise* "the founding document of cognitive science."<sup>[3]</sup> Also famous as a prose stylist,<sup>[4]</sup> Hume pioneered the essay as a literary genre and engaged with contemporary intellectual luminaries such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith (who acknowledged Hume's influence on his economics and political philosophy), James Boswell, Joseph Butler, and Thomas Reid.

## Life

David Hume, originally David Home, son of Joseph Home of Chirside, advocate, and Katherine Falconer, was born on 26 April 1711 (Old Style) in a tenement on the north side of the Lawnmarket in Edinburgh. He changed his name in 1734 because the English had difficulty pronouncing 'Home' in the Scottish manner. Throughout his life Hume, who never married, spent time occasionally at his family home at Ninewells by Chirside, Berwickshire.

## Education



An engraving of Hume from his *The History of England* Vol. I (1754)

Hume attended the University of Edinburgh at the unusually early age of twelve (possibly as young as ten) at a time when fourteen was normal. At first he considered a career in law, but came to have, in his words, "an insurmountable aversion to everything but the pursuits of Philosophy and general Learning; and while [my family] fancied I was poring over Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the Authors which I was secretly devouring."<sup>[5]</sup> He had little respect for the professors of his time, telling a friend in 1735, "there is nothing to be learnt from a Professor, which is not to be met with in Books."<sup>[6]</sup>

Hume made a philosophical discovery that opened up to him "...a new Scene of Thought," which inspired him "...to throw up every other Pleasure or Business to apply entirely to it."<sup>[7]</sup> He did not recount what this "Scene" was, and commentators have offered a variety of speculations.<sup>[8]</sup> Due to this inspiration, Hume set out to spend a minimum of ten years reading and writing. He came to the verge of nervous breakdown, after which he decided to have a more active life to better continue his learning.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Career

As Hume's options lay between a traveling tutorship and a stool in a merchant's office, he chose the latter. In 1734, after a few months occupied with commerce in Bristol, he went to La Flèche in Anjou, France. There he had frequent discourse with the Jesuits of the College of La Flèche. As he had spent most of his savings during his four years there while writing *A Treatise of Human Nature*,<sup>[9]</sup> he resolved "to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible except the improvements of my talents in literature".<sup>[10]</sup> He completed the *Treatise* at the age of 26.

Although many scholars today consider the *Treatise* to be Hume's most important work and one of the most important books in Western philosophy, the critics in Great Britain at the time did not agree, describing it as "abstract and unintelligible".<sup>[11]</sup> Despite the disappointment, Hume later wrote, "Being naturally of a cheerful and sanguine temper, I soon recovered from the blow and prosecuted with great ardour my studies in the country".<sup>[10]</sup> There, he wrote the *Abstract*<sup>[12]</sup> Without revealing his authorship, he aimed to make his larger work more intelligible.

After the publication of *Essays Moral and Political* in 1744, Hume applied for the Chair of Pneumatics and Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. However, the position was given to William Cleghorn, after Edinburgh

ministers petitioned the town council not to appoint Hume because he was seen as an atheist.<sup>[13]</sup>

During the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion, Hume tutored the Marquis of Annandale (1720–92), who was officially described as a "lunatic".<sup>[14]</sup> This engagement ended in disarray after about a year. But it was then that Hume started his great historical work *The History of England*, which took fifteen years and ran over a million words, to be published in six volumes in the period between 1754 and 1762, while also involved with the Canongate Theatre. In this context, he associated with Lord Monboddo and other Scottish Enlightenment luminaries in Edinburgh. From 1746, Hume served for three years as Secretary to Lieutenant-General St Clair, and wrote *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, later published as *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. The *Enquiry* proved little more successful than the *Treatise*.

Hume was charged with heresy, but he was defended by his young clerical friends, who argued that—as an atheist—he was outside the Church's jurisdiction. Despite his acquittal, Hume failed to gain the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Glasgow.

It was after returning to Edinburgh in 1752, as he wrote in *My Own Life*, that "the Faculty of Advocates chose me their Librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library".<sup>[15]</sup> This resource enabled him to continue historical research for *The History of England*.

Hume achieved great literary fame as a historian. His enormous *The History of England*, tracing events from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688, was a best-seller in its day. In it, Hume presented political person as a creature of habit, with a disposition to submit quietly to established government unless confronted by uncertain circumstances. In his view, only religious difference could deflect people from their everyday lives to think about political matters.

However, Hume's volume of *Political Discourses* (published by Kincaid & Donaldson, 1752)<sup>[16]</sup> was the only work he considered successful on first publication.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Religion

Hume wrote a great deal on religion. However, the question of what were Hume's personal views on religion is a difficult one.<sup>[18]</sup> The Church of Scotland seriously considered bringing charges of infidelity against him.<sup>[19]</sup> He never declared himself to be an atheist, but had he been hostile to religion, Hume would have been persecuted and his writings constrained, perhaps the reason behind his ambiguity. He did not acknowledge his authorship of many of his works in this area until close to his death, and some were not even published until afterwards.

In works such as *On Superstition and Enthusiasm*, Hume specifically seems to support the standard religious views of his time and place. This still meant that he could be very critical of the Catholic Church, referring to it with the standard Protestant epithets and descriptions of it as superstition and idolatry<sup>[20]</sup> as well as dismissing what his compatriots saw as uncivilised beliefs.<sup>[21]</sup> He also considered extreme Protestant sects, which he called *enthusiasts*, to be corrupters of religion.<sup>[22]</sup> Yet he also put forward arguments that suggested that polytheism had much to commend it in preference to monotheism.<sup>[23]</sup>

In his works, he attacked many of the basic assumptions of religion and Christian belief, and his arguments have become the foundation of much of the succeeding secular thinking about religion. In his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, one of his protagonists challenged one of the intellectual arguments for belief in God or one god (especially in the Age of Enlightenment): the Argument from Design. Also, in his *Of Miracles*, he challenged the



Tomb of David Hume in Edinburgh

idea that religion (specifically Christianity) is supported by revelation.

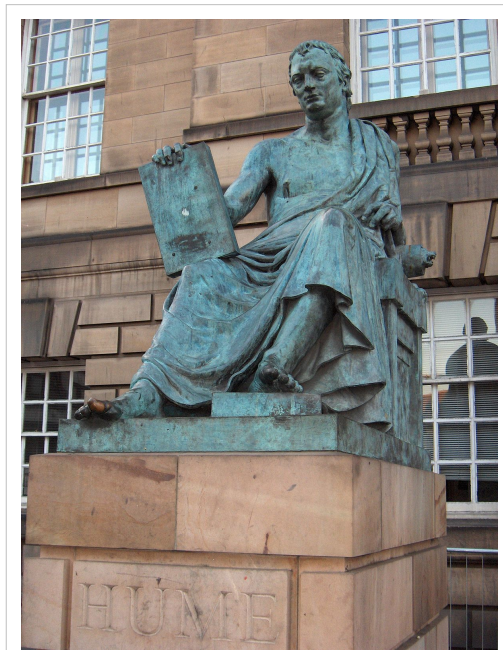
It is likely that Hume was skeptical both about religious belief (at least as demanded by the religious organisations of his time) and of the complete atheism promoted by such contemporaries as Baron d'Holbach. Paul Russell suggests that perhaps Hume's position is best characterised by the term "irreligion".<sup>[24]</sup> O'Connor (2001, p19) writes that Hume "did not believe in the God of standard theism. ... but he did not rule out all concepts of deity". Also, "ambiguity suited his purposes, and this creates difficulty in definitively pinning down his final position on religion".

### Later life

From 1763 to 1765, Hume was Secretary to Lord Hertford in Paris. He met and later fell out with Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He wrote of his Paris life, "I really wish often for the plain roughness of The Poker Club of Edinburgh ... to correct and qualify so much lusciousness".<sup>[25]</sup> For a year from 1767, Hume held the appointment of Under Secretary of State for the Northern Department. In 1768, he settled in Edinburgh; he lived from 1771 until his death in 1776 at the southwest corner of St. Andrew's Square, in Edinburgh's New Town, at what is now 21 Saint David Street. (A popular story, consistent with some historical evidence,<sup>[26]</sup> suggests the street was named after Hume.)

James Boswell saw Hume a few weeks before his death (most likely of either bowel or liver cancer). Hume told him he sincerely believed it a "most unreasonable fancy" that there might be life after death.<sup>[27]</sup> This meeting was dramatized in semi-fictional form for the BBC by Michael Ignatieff as *Dialogue in the Dark*. Hume asked that he be interred in a "simple roman tomb"; in his will he requests that it be inscribed only with his name and the year of his birth and death, "leaving it to Posterity to add the Rest."<sup>[28]</sup> It stands, as he wished it, on the southwestern slope of Calton Hill, in the Old Calton Cemetery, not far from his New Town home.

### Hume's "Science of man"



A statue of Hume by Alexander Stoddart on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh

In the introduction to *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume writes "Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, more or less, to human nature ... Even *Mathematics*, *Natural Philosophy*, and *Natural Religion*, are in some measure dependent on the science of Man". Also, "the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences", and the method for this science assumes "experience and observation" as the foundations of a logical argument.<sup>[29]</sup> Because "Hume's plan is to extend to philosophy in general the methodological limitations of Newtonian physics",<sup>[30]</sup> Hume is characterised as an empiricist.

Until recently, Hume was seen as a forerunner of the logical positivist movement; a form of anti-metaphysical empiricism. According to the logical positivists, unless a statement could be verified by experience, or else was true or false by definition (i.e. either tautological or contradictory), then it was meaningless (this is a summary statement of their verification principle). Hume, on this view, was a proto-positivist, who, in his philosophical writings, attempted to demonstrate how ordinary propositions about objects, causal relations, the self, and so on, are semantically equivalent to propositions about one's experiences.<sup>[31]</sup>

Many commentators have since rejected this understanding of Humean empiricism, stressing an epistemological, rather than a semantic reading of his project.<sup>[32]</sup> According to this view, Hume's empiricism consisted in the idea that it is our knowledge, and not our ability to conceive, that is restricted to what can be experienced. To be sure, Hume

thought that we can form beliefs about that which extends beyond any possible experience, through the operation of faculties such as custom and the imagination, but he was skeptical about claims to *knowledge* on this basis.

## Induction

Few philosophers are as associated with induction as David Hume; Hume himself, however, rarely used the term and when he did, he used it to support a point he was arguing.<sup>[33]</sup> He gave no indication that he saw any problem with induction.<sup>[34]</sup> Induction became associated with Hume only in the early twentieth century; John Maynard Keynes may have been the first to draw the connection.<sup>[35]</sup> The connection is now standard, but is based on what current scholars mean by "induction", not how Hume used the term in his writings.

The cornerstone of Hume's epistemology is the so-called Problem of Induction. This may be the area of Hume's thought where his skepticism about human powers of reason is most pronounced.<sup>[36]</sup> Understanding the problem of induction is central to grasping Hume's philosophical system.

The problem concerns the explanation of how we are able to make inductive inferences. Inductive inference is reasoning from the observed behaviour of objects to their behaviour when unobserved; as Hume says, it is a question of how things behave when they go "beyond the present testimony of the senses, and the records of our memory".<sup>[37]</sup> Hume notices that we tend to believe that things behave in a regular manner; i.e., that patterns in the behaviour of objects will persist into the future, and throughout the unobserved present. This persistence of regularities is sometimes called Uniformitarianism or the Principle of the Uniformity of Nature.

Hume's argument is that we cannot rationally justify the claim that nature will continue to be uniform, as justification comes in only two varieties, and both of these are inadequate. The two sorts are: (1) demonstrative reasoning, and (2) probable reasoning.<sup>[38]</sup> With regard to (1), Hume argues that the uniformity principle cannot be demonstrated, as it is "consistent and conceivable" that nature might stop being regular.<sup>[39]</sup> Turning to (2), Hume argues that we cannot hold that nature will continue to be uniform because it has been in the past, as this is using the very sort of reasoning (induction) that is under question: it would be circular reasoning.<sup>[40]</sup> Thus no form of justification will rationally warrant our inductive inferences.

Hume's solution to this problem is to argue that, rather than reason, natural instinct explains the human ability to make inductive inferences. He asserts that "Nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable [*sic*] necessity has determin'd us to judge as well as to breathe and feel". Although many modern commentators have demurred from Hume's solution,<sup>[41]</sup> some have notably concurred with it, seeing his analysis of our epistemic predicament as a major contribution to the theory of knowledge. For example, the Oxford Professor John D. Kenyon writes:

Reason might manage to raise a doubt about the truth of a conclusion of natural inductive inference just for a moment in the study, but the forces of nature will soon overcome that artificial skepticism, and the sheer agreeableness of animal faith will protect us from excessive caution and sterile suspension of belief.<sup>[42]</sup>

## Causation

The notion of causation is closely linked to the problem of induction. According to Hume, we reason inductively by associating constantly conjoined events, and it is the mental act of association that is the basis of our concept of causation. There are three main interpretations of Hume's theory of causation represented in the literature: (1) the logical positivist; (2) the skeptical realist; and (3) the quasi-realist.

The logical positivist interpretation is that Hume analyses causal propositions, such as "A caused B", in terms of regularities in perception: "A caused B" is equivalent to "Whenever A-type events happen, B-type ones follow", where "whenever" refers to all possible perceptions.<sup>[43]</sup>

power and necessity... are... qualities of perceptions, not of objects... felt by the soul and not perceived externally in bodies<sup>[44]</sup>

This view is rejected by skeptical realists, who argue that Hume thought that causation amounts to more than just the regular succession of events.<sup>[32]</sup> When two events are causally conjoined, a necessary connection underpins the conjunction:

Shall we rest contented with these two relations of contiguity and succession, as affording a complete idea of causation? By no means ... there is a *necessary connexion* to be taken into consideration.<sup>[45]</sup>

Hume held that we have no perceptual access to the necessary connection, hence *skepticism*, but we are naturally compelled to believe in its objective existence, ergo *realism*. He thus concluded that there are no necessary connections, only constant conjunctions.<sup>[46]</sup>

Referring to the Law of Causality, Hume wrote, "I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that something could arise without a cause."<sup>[47]</sup>

It has been argued that, whilst Hume did not think causation is reducible to pure regularity, he was not a fully fledged realist either: Simon Blackburn calls this a quasi-realist reading.<sup>[48]</sup> On this view, talk about causal necessity is an expression of a functional change in the human mind, whereby certain events are predicted or anticipated on the basis of prior experience. The expression of causal necessity is a "projection" of the functional change onto the objects involved in the causal connection: in Hume's words, "nothing is more usual than to apply to external bodies every internal sensation which they occasion."<sup>[49]</sup>

## The self

According to the standard interpretation of Hume on personal identity, he was a Bundle Theorist, who held that the self is nothing but a bundle of interconnected perceptions linked by the property of constancy and coherence; or, more accurately, that our idea of the self is just the idea of such a bundle. This view is forwarded by, for example, positivist interpreters, who saw Hume as suggesting that terms such as "self", "person", or "mind" referred to collections of "sense-contents".<sup>[50]</sup> A modern-day version of the bundle theory of the mind has been advanced by Derek Parfit in his *Reasons and Persons* (1986).

However, some philosophers have criticised the bundle-theory interpretation of Hume on personal identity. They argue that distinct selves can have perceptions that stand in relations of similarity and causality with one another. Thus perceptions must already come parceled into distinct "bundles" before they can be associated according to the relations of similarity and causality: in other words, the mind must already possess a unity that cannot be generated, or constituted, by these relations alone. Since the bundle-theory interpretation attributes Hume with answering an ontological or conceptual question, philosophers who see Hume as not very concerned with such questions have queried whether the view is really Hume's, or "only a decoy".<sup>[51]</sup> Instead, it is suggested, Hume might have been answering an epistemological question, about the causal origin of our concept of the self.

Another interpretation of Hume's view of the self has been argued for by James Giles.<sup>[52]</sup> According to this view, Hume is not arguing for a bundle theory, which is a form of reductionism, but rather for an eliminative view of the self. That is, rather than reducing the self to a bundle of perceptions, Hume is rejecting the idea of the self altogether. On this interpretation Hume is proposing a 'No-Self Theory' and thus has much in common with Buddhist thought.<sup>[53]</sup>

## Practical reason

Hume's anti-rationalism informed much of his theory of belief and knowledge, in his treatment of the notions of induction, causation, and the external world. But it was not confined to this sphere, and permeated just as strongly his theories of motivation, action, and morality. In a famous sentence in the *Treatise*, Hume circumscribes reason's role in the production of action:

Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.<sup>[54]</sup>

It has been suggested that this position can be lucidly brought out through the metaphor of "direction of fit": beliefs—the paradigmatic products of reason—are propositional attitudes that aim to have their content fit the world; conversely, desires—or what Hume calls passions, or sentiments—are states that aim to fit the world to their contents.<sup>[55]</sup> Though a metaphor, it has been argued that this intuitive way of understanding Hume's theory that desires are necessary for motivation "captures something quite deep in our thought about their nature".<sup>[56]</sup>

Hume's anti-rationalism has been very influential, and defended in contemporary philosophy of action by neo-Humeans such as Michael Smith<sup>[56]</sup> and Simon Blackburn.<sup>[57]</sup> The major opponents of the Humean view are cognitivists about what it is to act for a reason, such as John McDowell,<sup>[58]</sup> and Kantians, such as Christine Korsgaard.<sup>[59]</sup>

## Ethics

Hume's views on human motivation and action formed the cornerstone of his ethical theory: he conceived moral or ethical sentiments to be intrinsically motivating, or the providers of reasons for action. Given that one cannot be motivated by reason alone, requiring the input of the passions, Hume argued that reason cannot be behind morality.

Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason.<sup>[60]</sup>

Hume's sentimentalism about morality was shared by his close friend Adam Smith,<sup>[61]</sup> and Hume and Smith were mutually influenced by the moral reflections of Francis Hutcheson.<sup>[62]</sup>

Hume's theory of ethics has been influential in modern day ethical theory, helping to inspire various forms of emotivism,<sup>[63]</sup> <sup>[64]</sup> error theory<sup>[65]</sup> and ethical expressivism and non-cognitivism<sup>[66]</sup> and Alan Gibbard.<sup>[67]</sup>

## Free will, determinism, and responsibility

Hume, along with Thomas Hobbes, is cited as a classical compatibilist about the notions of freedom and determinism.<sup>[68]</sup> The thesis of compatibilism seeks to reconcile human freedom with the mechanist belief that human beings are part of a deterministic universe, whose happenings are governed by the laws of physics.

Hume argued that the dispute about the compatibility of freedom and determinism has been kept afloat by ambiguous terminology:

From this circumstance alone, that a controversy has been long kept on foot... we may presume, that there is some ambiguity in the expression.<sup>[69]</sup>

Hume defines the concepts of "necessity" and "liberty" as follows:

Necessity: "the uniformity, observable in the operations of nature; where similar objects are constantly conjoined together..".<sup>[70]</sup>

Liberty: "*a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will..*".<sup>[71]</sup>

Hume then argues that, according to these definitions, not only are the two compatible, but Liberty *requires* Necessity. For if our actions were not necessitated in the above sense, they would "...have so little in connexion with motives, inclinations and circumstances, that one does not follow with a certain degree of uniformity from the other." But if our actions are not thus hooked up to the will, then our actions can never be free: they would be matters of

"chance; which is universally allowed not to exist".<sup>[71]</sup>

Moreover, Hume goes on to argue that in order to be held morally responsible, it is required that our behaviour be caused, i.e. necessitated, for

Actions are, by their very nature, temporary and perishing; and where they proceed not from some *cause* in the character and disposition of the person who performed them, they can neither redound to his honour, if good; nor infamy, if evil<sup>[72]</sup>

This argument has inspired modern day commentators.<sup>[73]</sup> However, it has been argued that the issue of whether or not we hold one another morally responsible does not ultimately depend on the truth or falsity of a metaphysical thesis such as determinism, for our so holding one another is a non-rational human sentiment that is not predicated on such theses. For this influential argument, which is still made in a Humean vein, see P. F. Strawson's essay, *Freedom and Resentment*.<sup>[74]</sup>

## Problem of miracles

In his discussion of miracles in *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (Section 10) Hume defines a miracle as "a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent". Given that Hume argues that it is impossible to deduce the existence of a Deity from the existence of the world (for he says that causes cannot be determined from effects), miracles (including prophesy) are the only possible support he would conceivably allow for theistic religions.

Hume discusses everyday belief as often resulted from probability, where we believe an event that has occurred most often as being most likely, but that we also subtract the weighting of the less common event from that of the more common event. In the context of miracles, this means that a miraculous event should be labelled a miracle only where it would be even more unbelievable (by principles of probability) for it not to be. Hume mostly discusses miracles as testimony, of which he writes that when a person reports a miraculous event we [need to] balance our belief in their veracity against our belief that such events do not occur. Following this rule, only where it is considered, as a result of experience, less likely that the testimony is false than that a miracle occur should we believe in miracles.

Although Hume leaves open the possibility for miracles to occur and be reported, he offers various arguments against this ever having happened in history.<sup>[75]</sup>

- People often lie, and they have good reasons to lie about miracles occurring either because they believe they are doing so for the benefit of their religion or because of the fame that results.
- People by nature enjoy relating miracles they have heard without caring for their veracity and thus miracles are easily transmitted even where false.
- Hume notes that miracles seem to *occur* mostly in "ignorant" and "barbarous" nations and times, and the reason they don't occur in the "civilized" societies is such societies aren't awed by what they know to be natural events.
- The miracles of each religion argue against all other religions and their miracles, and so even if a proportion of all reported miracles across the world fit Hume's requirement for belief, the miracles of each religion make the other less likely.

Despite all this Hume observes that belief in miracles is popular, and that "The gazing populace receive greedily, without examination, whatever soothes superstition and promotes wonder".<sup>[76]</sup>

Critics have argued that Hume's position assumes the character of miracles and natural laws prior to any specific examination of miracle claims, and thus it amounts to a subtle form of begging the question. They have also noted that it requires an appeal to inductive inference, as none have observed every part of nature or examined every possible miracle claim (e.g., those yet future to the observer), which in Hume's philosophy was especially problematic.

Hume's main argument concerning miracles is the following. Miracles by definition are singular events that differ from the established Laws of Nature. The Laws of Nature are codified as a result of past experiences. Therefore a miracle is a violation of all prior experience. However the probability that something has occurred in contradiction of all past experience should always be judged to be less than the probability that either my senses have deceived me or the person recounting the miraculous occurrence is lying or mistaken, all of which I have past experience of. For Hume, this refusal to grant credence does not guarantee correctness – he offers the example of an Indian Prince, who having grown up in a hot country refuses to believe that water has frozen. By Hume's lights this refusal is not wrong and the Prince is thinking correctly; it is presumably only when he has had extensive experience of the freezing of water that he has warrant to believe that the event could occur. So for Hume, either the miraculous event will become a recurrent event or else it will never be rational to believe it occurred. The connection to religious belief is left inexplicit throughout, save for the close of his discussion wherein Hume notes the reliance of Christianity upon testimony of miraculous occurrences and makes an ironic <sup>[77]</sup> <sup>[78]</sup> remark that anyone who "is moved by faith to assent" to revealed testimony "is aware of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience."

### Design argument

One of the oldest and most popular arguments for the existence of God is the design argument: that order and "purpose" in the world bespeaks a divine origin. Hume gave the classic criticism of the design argument in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. Hume argued that for the design argument to be feasible, it must be true that order and purpose are observed only when they result from design. But order is often observed to result from presumably mindless processes like the generation of snowflakes and crystals. Design can account for only a tiny part of our experience of order.

### Political theory

It is difficult to categorize Hume's political affiliations. His thought contains elements that are, in modern terms, both conservative and liberal, as well as ones that are both contractarian and utilitarian, though these terms are all anachronistic. Thomas Jefferson banned Hume's *History* from the University of Virginia, fearing that it "has spread universal toryism over the land".<sup>[79]</sup> Yet, Samuel Johnson thought Hume "a Tory by chance... for he has no principle. If he is anything, he is a Hobbist".<sup>[80]</sup> His central concern is to show the importance of the rule of law, and stresses throughout his political *Essays* the importance of moderation in politics. This outlook needs to be seen within the historical context of eighteenth century Scotland, where the legacy of religious civil war, combined with the relatively recent memory of the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite risings, fostered in a historian such as Hume a distaste for enthusiasm and factionalism that appeared to threaten the fragile and nascent political and social stability of a country that was deeply politically and religiously divided. He thinks that society is best governed by a general and impartial system of laws, based principally on the "artifice" of contract; he is less concerned about the form of government that administers these laws, so long as it does so fairly (though he thought that republics were more likely to do so than monarchies).

Hume expressed suspicion of attempts to reform society in ways that departed from long-established custom, and he counselled peoples not to resist their governments except in cases of the most egregious tyranny.<sup>[81]</sup> However, he resisted aligning himself with either of Britain's two political parties, the Whigs and the Tories. Hume writes

My views of *things* are more conformable to Whig principles; my representations of persons to Tory prejudices.<sup>[82]</sup>

McArthur says that Hume believed that we should try to balance our demands for liberty with the need for strong authority, without sacrificing either. McArthur characterizes Hume as a 'precautionary conservative': whose actions would have been "determined by prudential concerns about the consequences of change, which often demand we ignore our own principles about what is ideal or even legitimate",<sup>[83]</sup> He supported liberty of the press, and was



sympathetic to democracy, when suitably constrained. Douglass Adair has argued that Hume was a major inspiration for James Madison's writings, and the *Federalist No. 10* in particular.<sup>[84]</sup> Hume was also, in general, an optimist about social progress, believing that, thanks to the economic development that comes with the expansion of trade, societies progress from a state of "barbarism" to one of "civilisation". Civilised societies are open, peaceful and sociable, and their citizens are as a result much happier. It is therefore not fair to characterise him, as Leslie Stephen did, as favouring "...that stagnation which is the natural ideal of a skeptic."<sup>[85]</sup>

Though it has been suggested Hume had no positive vision of the best society, he in fact produced an essay titled *Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth*,<sup>[86]</sup> which lays out what he thought was the best form of government. His pragmatism shone through, however, in his caveat that we should only seek to implement such a system should an opportunity present itself, which would not upset established structures. He defended a strict separation of powers, decentralisation, extending the franchise to anyone who held property of value and limiting the power of the clergy. The Swiss militia system was proposed as the best form of protection. Elections were to take place on an annual basis and representatives were to be unpaid. It is also important to note that the ideal commonwealth laid out by Hume was held to be ideal only for the British Isles in the 18th century. Hume was a relativist, and realized that such a form of government would not be ideal for all cultures, nor would it necessarily be permanent as historical conditions change.

### Contributions to economic thought

Through his discussions on politics, Hume developed many ideas that are prevalent in the field of economics. This includes ideas on private property, inflation, and foreign trade.<sup>[87]</sup>

Hume does not believe, as Locke does, that private property is a natural right, but he argues that it is justified since resources are limited. If all goods were unlimited and available freely, then private property would not be justified, but instead becomes an "idle ceremonial". Hume also believed in unequal distribution of property, because perfect equality would destroy the ideas of thrift and industry. Perfect equality would thus lead to impoverishment.<sup>[88]</sup>

Hume was among the first to develop automatic price-specie flow, an idea that contrasts with the mercantile system. Simply put, when a country increases its in-flow of gold, this in-flow of gold will result in price inflation, and then price inflation will force out countries from trading that would have traded before the inflation. This results in a decrease of the in-flow of gold in the long run.

Hume also proposed a theory of beneficial inflation. He believed that increasing the money supply would raise production in the short run. This phenomenon would be caused by a gap between the increase in the money supply and that of the price level. The result is that prices will not rise at first and may not rise at all. This theory was later developed by John Maynard Keynes.



Statues of David Hume and Adam Smith by David Watson Stevenson on the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh

## As historian of England

Between Hume's death and 1894, there were at least 50 editions of his 6-volume *History of England*, a work of immense sweep. The subtitle tells us as much, "From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688".

There was also an often-reprinted abridgement, *The Student's Hume* (1859).

Another remarkable feature of the series was that it widened the focus of history, away from merely Kings, Parliaments, and armies, including literature and science as well.

## Works

- *A Kind of History of My Life* (1734) Mss 23159 National Library of Scotland. A letter to an unnamed physician, asking for advice about "the Disease of the Learned" that then afflicted him. Here he reports that at the age of eighteen "there seem'd to be open'd up to me a new Scene of Thought..." that made him "throw up every other Pleasure or Business" and turned him to scholarship.
- *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*. (1739–40) Hume intended to see whether the *Treatise of Human Nature* <sup>[89]</sup> met with success, and if so to complete it with books devoted to Politics and Criticism. However, it did not meet with success. As Hume himself said, "It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots"<sup>[10]</sup> and so was not completed.
- *An Abstract of a Book lately Published: Entitled A Treatise of Human Nature etc.* (1740) Anonymously published, but almost certainly written by Hume<sup>[90]</sup> in an attempt to popularise his *Treatise*. Of considerable philosophical interest, because it spells out what he considered "The Chief Argument" of the *Treatise*, in a way that seems to anticipate the structure of the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*.
- *Essays Moral and Political* (first ed. 1741–2) A collection of pieces written and published over many years, though most were collected together in 1753–4. Many of the essays are focused on topics in politics and economics, though they also range over questions of aesthetic judgement, love, marriage and polygamy, and the demographics of ancient Greece and Rome, to name just a few of the topics considered. The Essays show some influence from Addison's *Tatler* and *The Spectator*, which Hume read avidly in his youth.
- *A Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend in Edinburgh: Containing Some Observations on a Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality, said to be maintain'd in a Book lately publish'd, intituled A Treatise of Human Nature etc.* Edinburgh (1745). Contains a letter written by Hume to defend himself against charges of atheism and scepticism, while applying for a Chair at Edinburgh University.
- *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) Contains reworking of the main points of the *Treatise*, Book 1, with the addition of material on free will (adapted from Book 2), miracles, the Design Argument, and mitigated scepticism. *Of Miracles*, section X of the *Enquiry*, was often published separately,
- *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751) A reworking of material from Book 3 of the *Treatise*, on morality, but with a significantly different emphasis. Hume regarded this as the best of all his philosophical works, both in its philosophical ideas and in its literary style.
- *Political Discourses*, (part II of *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* within vol. 1 of the larger *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*) Edinburgh (1752). Included in *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (1753–6) reprinted 1758–77.
- *Political Discourses/Discours politiques* (1752–1758), *My own life* (1776), *Of Essay writing*, 1742. Bilingual English-French (translated by Fabien Grandjean). Mauvezin, France, Trans-Europ-Repress, 1993, 22 cm, V-260 p. Bibliographic notes, index.
- *Four Dissertations* London (1757). Included in reprints of *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (above).
- *The History of England* (Sometimes referred to as *The History of Great Britain*) (1754–62) More a category of books than a single work, Hume's history spanned "from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688" and went through over 100 editions. Many considered it *the* standard history of England until Thomas Macaulay's

*History of England.*

- *The Natural History of Religion* (1757)
- "My Own Life" (1776) Penned in April, shortly before his death, this autobiography was intended for inclusion in a new edition of "Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects". It was first published by Adam Smith who claimed that by doing so he had incurred "ten times more abuse than the very violent attack I had made upon the whole commercial system of Great Britain". (Ernest Campbell Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*)
- *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) Published posthumously by his nephew, David Hume the Younger. Being a discussion among three fictional characters concerning the nature of God, and is an important portrayal of the argument from design. Despite some controversy, most scholars agree that the view of Philo, the most sceptical of the three, comes closest to Hume's own.<sup>[91]</sup>

## Hume's influence

Attention to Hume's philosophical works grew after the German philosopher Immanuel Kant credited Hume with awakening him from "dogmatic slumbers" (*circa* 1770).<sup>[92]</sup>

According to Schopenhauer, "there is more to be learned from each page of David Hume than from the collected philosophical works of Hegel, Herbart and Schleiermacher taken together".<sup>[93]</sup>

A. J. Ayer (1936), introducing his classic exposition of logical positivism, claimed: "The views which are put forward in this treatise derive from the logical outcome of the empiricism of Berkeley and Hume."<sup>[94]</sup> Albert Einstein (1915) wrote that he was inspired by Hume's positivism when formulating his Special Theory of Relativity.<sup>[95]</sup> Hume was called "the prophet of the Wittgensteinian revolution" by N. Phillipson, referring to his view that mathematics and logic are closed systems, disguised tautologies, and have no relation to the world of experience.<sup>[96]</sup> David Fate Norton (1993) asserted that Hume was "the first post-sceptical philosopher of the early modern period".<sup>[97]</sup>

Hume's Problem of Induction was also of fundamental importance to the philosophy of Karl Popper. In his autobiography, *Unended Quest*,<sup>[98]</sup> he wrote: "'Knowledge' ... is *objective*; and it is hypothetical or conjectural. This way of looking at the problem made it possible for me to reformulate Hume's *problem of induction*". This insight resulted in Popper's major work *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*.<sup>[99]</sup> In his *Conjectures and Refutations*, p 55, he writes:

"I approached the problem of induction through Hume. Hume, I felt, was perfectly right in pointing out that induction cannot be logically justified".

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## External links

- David Hume <sup>[102]</sup> at the Online Library of Liberty
- Works by David Hume <sup>[103]</sup> at Project Gutenberg
- Books by David Hume <sup>[104]</sup> at the Online Books Page
- Audio books by David Hume <sup>[105]</sup> at Librivox
- Works by or about David Hume <sup>[106]</sup> in libraries (WorldCat catalog)
- David Hume <sup>[107]</sup> resources including books, articles, and encyclopedia entries
- David Hume <sup>[108]</sup> readable versions of the *Treatise*, the two *Enquiries*, the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, and four essays
- David Hume <sup>[109]</sup> entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
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- [21] Hume, D, *The Natural History of Religion* "... our present experience concerning the principles and opinions of barbarous nations. The savage tribes of America Africa and Asia are all idolaters."
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- [38] These are Hume's terms. In modern parlance, demonstration may be termed deductive reasoning, while probability may be termed inductive reasoning: see Dr. Peter J. R. Millican's. "Hume, Induction and Probability" (<http://www.davidhume.org/documents/1996PhD.pdf>). *D.Phil thesis*. .
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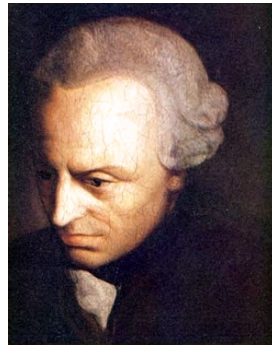
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# Immanuel Kant

## Immanuel Kant



Immanuel Kant

<b>Full name</b>	Immanuel Kant
<b>Born</b>	22 April 1724 Königsberg, Prussia (Now Kaliningrad, Russia)
<b>Died</b>	12 February 1804 (aged 79) Königsberg, Prussia
<b>Era</b>	18th-century philosophy
<b>Region</b>	Western Philosophy
<b>School</b>	Kantianism, enlightenment philosophy
<b>Main interests</b>	Epistemology, Metaphysics, Ethics, Logic
<b>Notable ideas</b>	Categorical imperative, Transcendental Idealism, Synthetic a priori, Noumenon, Sapere aude, Nebular hypothesis
<b>Signature</b>	

**Immanuel Kant** (German pronunciation: [ɪˈmaːnu̯eːl ˈkant]; 22 April 1724 – 12 February 1804) was a German philosopher from Königsberg (today Kaliningrad of Russia), researching, lecturing and writing on philosophy and anthropology at the end of the 18th Century Enlightenment.<sup>[1]</sup>

At the time, there were major successes and advances in the sciences (for example, Isaac Newton, Carl Friedrich Gauss, and Robert Boyle) using reason and logic. But this stood in sharp contrast to the scepticism and lack of agreement or progress in empiricist philosophy.

Kant's magnum opus, the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 1781),<sup>[2]</sup> aimed to unite reason with experience to move beyond what he took to be failures of traditional philosophy and metaphysics. He hoped to end an age of speculation where objects outside experience were used to support what he saw as futile theories, while opposing the scepticism of thinkers such as Descartes, Berkeley and Hume.

He said that

it always remains a scandal of philosophy and universal human reason that the existence of things outside us ... should have to be assumed merely on faith, and that if it occurs to anyone to doubt it, we should be unable to answer him with a satisfactory proof.<sup>[3]</sup>

Kant proposed a 'Copernican Revolution', saying that

Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but ... let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition.<sup>[4]</sup>

Kant published other important works on religion, law, aesthetics, astronomy and history. These included the *Critique of Practical Reason* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, 1788), which deals with ethics, and the *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 1790), which looks at aesthetics and teleology. He aimed to resolve disputes between empirical and rationalist approaches. The former asserted that all knowledge comes through experience; the latter maintained that reason and innate ideas were prior. Kant argued that experience is purely subjective without first being processed by pure reason. He also said that using reason without applying it to experience will only lead to theoretical illusions. The free and proper exercise of reason by the individual was both a theme of the Enlightenment, and of Kant's approaches to the various problems of philosophy.

His ideas influenced many thinkers in Germany during his lifetime. He settled and moved philosophy beyond the debate between the rationalists and empiricists. The philosophers Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer amended and developed the Kantian system, thus bringing about various forms of German idealism. He is seen as a major figure in the history and development of philosophy. German and European thinking progressed after his time, and his influence still inspires philosophical work today.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Biography

Immanuel Kant was born in 1724 in Königsberg, the capital of Prussia at that time, today the city of Kaliningrad in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad Oblast. He was the fourth of nine children (four of them reached adulthood). Baptized 'Emanuel', he changed his name to 'Immanuel'<sup>[6]</sup> after learning Hebrew. In his entire life, he never traveled more than ten miles from Königsberg.<sup>[7]</sup> His father, Johann Georg Kant (1682–1746), was a German harnessmaker from Memel, at the time Prussia's most northeastern city (now Klaipėda, Lithuania). His mother, Regina Dorothea Reuter (1697–1737), was born in Nuremberg.<sup>[8]</sup> Kant's paternal grandfather had emigrated from Scotland to East Prussia, and his father still spelled their family name "Cant".<sup>[9]</sup> In his youth, Kant was a solid, albeit unspectacular, student. He was brought up in a Pietist household that stressed intense religious devotion, personal humility, and a literal interpretation of the Bible. Consequently, Kant received a stern education – strict, punitive, and disciplinary – that preferred Latin and religious instruction over mathematics and science.<sup>[10]</sup> The common myths concerning Kant's personal mannerisms are enumerated, explained, and refuted in Goldthwait's introduction to his translation of *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*.<sup>[11]</sup> It is often held that Kant lived a very strict and predictable life, leading to the oft-repeated story that neighbors would set their clocks by his daily walks. He never married, but did not seem to lack a rewarding social life - he was a popular teacher and a modestly successful author even before starting on his major philosophical works.

## The young scholar

Kant showed a great aptitude to study at an early age. He was first sent to Collegium Fredericianum and then enrolled at the University of Königsberg (where he would spend his entire career) in 1740, at the age of 16.<sup>[12]</sup> He studied the philosophy of Leibniz and Wolff under Martin Knutzen, a rationalist who was also familiar with developments in British philosophy and science and who introduced Kant to the new mathematical physics of Newton. Knutzen dissuaded Kant from the theory of pre-established harmony, which he regarded as "the pillow for the lazy mind". He also dissuaded the young scholar from idealism, which was negatively regarded by most philosophers in the 18th century. (The theory of transcendental idealism that Kant developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not traditional idealism, i.e. the idea that reality is purely mental. In fact, Kant produced arguments against traditional idealism in the second part of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.) His father's stroke and subsequent death in 1746 interrupted his studies. Kant became a private tutor in the smaller towns surrounding Königsberg, but continued his scholarly research. 1749 saw the publication of his first philosophical work, *Thoughts on the True*

*Estimation of Living Forces.*

## Early work

Kant is best known for his transcendental idealist philosophy that time and space are not materially real but merely the ideal a priori condition of our internal intuition. But he worked in other areas as well. He made an important astronomical discovery, namely the discovery of the retardation of the rotation of the Earth, for which he won the Berlin Academy Prize in 1754. Even more importantly, from this Kant concluded that time is not a thing in itself determined from experience, objects, motion, and change, but rather an unavoidable framework of the human mind that preconditions possible experience.

According to Lord Kelvin:

Kant pointed out in the middle of last century, what had not previously been discovered by mathematicians or physical astronomers, that the frictional resistance against tidal currents on the earth's surface must cause a diminution of the earth's rotational speed. This immense discovery in Natural Philosophy seems to have attracted little attention,--indeed to have passed quite unnoticed, --among mathematicians, and astronomers, and naturalists, until about 1840, when the doctrine of energy began to be taken to heart.

—Lord Kelvin, physicist, 1897

He became a university lecturer in 1755. The subject on which he lectured was "Metaphysics"; the course textbook was written by A.G. Baumgarten.

According to Thomas Huxley:

"The sort of geological speculation to which I am now referring (geological aetiology, in short) was created as a science by that famous philosopher, Immanuel Kant, when, in 1775, he wrote his *General Natural History and Theory of the Celestial Bodies; or, an Attempt to Account for the Constitutional and Mechanical Origin of the Universe, upon Newtonian Principles.*" --

—Thomas H. Huxley, 1869

In the *General History of Nature and Theory of the Heavens* (*Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*) (1755), Kant laid out the Nebular hypothesis, in which he deduced that the Solar System formed from a large cloud of gas, a nebula. He thus attempted to explain the order of the solar system, seen previously by Newton as being imposed from the beginning by God. Kant also correctly deduced that the Milky Way was a large disk of stars, which he theorized also formed from a (much larger) spinning cloud of gas. He further suggested the possibility that other nebulae might also be similarly large and distant disks of stars. These postulations opened new horizons for astronomy: for the first time extending astronomy beyond the solar system to galactic and extragalactic realms.<sup>[13]</sup>

From this point on, Kant turned increasingly to philosophical issues, although he continued to write on the sciences throughout his life. In the early 1760s, Kant produced a series of important works in philosophy. *The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures*, a work in logic, was published in 1762. Two more works appeared the following year: *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* and *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*. In 1764, Kant wrote *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* and then was second to Moses Mendelssohn in a Berlin Academy prize competition with his *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* (often referred to as "the Prize Essay"). In 1770, at the age of 45, Kant was finally appointed Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Königsberg. Kant wrote his *inaugural dissertation* in defence of this appointment. This work saw the emergence of several central themes of his mature work, including the distinction between the faculties of intellectual thought and sensible receptivity. Not to observe this distinction would mean to commit the error of subreption, and, as he says in the last chapter of the dissertation, only in avoidance of this error will metaphysics flourish.

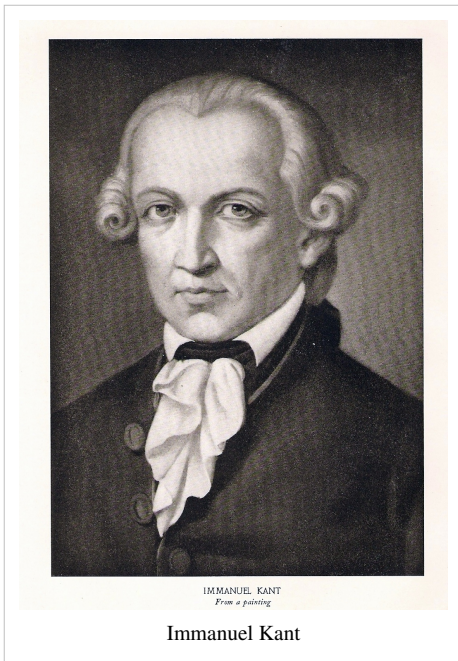
The issue that vexed Kant was central to what twentieth century scholars termed "the philosophy of mind." The flowering of the natural sciences had led to an understanding of how data reaches the brain. Sunlight may fall upon a distant object, whereupon light is reflected from various parts of the object in a way that maps the surface features (color, texture, etc.) of the object. The light reaches the eye of a human observer, passes through the cornea, is focused by the lens upon the retina where it forms an image similar to that formed by light passing through a pinhole into a camera obscura. The retinal cells next send impulses through the optic nerve and thereafter they form a mapping in the brain of the visual features of the distant object. The interior mapping is not the exterior thing being mapped, and our belief that there is a meaningful relationship between the exterior object and the mapping in the brain depends on a chain of reasoning that is not fully grounded. But the uncertainty aroused by these considerations, the uncertainties raised by optical illusions, misperceptions, delusions, etc., are not the end of the problems.

Kant saw that the mind could not function as an empty container that simply receives data from the outside. Something had to be giving order to the incoming data. Images of external objects have to be kept in the same sequence in which they were received. This ordering occurs through the mind's intuition of time. The same considerations apply to the mind's function of constituting **space** for ordering mappings of visual and tactile signals arriving via the already described chains of physical causation.

It is often held that Kant was a late developer, that he only became an important philosopher in his mid-50s after rejecting his earlier views. While it is true that Kant wrote his greatest works relatively late in life, there is a tendency to underestimate the value of his earlier works. Recent Kant scholarship has devoted more attention to these "pre-critical" writings and has recognized a degree of continuity with his mature work.<sup>[14]</sup>

### **The silent decade**

At the age of 46, Kant was an established scholar and an increasingly influential philosopher. Much was expected of him. In correspondence with his ex-student and friend Markus Herz, Kant admitted that, in the *Inaugural Dissertation*, he had failed to account for the relation and connection between our sensible and intellectual faculties—he needed to explain how we combine sensory knowledge with reasoned knowledge, these being related but very different processes. He also credited David Hume with awakening him from "dogmatic slumber" (circa 1771).<sup>[15]</sup> Hume had stated that experience consists only of sequences of feelings, images or sounds. Ideas such as 'cause', goodness, or objects were not evident in experience, so why do we believe in the reality of these? Kant felt that reason could remove this scepticism, and he set himself to solving these problems. He did not publish any work in philosophy for the next eleven years.



Although fond of company and conversation with others, Kant isolated himself. He resisted friends' attempts to bring him out of his isolation. In 1778, in response to one of these offers by a former pupil, Kant wrote:

"Any change makes me apprehensive, even if it offers the greatest promise of improving my condition, and I am persuaded by this natural instinct of mine that I must take heed if I wish that the threads which the Fates spin so thin and weak in my case to be spun to any length. My great thanks, to my well-wishers and friends, who think so kindly of me as to undertake my welfare, but at the same time a most humble request to protect me in my current condition from any disturbance."<sup>[16]</sup>

When Kant emerged from his silence in 1781, the result was the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Although now uniformly recognized as one of the greatest works in the history of philosophy, this *Critique* was largely ignored upon its initial publication. The book was long, over 800 pages in the original German edition, and written in what some considered a convoluted style. It received few reviews, and these granted no significance to the work. Its density made it, as Johann Gottfried Herder put it in a letter to Johann Georg Hamann, a "tough nut to crack," obscured by "all this heavy gossamer."<sup>[17]</sup> Its reception stood in stark contrast to the praise Kant had received for earlier works such as his "Prize Essay" and other shorter works that precede the first *Critique*. These well-received and readable tracts include one on the earthquake in Lisbon which was so popular that it was sold by the page.<sup>[18]</sup> Prior to the change in course documented in the first *Critique*, his books sold well, and by the time he published *Observations On the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* in 1764 he had become a popular author of some note.<sup>[19]</sup> Kant was disappointed with the first *Critique*'s reception. Recognizing the need to clarify the original treatise, Kant wrote the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* in 1783 as a summary of its main views. He also encouraged his friend, Johann Schultz, to publish a brief commentary on the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Kant's reputation gradually rose through the 1780s, sparked by a series of important works: the 1784 essay, "Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?"; 1785's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (his first work on moral philosophy); and, from 1786, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. But Kant's fame ultimately arrived from an unexpected source. In 1786, Karl Reinhold began to publish a series of public letters on the Kantian philosophy. In these letters, Reinhold framed Kant's philosophy as a response to the central intellectual controversy of the era: the Pantheism Dispute. Friedrich Jacobi had accused the recently deceased G. E. Lessing (a distinguished dramatist and philosophical essayist) of Spinozism. Such a charge, tantamount to atheism, was vigorously denied by Lessing's friend Moses Mendelssohn, and a bitter public dispute arose among partisans. The controversy gradually escalated into a general debate over the values of the Enlightenment and the value of reason itself. Reinhold maintained in his letters that Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* could settle this dispute by defending the authority and bounds of reason. Reinhold's letters were widely read and made Kant the most famous philosopher of his era.

## Mature work

Kant published a second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*) in 1787, heavily revising the first parts of the book. Most of his subsequent work focused on other areas of philosophy. He continued to develop his moral philosophy, notably in 1788's *Critique of Practical Reason* (known as the second *Critique*) and 1797's *Metaphysics of Morals*. The 1790 *Critique of Judgment* (the third *Critique*) applied the Kantian system to aesthetics and teleology.

In 1792, Kant's attempt to publish the Second of the four Pieces of *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, in the journal *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, met with opposition from the King's censorship commission, which had been established that same year in the context of 1789 French Revolution.<sup>[20]</sup> Kant then arranged to have all four pieces published as a book, routing it through the philosophy department at the University of Jena to avoid the need for theological censorship. Kant got a now famous reprimand from the King,<sup>[20]</sup> for this action of insubordination. When he nevertheless published a second edition in 1794, the censor was so irate that he arranged for a royal order that required Kant never to publish or even speak publicly about religion. Kant then published his response to the King's reprimand and explained himself, in the preface of *The Conflict of the Faculties*.<sup>[20]</sup>

He also wrote a number of semi-popular essays on history, religion, politics and other topics. These works were well received by Kant's contemporaries and confirmed his preeminent status in eighteenth century philosophy. There were several journals devoted solely to defending and criticizing the Kantian philosophy. But despite his success, philosophical trends were moving in another direction. Many of Kant's most important disciples (including Reinhold, Beck and Fichte) transformed the Kantian position into increasingly radical forms of idealism. The progressive stages of revision of Kant's teachings marked the emergence of German Idealism. Kant opposed these developments and publicly denounced Fichte in an open letter in 1799.<sup>[21]</sup> It was one of his final acts expounding a stance on philosophical questions. In 1800 a student of Kant, Gottlob Benjamin Jäsche, published a manual of logic for teachers called *Logik*, which he had prepared at Kant's request. Jäsche prepared the *Logik* using a copy of a textbook in logic by Georg Freidrich Meier entitled *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*, in which Kant had written copious notes and annotations. The *Logik* has been considered to be of fundamental importance to Kant's philosophy, and the understanding of it. The great nineteenth century logician Charles Sanders Peirce remarked, in an incomplete review of Thomas Kingsmill Abbott's English translation of the introduction to the *Logik*, that "Kant's whole philosophy turns upon his logic."<sup>[22]</sup> Also, Robert Schirokauer Hartman and Wolfgang Schwarz, wrote in the translators' introduction to their English translation of the *Logik*, "Its importance lies not only in its significance for the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the second part of which is a restatement of fundamental tenets of the *Logic*, but in its position within the whole of Kant's work."<sup>[23]</sup> Kant's health, long poor, took a turn for the worse and he died at Königsberg on 12 February 1804, uttering "*Genug*" ("Enough") before expiring.<sup>[24]</sup> His unfinished final work, the fragmentary *Opus Postumum*, was, as its title suggests, published posthumously.

## Philosophy

In Kant's essay "Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?", Kant defined the Enlightenment as an age shaped by the Latin motto *Sapere aude* ("Dare to Know"). Kant maintained that one ought to think autonomously, free of the dictates of external authority. His work reconciled many of the differences between the rationalist and empiricist traditions of the 18th century. He had a decisive impact on the Romantic and German Idealist philosophies of the 19th century. His work has also been a starting point for many 20th century philosophers.

Kant asserted that, because of the limitations of argumentation in the absence of irrefutable evidence, no one could really know whether there is a God and an afterlife or not. For the sake of society and morality, Kant asserted, people are reasonably justified in believing in them, even though they could never know for sure whether they are real or not. He explained:

All the preparations of reason, therefore, in what may be called pure philosophy, are in reality directed to those three problems only [God, the soul, and freedom]. However, these three elements in themselves still hold

independent, proportional, objective weight individually. Moreover, in a collective relational context; namely, to know *what ought to be done*: if the will is free, if there is a God, and if there is a future world. As this concerns our actions with reference to the highest aims of life, we see that the ultimate intention of nature in her wise provision was really, in the constitution of our reason, directed to moral interests only.<sup>[25]</sup>

The sense of an enlightened approach and the critical method required that "If one cannot prove that a thing *is*, he may try to prove that it is *not*. And if he succeeds in doing neither (as often occurs), he may still ask whether it is in his *interest* to *accept* one or the other of the alternatives hypothetically, from the theoretical or the practical point of view. Hence the question no longer is as to whether perpetual peace is a real thing or not a real thing, or as to whether we may not be deceiving ourselves when we adopt the former alternative, but we must *act* on the supposition of its being real."<sup>[26]</sup> The presupposition of God, soul, and freedom was then a practical concern, for "Morality, by itself, constitutes a system, but happiness does not, unless it is distributed in exact proportion to morality. This, however, is possible in an intelligible world only under a wise author and ruler. Reason compels us to admit such a ruler, together with life in such a world, which we must consider as future life, or else all moral laws are to be considered as idle dreams... ." <sup>[27]</sup>

Kant claimed to have created a "Copernican revolution" in philosophy. This involved two interconnected foundations of his "critical philosophy":

- the epistemology of Transcendental Idealism and
- the moral philosophy of the autonomy of practical reason.

These teachings placed the active, rational human subject at the center of the cognitive and moral worlds. Kant argued that the rational order of the world as known by science was not just the fortuitous accumulation of sense perceptions.

Conceptual unification and integration is carried out by the mind through concepts or the "categories of the understanding" operating on the perceptual manifold within space and time. The latter are not concepts,<sup>[28]</sup> but are forms of sensibility that are a priori necessary conditions for any possible experience. Thus the objective order of nature and the causal necessity that operates within it are dependent upon the mind's processes, the product of the rule-based activity which Kant called "synthesis". There is much discussion among Kant scholars on the correct interpretation of this train of thought.

The 'two-world' interpretation regards Kant's position as a statement of epistemological limitation, that we are not able to transcend the bounds of our own mind, meaning that we cannot access the "thing-in-itself". Kant, however, also speaks of the thing in itself or *transcendental object* as a product of the (human) understanding as it attempts to conceive of objects in abstraction from the conditions of sensibility. Following this line of thought, some interpreters have argued that the thing in itself does not represent a separate ontological domain but simply a way of considering objects by means of the understanding alone – this is known as the two-aspect view.

The notion of the "thing in itself" was much discussed by those who came after Kant. It was argued that since the "thing in itself" was unknowable its existence could not simply be assumed. Rather than arbitrarily switching to an account that was ungrounded in anything supposed to be the "real," as did the German Idealists, another group arose to ask how our (presumably reliable) accounts of a coherent and rule-abiding universe were actually grounded. This new kind of philosophy became known as Phenomenology, and its founder was Edmund Husserl.

With regard to morality, Kant argued that the source of the good lies not in anything outside the human subject, either in nature or given by God, but rather is only the good will itself. A good will is one that acts from duty in accordance with the universal moral law that the autonomous human being freely gives itself. This law obliges one to treat humanity – understood as rational agency, and represented through oneself as well as others – as an end in itself rather than (merely) as means to other ends the individual might hold.

These ideas have largely framed or influenced all subsequent philosophical discussion and analysis. The specifics of Kant's account generated immediate and lasting controversy. Nevertheless, his theses – that the mind itself

necessarily makes a constitutive contribution to its knowledge, that this contribution is transcendental rather than psychological, that philosophy involves self-critical activity, that morality is rooted in human freedom, and that to act autonomously is to act according to rational moral principles – have all had a lasting effect on subsequent philosophy.

## Theory of perception

Kant defines his theory of perception in his influential 1781 work *The Critique of Pure Reason*, which has often been cited as the most significant volume of metaphysics and epistemology in modern philosophy. Kant maintains that our understanding of the external world had its foundations not merely in experience, but in both experience and a priori concepts, thus offering a **non-empiricist critique of rationalist philosophy**, which is what he and others referred to as his "Copernican revolution".<sup>[29]</sup>

Firstly, Kant's distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions:

1. Analytic proposition: a proposition whose predicate concept is contained in its subject concept; *e.g.*, "All bachelors are unmarried," or, "All bodies take up space."
2. Synthetic proposition: a proposition whose predicate concept is not contained in its subject concept ; *e.g.*, "All bachelors are happy," or, "All bodies have weight."

Analytic propositions are true by nature of the meaning of the words involved in the sentence—we require no further knowledge than a grasp of the language to understand this proposition. On the other hand, synthetic statements are those that tell us something about the world. The truth or falsehood of synthetic statements derives from something outside of their linguistic content. In this instance, weight is not a necessary predicate of the body; until we are told the heaviness of the body we do not know that it has weight. In this case, experience of the body is required before its heaviness becomes clear. Before Kant's first Critique, empiricists (cf. Hume) and rationalists (cf. Leibniz) assumed that all synthetic statements required experience in order to be known.

Kant, however, contests this: he claims that elementary mathematics, like arithmetic, is synthetic *a priori*, in that its statements provide new knowledge, but knowledge that is not derived from experience. This becomes part of his over-all argument for transcendental idealism. That is, he argues that the possibility of experience depends on certain necessary conditions—which he calls *a priori* forms—and that these conditions structure and hold true of the world of experience. In so doing, his main claims in the "Transcendental Aesthetic" are that mathematic judgments are synthetic *a priori* and in addition, that Space and Time are not derived from experience but rather are its preconditions.

Once we have grasped the concepts of addition, subtraction or the functions of basic arithmetic, we do not need any empirical experience to know that  $100 + 100 = 200$ , and in this way it would appear that arithmetic is in fact analytic. However, that it is analytic can be disproved thus: if the numbers five and seven in the calculation  $5 + 7 = 12$  are examined, there is nothing to be found in them by which the number 12 can be inferred. Such it is that "5 + 7" and "the cube root of 1,728" or "12" are not analytic because their reference is the same but their sense is not—that the mathematic judgment " $5 + 7 = 12$ " tells us something new about the world. It is self-evident, and undeniably a priori, but at the same time it is synthetic. And so Kant proves a proposition can be synthetic and known a priori.

Kant asserts that experience is based both upon the perception of external objects and a priori knowledge.<sup>[30]</sup> The external world, he writes, provides those things which we sense. It is our mind, though, that processes this information about the world and gives it order, allowing us to comprehend it. Our mind supplies the conditions of space and time to experience objects. According to the "transcendental unity of apperception", the concepts of the mind (Understanding) and the perceptions or intuitions that garner information from phenomena (Sensibility) are synthesized by comprehension. Without the concepts, intuitions are nondescript; without the intuitions, concepts are meaningless—thus the famous statement, "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."<sup>[31]</sup>



## Categories of the Faculty of Understanding

In studying the work of Kant one must realize that there is a distinction between "understanding" as the general concept (in German, *das Verstehen*) and the "understanding" as a faculty of the human mind (in German, *der Verstand*, "the intellect"). In much English language scholarship, the word "understanding" is used in both senses.

Kant deemed it obvious that we have some objective knowledge of the world, such as, say, Newtonian physics. But this knowledge relies on synthetic, *a priori* laws of nature, like causality and substance. The problem, then, is how this is possible. Kant's solution was to reason that the subject must supply laws that make experience of objects possible, and that these laws are the synthetic, *a priori* laws of nature which we can know all objects are subject to prior to experiencing them. So to deduce all these laws, Kant examined experience in general, dissecting in it what is supplied by the mind from what is supplied by the given intuitions. This which has just been explicated is commonly called a transcendental reduction.<sup>[32]</sup>



Kant statue in Belo Horizonte, Brazil

To begin with, Kant's distinction between the *a posteriori* being contingent and particular knowledge, and the *a priori* being universal and necessary knowledge, must be kept in mind. For if we merely connect two intuitions together in a perceiving subject, the knowledge will always be subjective because it is derived *a posteriori*, when what is desired is for the knowledge to be objective, that is, for the two intuitions to refer to the object and hold good of it necessarily universally for anyone at anytime, not just the perceiving subject in its current condition. What else is equivalent to objective knowledge besides the *a priori*, that is to say, universal and necessary knowledge? Nothing else, and hence before knowledge can be objective, it must be incorporated under an *a priori* category of *the understanding*.<sup>[32] [33]</sup>

For example, say a subject says, "The sun shines on the stone; the stone grows warm", which is all he perceives in perception. His judgment is contingent and holds no necessity. But if he says, "The sunshine causes the stone to warm", he subsumes the perception under the category of causality, which is not found in the perception, and necessarily synthesizes the concept sunshine with the concept heat, producing a necessarily universally true judgment.<sup>[32]</sup>

To explain the categories in more detail, they are the preconditions of the construction of objects in the mind. Indeed, to even think of the sun and stone presupposes the category of subsistence, that is, substance. For the categories synthesize the random data of the sensory manifold into intelligible objects. This means that the categories are also the most abstract things one can say of any object whatsoever, and hence one can have an *a priori* cognition of the totality of all objects of experience if one can list all of them. To do so, Kant formulates another transcendental deduction.<sup>[32]</sup>

Judgments are, for Kant, the preconditions of any thought. Man thinks via judgments, so all possible judgments must be listed and the perceptions connected within them put aside, so as to make it possible to examine the moments when *the understanding* is engaged in constructing judgments. For the categories are equivalent to these moments, in that they are concepts of intuitions in general, so far as they are determined by these moments universally and necessarily. Thus by listing all the moments, one can deduce from them all of the categories.<sup>[32]</sup>

One may now ask: How many possible judgments are there? Kant believed that all the possible propositions within Aristotle's syllogistic logic are equivalent to all possible judgments, and that all the logical operators within the propositions are equivalent to the moments of the understanding within judgments. Thus he listed Aristotle's system in four groups of three: quantity (universal, particular, singular), quality (affirmative, negative, infinite), relation

(categorical, hypothetical, disjunctive) and modality (problematic, assertoric, apodeictic). The parallelism with Kant's categories is obvious: quantity (unity, plurality, totality), quality (reality, negation, limitation), relation (substance, cause, community) and modality (possibility, existence, necessity).<sup>[32]</sup>

The fundamental building blocks of experience, i.e. objective knowledge, are now in place. First there is the sensibility, which supplies the mind with intuitions, and then there is the understanding, which produces judgments of these intuitions and can subsume them under categories. These categories lift the intuitions up out of the subject's current state of consciousness and place them within consciousness in general, producing universally necessary knowledge. For the categories are innate in any rational being, so any intuition thought within a category in one mind will necessarily be subsumed and understood identically in any mind. In other words we filter what we see and hear.<sup>[32]</sup>

## Schema

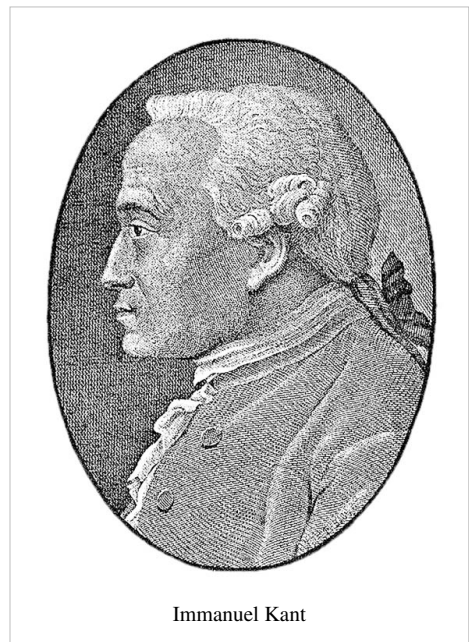
Kant ran into a problem with his theory that the mind plays a part in producing objective knowledge. Intuitions and categories are entirely disparate, so how can they interact? Kant's solution is the schema: a priori principles by which the transcendental imagination connects concepts with intuitions through time. All the principles are temporally bound, for if a concept is purely a priori, as the categories are, then they must apply for all times. Hence there are principles such as *substance is that which endures through time*, and *the cause must always be prior to the effect*.<sup>[34]</sup>  
<sup>[35]</sup>

## Moral philosophy

Kant developed his moral philosophy in three works: *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785),<sup>[36]</sup> *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797).

In the *Groundwork*, Kant's method involves trying to convert our everyday, obvious, rational<sup>[37]</sup> knowledge of morality into philosophical knowledge. The latter two works followed a method of using "practical reason", which is based only upon things about which reason can tell us, and not deriving any principles from experience, to reach conclusions which are able to be applied to the world of experience (in the second part of *The Metaphysic of Morals*).

Kant is known for his theory that there is a single moral obligation, which he called the "Categorical Imperative", and is derived from the concept of duty. Kant defines the demands of the moral law as "categorical imperatives". Categorical imperatives are principles that are intrinsically valid; they are good in and of themselves; they must be obeyed in all, and by all, situations and circumstances if our behavior is to observe the moral law. It is from the Categorical Imperative that all other moral obligations are generated, and by which all moral obligations can be tested. Kant also stated that the moral means and ends can be applied to the categorical imperative, that rational beings can pursue certain "ends" using the appropriate "means". Ends that are based on physical needs or wants will always give merely hypothetical imperatives. The categorical imperative, however, may be based only on something that is an "end in itself". That is, an end that is a means only to itself and not to some other need, desire, or purpose.<sup>[38]</sup> He believed that the moral law is a principle of reason itself, and is not based on contingent facts about the world, such as what would make us happy, but to act upon the moral law which has no other motive than "worthiness of being happy".<sup>[39]</sup> Accordingly, he believed that moral obligation applies to all, but only, rational agents.<sup>[40]</sup>



Immanuel Kant

A categorical imperative is an unconditional obligation; that is, it has the force of an obligation regardless of our will or desires (Contrast this with hypothetical imperative)<sup>[41]</sup> In *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) Kant enumerated three formulations of the categorical imperative which he believed to be roughly equivalent.<sup>[42]</sup>

Kant believed that if an action is not done with the motive of duty, then it is without moral value. He thought that every action should have pure intention behind it; otherwise it was meaningless. He did not necessarily believe that the final result was the most important aspect of an action, but that how the person felt while carrying out the action was the time at which value was set to the result.

In *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant also posited the "counter-utilitarian idea that there is a difference between preferences and values and that considerations of individual rights temper calculations of aggregate utility", a concept that is an axiom in economics:<sup>[43]</sup>

Everything has either a *price* or a *dignity*. Whatever has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; on the other hand, whatever is above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has a dignity. But that which constitutes the condition under which alone something can be an end in itself does not have mere relative worth, i.e., price, but an intrinsic worth, i.e., a dignity. (p. 53, italics in original).

A phrase quoted by Kant, which is used to summarize the counter-utilitarian nature of his moral philosophy, is *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*, ("Let justice be done, though the world perish"), which he translates loosely as "Let justice reign even if all the rascals in the world should perish from it". This appears in his 1795 *Perpetual Peace* (Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf.), Appendix 1.<sup>[44] [45] [46]</sup>

### The first formulation

The first formulation (Formula of Universal Law) of the moral imperative "requires that the maxims be chosen as though they should hold as universal laws of nature".<sup>[42]</sup> This formulation in principle has as its supreme law the creed "Always act according to that maxim whose universality as a law you can at the same time will" and is the "only condition under which a will can never come into conflict with itself [...]"<sup>[47]</sup>

One interpretation of the first formulation is called the "universalizability test".<sup>[48]</sup> An agent's maxim, according to Kant, is his "subjective principle of human actions": that is, what the agent believes is his reason to act.<sup>[49]</sup> The universalisability test has five steps:

1. Find the agent's maxim (i.e., an action paired with its motivation). Take for example the declaration "I will lie for personal benefit". Lying is the action; the motivation is to fulfill some sort of desire. Paired together, they form the maxim.
2. Imagine a possible world in which everyone in a similar position to the real-world agent followed that maxim. With no exception of one's self. This is in order for you to hold people to the same principle, that is required of yourself.
3. Decide whether any contradictions or irrationalities arise in the possible world as a result of following the maxim.
4. If a contradiction or irrationality arises, acting on that maxim is not allowed in the real world.
5. If there is no contradiction, then acting on that maxim is permissible, and in some instances required.

(For a modern parallel, see John Rawls' hypothetical situation, the original position.)

### The second formulation

The second formulation (or Formula of the End in Itself) holds that "the rational being, as by its nature an end and thus as an end in itself, must serve in every maxim as the condition restricting all merely relative and arbitrary ends".<sup>[42]</sup> The principle dictates that you "[a]ct with reference to every rational being (whether yourself or another) so that it is an end in itself in your maxim", meaning that the rational being is "the basis of all maxims of action" and "must be treated never as a mere means but as the supreme limiting condition in the use of all means, i.e., as an end at the same time".<sup>[50]</sup>

### The third formulation

The third formulation (Formula of Autonomy) is a synthesis of the first two and is the basis for the "complete determination of all maxims". It says "that all maxims which stem from autonomous legislation ought to harmonize with a possible realm of ends as with a realm of nature".<sup>[42]</sup> In principle, "So act as if your maxims should serve at the same time as the universal law (of all rational beings)", meaning that we should so act that we may think of ourselves as "a member in the universal realm of ends", legislating universal laws through our maxims (that is, a code of conduct), in a "possible realm of ends".<sup>[51]</sup> None may elevate themselves above the universal law, therefore it is one's duty to follow the maxim(s).

### Idea of God

Kant stated the practical necessity for a belief in God in his *Critique of Practical Reason*. As an idea of pure reason, "we do not have the slightest ground to assume in an absolute manner ... the object of this idea",<sup>[52]</sup> but adds that the idea of God cannot be separated from the relation of happiness with morality as the "ideal of the supreme good". The foundation of this connection is an intelligible moral world, and "is necessary from the practical point of view";<sup>[53]</sup> compare Voltaire: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."<sup>[54]</sup> In the *Jäsche Logic* (1800) he wrote "One cannot provide objective reality for any theoretical idea, or prove it, except for the idea of freedom, because this is the condition of the moral law, whose reality is an axiom. The reality of the idea of God can only be proved by means of this idea, and hence only with a practical purpose, i.e., to act as though (*als ob*) there is a God, and hence only for this purpose" (9:93, trans. J. Michael Young, *Lectures on Logic*, p. 590-91).

Along with this idea over reason and God, Kant places thought over religion and nature, i.e. the idea of religion being natural or naturalistic. Kant saw reason as natural, and as some part of Christianity is based on reason and morality, as Kant points out this is major in the scriptures, it is inevitable that Christianity is 'natural'. However, it is not 'naturalistic' in the sense that the religion does include supernatural or transcendent belief. Aside from this, a key point is that Kant saw that the Bible should be seen as a source of natural morality no matter whether there is/was any truth behind the supernatural factor, meaning that it is not necessary to know whether the supernatural part of Christianity has any truth to abide by and use the core Christian moral code.

Kant articulates in Book Four some of his strongest criticisms of the organization and practices of Christianity that encourage what he sees as a religion of counterfeit service to God. Among the major targets of his criticism are external ritual, superstition and a hierarchical church order. He sees all of these as efforts to make oneself pleasing to God in ways other than conscientious adherence to the principle of moral rightness in the choice of one's actions. The severity of Kant's criticisms on these matters, along with his rejection of the possibility of theoretical proofs for the existence of God and his philosophical re-interpretation of some basic Christian doctrines, have provided the basis for interpretations that see Kant as thoroughly hostile to religion in general and Christianity in particular (e.g., Walsh 1967).<sup>[55]</sup>

Kant had exposure to Islam as well and reflected about the role of reason therein.<sup>[56]</sup>

### Idea of freedom

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*,<sup>[57]</sup> Kant distinguishes between the transcendental idea of freedom, which as a psychological concept is "mainly empirical" and refers to "the question whether we must admit a power of spontaneously beginning a series of successive things or states" as a real ground of necessity in regard to causality,<sup>[58]</sup> and the practical concept of freedom as the independence of our will from the "coercion" or "necessitation through sensuous impulses". Kant finds it a source of difficulty that the practical concept of freedom is founded on the transcendental idea of freedom,<sup>[59]</sup> but for the sake of practical interests uses the practical meaning, taking "no account of... its transcendental meaning", which he feels was properly "disposed of" in the Third Antinomy, and as an element in the question of the freedom of the will is for philosophy "a real stumbling-block" that has "embarrassed speculative reason".<sup>[58]</sup>

Kant calls practical "everything that is possible through freedom", and the pure practical laws that are never given through sensuous conditions but are held analogously with the universal law of causality are moral laws. Reason can give us only the "pragmatic laws of free action through the senses", but pure practical laws given by reason *a priori*<sup>[60]</sup> dictate "*what ought to be done*".<sup>[61]</sup> <sup>[62]</sup>

## Aesthetic philosophy

Kant discusses the subjective nature of aesthetic qualities and experiences in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, (1764). Kant's contribution to aesthetic theory is developed in the *Critique of Judgment* (1790) where he investigates the possibility and logical status of "judgments of taste." In the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment," the first major division of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant used the term "aesthetic" in a manner that is, according to Kant scholar W.H. Walsh, its modern sense.<sup>[63]</sup> Prior to this, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had, in order to note the essential differences between judgments of taste, moral judgments, and scientific judgments, abandoned the use of the term "aesthetic" as "designating the critique of taste," noting that judgments of taste could never be "directed" by "laws *a priori*".<sup>[64]</sup> After A. G. Baumgarten, who wrote *Aesthetica* (1750–58),<sup>[65]</sup> Kant was one of the first philosophers to develop and integrate aesthetic theory into a unified and comprehensive philosophical system, utilizing ideas that played an integral role throughout his philosophy.<sup>[66]</sup>

In the chapter "Analytic of the Beautiful" of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant states that beauty is not a property of an artwork or natural phenomenon, but is instead a consciousness of the pleasure which attends the 'free play' of the imagination and the understanding. Even though it appears that we are using reason to decide that which is beautiful, the judgment is not a cognitive judgment,<sup>[67]</sup> "and is consequently not logical, but aesthetical" (§ 1). A pure judgement of taste is in fact subjective insofar as it refers to the emotional response of the subject and is based upon nothing but esteem for an object itself: it is a *disinterested* pleasure, and we feel that pure judgements of taste, i.e. judgements of beauty, lay claim to universal validity (§§20–22). It is important to note that this universal validity is not derived from a determinate concept of beauty but from *common sense* [source?]. Kant also believed that a judgement of taste shares characteristics engaged in a moral judgement: both are disinterested, and we hold them to be universal. In the chapter "Analytic of the Sublime" Kant identifies the sublime as an aesthetic quality which, like beauty, is subjective, but unlike beauty refers to an indeterminate relationship between the faculties of the imagination and of reason, and shares the character of moral judgments in the use of reason. The feeling of the sublime, itself divided into two distinct modes (the mathematical sublime and the dynamical sublime), describe two subjective moments both of which concern the relationship of the faculty of the imagination to reason. The mathematical sublime is situated in the failure of the imagination to comprehend natural objects which appear boundless and formless, or which appear "absolutely great" (§ 23–25). This imaginative failure is then recuperated through the pleasure taken in reason's assertion of the concept of infinity. In this move the faculty of reason proves itself superior to our fallible sensible self (§§ 25–26). In the dynamical sublime there is the sense of annihilation of the sensible self as the imagination tries to comprehend a vast might. This power of nature threatens us but through the resistance of reason to such sensible annihilation, the subject feels a pleasure and a sense of the human moral vocation. This appreciation of moral feeling through exposure to the sublime helps to develop moral character.

Kant had developed the distinction between an object of art as a material value subject to the conventions of society and the transcendental condition of the judgment of taste as a "refined" value in the propositions of his *Idea of A Universal History* (1784). In the Fourth and Fifth Theses of that work he identified all art as the "fruits of unsociableness" due to men's "antagonism in society",<sup>[68]</sup> and in the Seventh Thesis asserted that while such material property is indicative of a civilized state, only the ideal of morality and the universalization of refined value through the improvement of the mind of man "belongs to culture".<sup>[69]</sup>

## Political philosophy

In *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*<sup>[70]</sup> Kant listed several conditions that he thought necessary for ending wars and creating a lasting peace. They included a world of constitutional republics.<sup>[71]</sup> His classical republican theory was extended in the *Science of Right*, the first part of the *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797).<sup>[72]</sup>

He opposed "democracy," which at his time meant direct democracy, believing that majority rule posed a threat to individual liberty. He stated, "...democracy is, properly speaking, necessarily a despotism, because it establishes an executive power in which 'all' decide for or even against one who does not agree; that is, 'all,' who are not quite all, decide, and this is a contradiction of the general will with itself and with freedom."<sup>[73]</sup> As most writers at the time he distinguished three forms of government i.e. democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy with mixed government as the most ideal form of it.

## Anthropology

Kant lectured on anthropology for over 25 years. His *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* was published in 1798. (This was the subject of Michel Foucault's doctoral dissertation.) Kant's Lectures on Anthropology were published for the first time in 1997 in German. The former was translated into English and published by the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series in 2006.<sup>[74]</sup>

## Influence

Kant's influence on Western thought has been profound.<sup>[75]</sup> Over and above his influence on specific thinkers, Kant changed the framework within which philosophical inquiry has been carried out. He accomplished a paradigm shift: very little philosophy is now carried out as an extension, or in the style of pre-Kantian philosophy. This shift consists in several closely related innovations that have become axiomatic, in philosophy itself and in the social sciences and humanities generally:

- Kant's "Copernican revolution", that placed the role of the human subject or knower at the center of inquiry into our knowledge, such that it is impossible to philosophize about things as they are independently of us or of how they are for us,<sup>[76]</sup>
- his invention of critical philosophy, that is of the notion of being able to discover and systematically explore possible inherent limits to our ability to know through philosophical reasoning;
- his creation of the concept of "conditions of possibility", as in his notion of "the conditions of possible experience" – that is that things, knowledge, and forms of consciousness rest on prior conditions that make them possible, so that to understand or know them we have to first understand these conditions;
- his theory that objective experience is actively constituted or constructed by the functioning of the human mind;
- his notion of moral autonomy as central to humanity;
- his assertion of the principle that human beings should be treated as ends rather than as means.

Some or all of these Kantian ideas can be seen in schools of thought as different from one another as German Idealism, Marxism, positivism, phenomenology, existentialism, critical theory, linguistic philosophy, structuralism, post-structuralism, and deconstructionism.<sup>[77]</sup>

## Historical influence

During his own life, there was much critical attention paid to his thought. He did have a positive influence on Reinhold, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Novalis during the 1780s and 1790s. The school of thinking known as German Idealism developed from his writings. The German Idealists Fichte and Schelling, for example, tried to bring traditional "metaphysically" laden notions like "the Absolute," "God," or "Being" into the scope of Kant's critical thought.<sup>[78]</sup> In so doing, the German Idealists tried to reverse Kant's view that we cannot know that which we cannot observe.

Hegel was one of his first major critics. In response to what he saw as Kant's abstract and formal account, Hegel brought about an ethic focused on the "ethical life" of the community.<sup>[79]</sup> But Hegel's notion of "ethical life" is meant to subsume, rather than replace, Kantian ethics. And Hegel can be seen as trying to defend Kant's idea of freedom as going beyond finite "desires," by means of reason. Thus, in contrast to later critics like Nietzsche or Russell, Hegel shares some of Kant's most basic concerns.<sup>[80]</sup>

Many British Catholic writers, notably G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, seized on Kant and promoted his work. This was with a view to restoring support for a belief in God. Reaction against this, and an attack on Kant's use of language, is found in Ronald Englefield's article,<sup>[81]</sup> reprinted in Englefield<sup>[82]</sup> These criticisms of Kant were common in the realist views of the new positivism.

Arthur Schopenhauer was strongly influenced by Kant's transcendental idealism. He, like G. E. Schulze, Jacobi and Fichte before him, was critical of Kant's theory of the thing in itself. Things in themselves, they argued, are neither the cause of what we observe nor are they completely beyond our access. Ever since the first *Critique of Pure Reason* philosophers have been critical of Kant's theory of the thing in itself. Many have argued, if such a thing exists beyond experience then one cannot posit that it affects us causally, since that would entail stretching the category 'causality' beyond the realm of experience. For a review of this problem and the relevant literature see *The Thing in Itself and the Problem of Affection* in the revised edition of Henry Allison's *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. For Schopenhauer things in themselves do not exist outside the non-rational will. The world, as Schopenhauer would have it, is the striving and largely unconscious will.

With the success and wide influence of Hegel's writings, Kant's influence began to wane, though there was in Germany a movement that hailed a return to Kant in the 1860s, beginning with the publication of *Kant und die Epigonen* in 1865 by Otto Liebmann. His motto was "Back to Kant", and a re-examination of his ideas began (See Neo-Kantianism). During the turn of the 20th century there was an important revival of Kant's theoretical philosophy, known as the Marburg School, represented in the work of Hermann Cohen, Paul Natorp, Ernst Cassirer,<sup>[83]</sup> and anti-Neo-Kantian Nicolai Hartmann.<sup>[84]</sup>

Kant's notion of "Critique" or criticism has been quite influential. The Early German Romantics, especially Friedrich Schlegel in his "Athenaeum Fragments", used Kant's self-reflexive conception of criticism in their Romantic theory of poetry.<sup>[85]</sup> Also in Aesthetics, Clement Greenberg, in his classic essay "Modernist Painting", uses Kantian criticism, what Greenberg refers to as "immanent criticism", to justify the aims of Abstract painting, a movement Greenberg saw as aware of the key limitation—flatness—that makes up the medium of painting.<sup>[86]</sup> French philosopher Michel Foucault was also greatly influenced by Kant's notion of "Critique" and wrote several pieces on Kant for a re-thinking of the Enlightenment as a form of "critical thought". He went so far as to classify his own



Statue of Immanuel Kant in Kaliningrad (Königsberg), Russia

philosophy as a "critical history of modernity, rooted in Kant".<sup>[87]</sup>

Kant believed that mathematical truths were forms of synthetic a priori knowledge, which means they are necessary and universal, yet known through intuition.<sup>[88]</sup> Kant's often brief remarks about mathematics influenced the mathematical school known as intuitionism, a movement in philosophy of mathematics opposed to Hilbert's formalism, and the logicism of Frege and Bertrand Russell.<sup>[89]</sup>

### Influence on modern thinkers

With his *Perpetual Peace*, Kant is considered to have foreshadowed many of the ideas that have come to form the democratic peace theory, one of the main controversies in political science.<sup>[90]</sup>

The Kantian paradigm shift in philosophy and metaphysics has been sustained. Some British and American philosophers trace their intellectual origins to Hume.<sup>[91]</sup> However, Kant acknowledged Hume as awakening him from his 'dogmatic slumbers', and his work articulated and clarified the issues looked at by Hume.<sup>[92]</sup> (See The silent decade section, above).

Prominent recent Kantians include the British philosopher P. F. Strawson,<sup>[93]</sup> the American philosophers Wilfrid Sellars<sup>[94]</sup> and Christine Korsgaard.<sup>[95]</sup>

Due to the influence of Strawson and Sellars, among others, there has been a renewed interest in Kant's view of the mind. Central to many debates in philosophy of psychology and cognitive science is Kant's conception of the unity of consciousness.<sup>[96]</sup>

Kant's work on mathematics and synthetic a priori knowledge is also cited by theoretical physicist Albert Einstein as an early influence on his intellectual development.<sup>[97]</sup>

Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls are two significant political and moral philosophers whose work is strongly influenced by Kant's moral philosophy.<sup>[98]</sup> They have each argued against relativism,<sup>[99]</sup> supporting the Kantian view that universality is essential to any viable moral philosophy.

Ayn Rand was a critic of Kant. She referred to him as a "monster" and "the most evil man in history".<sup>[100]</sup> Rand was strongly opposed to the view that reason is unable to know reality "as it is in itself", which she ascribed to Kant, and she considered her philosophy to be the "exact opposite" of Kant's on "every fundamental issue".<sup>[100]</sup>

Kant's influence also has extended to the social and behavioral sciences, as in the sociology of Max Weber, the psychology of Jean Piaget, and the linguistics of Noam Chomsky. Because of the thoroughness of the Kantian paradigm shift, his influence extends to thinkers who neither specifically refer to his work nor use his terminology.



West German postage stamp, 1974, commemorating the 250th anniversary of Kant's birth.



## Tomb and statue

Kant's tomb is today in a mausoleum adjoining the northeast corner of Königsberg Cathedral in what is now known as Kaliningrad, Russia. The mausoleum was constructed by the architect Friedrich Lahrs and was finished in 1924 in time for the bicentenary of Kant's birth. Originally, Kant was buried inside the cathedral, but in 1880 his remains were moved outside and placed in a neo-Gothic chapel adjoining the northeast corner of the cathedral. Over the years, the chapel became dilapidated before it was demolished to make way for the mausoleum, which was built on the same spot, where it is today.

The tomb and its mausoleum are some of the few artifacts of German times preserved by the Soviets after they conquered and annexed the city. Today, many newlyweds bring flowers to the mausoleum.

A replica of the statue of Kant that stood in German times in front of the main University of Königsberg building was donated by a German entity in the early 1990s and placed in the same grounds.

After the expulsion of Königsberg's German population at the end of World War II, the historical University of Königsberg where Kant taught was replaced by the Russian-speaking "Kaliningrad State University", which took up the campus and surviving buildings of the historic German university. In 2005, that Russian-speaking university was renamed Immanuel Kant State University of Russia in honour of Kant. The change of name was announced at a ceremony attended by President Vladimir Putin of Russia and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of Germany, and the university further formed a Kant Society, dedicated to the study of Kantianism.



## List of works

- (1746) *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Vital Forces (Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte)*
- (1755) *A New Explanation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge (Neue Erhellung der ersten Grundsätze metaphysischer Erkenntnisse; Doctoral Thesis: Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio)*
- (1755) *Universal Natural History and Theory of Heaven (Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels)*
- (1756) *Monadologia Physica*
- (1762) *The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures (Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren)*
- (1763) *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God (Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes)*
- (1763) *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy (Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen)*
- (1764) *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen)*
- (1764) *Essay on the Illness of the Head (Über die Krankheit des Kopfes)*
- (1764) *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality (the Prize Essay) (Untersuchungen über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral)*
- (1766) *Dreams of a Spirit Seer (On Emmanuel Swedenborg) (Träume eines Geistersehers)*
- (1770) *Inaugural Dissertation (De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis)*
- (1775) *On the Different Races of Man (Über die verschiedenen Rassen der Menschen)*
- (1781) First edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* <sup>[101]</sup> (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft* <sup>[102]</sup>)
- (1783) "*Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*"<sup>[103]</sup> (*Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*)
- (1784) "*An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?*" (*Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* <sup>[104]</sup>)
- (1784) "*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*" (*Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*)
- (1785) *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten)*
- (1786) *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science (Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft)*
- (1786) *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*
- (1787) Second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* <sup>[105]</sup> (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft* <sup>[106]</sup>)
- (1788) *Critique of Practical Reason* <sup>[107]</sup> (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* <sup>[108]</sup>)
- (1790) *Critique of Judgement (Kritik der Urteilskraft* <sup>[109]</sup>)
- (1790) *The Science of Right* <sup>[110]</sup>
- (1793) *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone (Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft)* <sup>[111]</sup>
- (1793) *On the Old Saw: That may be right in theory, but it won't work in practice (Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis)*
- (1795) *Perpetual Peace* <sup>[112]</sup> (*Zum ewigen Frieden* <sup>[113]</sup>)



Plaque on a wall in Kaliningrad, in German and Russian, with the words taken from the conclusion of Kant's Critique of Practical Reason: *Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: The starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.* (The wall is next to where the southwest part of Königsberg Castle used to be.)

- (1797) *Metaphysics of Morals (Metaphysik der Sitten)*
- (1798) *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View (Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht)*
- (1798) *The Contest of Faculties* <sup>[114]</sup> (*Der Streit der Fakultäten* <sup>[115]</sup>)
- (1800) *Logic (Logik)*
- (1803) *On Pedagogy (Über Pädagogik)* <sup>[116]</sup>
- (1804) *Opus Postumum*
- (1817) *Lectures on Philosophical Theology (Immanuel Kants Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre* edited by K. H. L. Pölitz). [The English edition of A. W. Wood & G. M. Clark (Cornell, 1978) is based on Pölitz' second edition, 1830, of these lectures.] <sup>[117]</sup>

## Footnotes

- [1] Crane Brinton. "Enlightenment". *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Vol. 2, p. 519. Macmillan, 1967.
- [2] Kant, Immanuel; Kitcher, Patricia (intro.); Pluhar, W. (trans.) (1996). *Critique of Pure Reason*. Indianapolis: Hackett. xxviii.
- [3] "Transcendental Arguments (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)" (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/transcendental-arguments/>). Plato.stanford.edu. 2011-02-25. . Retrieved 2011-10-22.
- [4] Rohlf, Michael. "Immanuel Kant" (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/kant/>), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)
- [5] "Immanuel Kant (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)" (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/>). Plato.stanford.edu. 2010-05-20. . Retrieved 2011-10-22.
- [6] Kuehn, Manfred. *Kant: a Biography*. Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 26
- [7] Lewis, Rick. 2005. 'Kant 200 Years On'. *Philosophy Now*. No. 49.
- [8] "Cosmopolis" ([http://www.koenigsberg-is-dead.de/I\\_Cosmopolis.html](http://www.koenigsberg-is-dead.de/I_Cosmopolis.html)). Koenigsberg-is-dead.de. 2001-04-23. . Retrieved 2009-07-24. Kant's mother's name is sometimes erroneously given as Anna Regina Porter.
- [9] [http://www.csudh.edu/phenom\\_studies/western/lect\\_9.html](http://www.csudh.edu/phenom_studies/western/lect_9.html)
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- [25] *Critique of Pure Reason*, A801.
- [26] *The Science of Right*, Conclusion.
- [27] *Critique of Pure Reason*, A811.
- [28] In the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant refers to space as "no discursive or...general conception of the relation of things, but a pure intuition" and maintained that "We can only represent to ourselves one space". The "general notion of spaces...depends solely upon limitations" (Meikeljohn trans., A25). In the second edition of the CPR, Kant adds, "The original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, not a concept" (Kemp Smith trans., B40). In regard to time, Kant states that "Time is not a discursive, or what is called a general concept, but a pure form of sensible intuition. Different times are but parts of one and the same time; and the representation which can be given only through a single object is intuition" (A31/B47). For the differences in the discursive use of reason according to concepts and its intuitive use through the construction of concepts, see *Critique of Pure Reason* (A719/B747 ff. and A837/B865). On "One and the same thing in space and time" and the mathematical construction of concepts, see A724/B752.
- [29] See, e.g., "Kant, Immanuel!", in The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition Bartleby.com (<http://www.bartleby.com/65/ka/Kant-Imm.html>)

- [30] The German word *Anschauung*, which Kant used, literally means 'looking at' and generally means what in philosophy in English is called "perception". However it sometimes is rendered as "intuition": not, however, with the vernacular meaning of an indescribable or mystical experience or sixth sense, but rather with the meaning of the direct perception or grasping of sensory phenomena. In this article, both terms, "perception" and "intuition" are used to stand for Kant's *Anschauung*.
- [31] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* [1781], trans. Norman Kemp Smith (N.Y.: St. Martins, 1965), A 51/B 75.
- [32] Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to perhaps Any Future Metaphysics*, pages 35 to 43.
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- [38] Kant, *Foundations*, p. 421.
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- [51] Kant, *Foundations*, pp. 438–9. See also Kingdom of Ends
- [52] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A685/B713.
- [53] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A810/B838.
- [54] Originally, "Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer.", q:Voltaire, *Épître à l'Auteur du Livre des Trois Imposteurs* (1770-11-10).
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- [57] The Norman Kemp Smith translation has been used for this section, with citation noting the pagination of the first and second editions.
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## References and further reading

Any suggestion of further reading on Kant has to take cognizance of the fact that his work has dominated philosophy like no other figure after him. Nevertheless, several guideposts can be made out. In Germany, the most important contemporary interpreter of Kant and the movement of German Idealism which he began is Dieter Henrich, who has some work available in English. P.F. Strawson's "The Bounds of Sense" (1969) played a significant role in determining the contemporary reception of Kant in England and America. More recent interpreters of note in the English-speaking world include Lewis White Beck, Jonathan Bennett, Henry Allison, Paul Guyer, Christine Korsgaard, Stephen Palmquist, Robert B. Pippin, Roger Scruton, Rudolf Makkreel, and Béatrice Longuenesse.

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## External links

- Works by Immanuel Kant (<http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Kant>.) at Project Gutenberg
- Works by or about Immanuel Kant (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79-21614>) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)
- (More German works at Wikisource ([http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Immanuel\\_Kant](http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant)))
- (More German works at Project Gutenberg (<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/autoren/kant.htm>))
- (More English works at The University of Adelaide Library ([http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/aut/kant\\_immanuel.html](http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/aut/kant_immanuel.html)))
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- Works by Immanuel Kant (<http://librivox.org/newcatalog/search.php?title=&author=Immanuel+Kant&action=Search>) in audio format from LibriVox
- Stephen Palmquist's Glossary of Kantian Terminology (<http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/ksp1/KSPglos.html>)

- Kant's Categories as grammatical reifications (<http://www.percepp.com/kantcats.htm>)
- Kant's Ethical Theory (<http://www.rsrevision.com/Alevel/ethics/kant/index.htm>) Kantian ethics explained, applied and evaluated
- Kant & Ethics (<http://ethics.sandiego.edu/theories/Kant/index.asp>) Extensive links and discussions from Lawrence Hinman at University of San Diego
- Notes on Deontology (<http://webs.wofford.edu/kaycd/ethics/deon.htm>) A conveniently brief survey of Kant's deontology
- Kant on the Web (<http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/Kant.html>) on Stephen Palmquist's website
- Kant Links (<http://comp.uark.edu/~rlee/semiau96/kantlink.html>)
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- German Idealist Foundations of Durkheim's Sociology and Teleology of Knowledge (<http://theoryandscience.icaap.org/content/vol003.001/tekiner.html>)
- Several Kant's works in clickable pdf (<http://www.e-text.org/text/>)
- Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (14 sections on Kant) (<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/DB047>)
- International Kant Interview - 2004 ([http://www.philos.msu.ru/community/staff/vasiliev/Kant\\_Interview/Kant\\_Interview.html](http://www.philos.msu.ru/community/staff/vasiliev/Kant_Interview/Kant_Interview.html))
- Readable versions of Prolegomena, Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals, Critique of Pure Reason, and Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science ([http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/f\\_kant.html](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/f_kant.html)) (J. Bennett translations)
- Kant's moral philosophy and the question of pre-emptive war, *Revue Sens Public* ([http://www.sens-public.org/article.php3?id\\_article=150](http://www.sens-public.org/article.php3?id_article=150))
- Kant in the Classroom (<http://www.manchester.edu/kant>) background information for Kant's lectures
- Works (<http://www.intratext.com/Catalogo/Autori/AUT216.HTM>): text, concordances and frequency list
- Kant's Death Mask (<http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/dokumente/7806/>)
- The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has several entries on Kant:
- Immanuel Kant (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/>)
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- Kant's Critique of Metaphysics (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-metaphysics/>)
- Kant's Theory of Judgment (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-judgment/>)
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- Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics/>)
- Kant's Philosophy of Religion (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-religion/>)
- Kant's Moral Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral/>)
- Kant and Leibniz (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-leibniz/>)

# John Locke

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## John Locke



<b>Full name</b>	John Locke
<b>Born</b>	29 August 1632 Wrington, Somerset, England
<b>Died</b>	28 October 1704 (aged 72) Essex, England
<b>Era</b>	17th-century philosophy (Modern Philosophy)
<b>Region</b>	Western Philosophers
<b>School</b>	British Empiricism, Social Contract, Natural Law
<b>Main interests</b>	Metaphysics, Epistemology, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Education, Economics
<b>Notable ideas</b>	Tabula rasa, "government with the consent of the governed"; state of nature; rights of life, liberty and property
<b>Signature</b>	

**John Locke** FRS (  <sup>ⓘ</sup>  <sup>Ⓘ</sup>  <sup>Ⓙ</sup>  <sup>Ⓚ</sup>  <sup>Ⓛ</sup>  <sup>Ⓜ</sup>  <sup>Ⓝ</sup>  <sup>Ⓒ</sup>  <sup>Ⓟ</sup>  <sup>Ⓠ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup>  <sup>Ⓡ</sup>  <sup>Ⓢ</sup>  <sup>Ⓣ</sup>  <sup>Ⓤ</sup> 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## Biography

Locke's father, who was also called John Locke, was a country lawyer and clerk to the Justices of the Peace in Chew Magna,<sup>[6]</sup> who had served as a captain of cavalry for the Parliamentary forces during the early part of the English Civil War. His mother was Agnes Keene. Both parents were Puritans. Locke was born on 29 August 1632, in a small thatched cottage by the church in Wrington, Somerset, about twelve miles from Bristol. He was baptised the same day. Soon after Locke's birth, the family moved to the market town of Pensford, about seven miles south of Bristol, where Locke grew up in a rural Tudor house in Belluton.

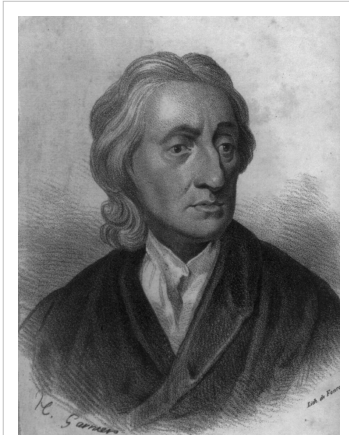
In 1647, Locke was sent to the prestigious Westminster School in London under the sponsorship of Alexander Popham, a member of Parliament and his father's former commander. After completing his studies there, he was admitted to Christ Church, Oxford. The dean of the college at the time was John Owen, vice-chancellor of the university. Although a capable student, Locke was irritated by the undergraduate curriculum of the time. He found the works of modern philosophers, such as René Descartes, more interesting than the classical material taught at the university. Through his friend Richard Lower, whom he knew from the Westminster School, Locke was introduced to medicine and the experimental philosophy being pursued at other universities and in the English Royal Society, of which he eventually became a member.

Locke was awarded a bachelor's degree in 1656 and a master's degree in 1658. He obtained a bachelor of medicine in 1674, having studied medicine extensively during his time at Oxford and worked with such noted scientists and thinkers as Robert Boyle, Thomas Willis, Robert Hooke and Richard Lower. In 1666, he met Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, who had come to Oxford seeking treatment for a liver infection. Cooper was impressed with Locke and persuaded him to become part of his retinue.

Locke had been looking for a career and in 1667 moved into Shaftesbury's home at Exeter House in London, to serve as Lord Ashley's personal physician. In London, Locke resumed his medical studies under the tutelage of Thomas Sydenham. Sydenham had a major effect on Locke's natural philosophical thinking – an effect that would become evident in the *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

Locke's medical knowledge was put to the test when Shaftesbury's liver infection became life-threatening. Locke coordinated the advice of several physicians and was probably instrumental in persuading Shaftesbury to undergo an operation (then life-threatening itself) to remove the cyst. Shaftesbury survived and prospered, crediting Locke with saving his life.

It was in Shaftesbury's household, during 1671, that the meeting took place, described in the Epistle to the reader of the Essay, which was the genesis of what would later become the Essay. Two extant Drafts still survive from this period. It was also during this time that Locke served as Secretary of the Board of Trade and Plantations and Secretary to the Lords and Proprietors of the Carolinas, helping to shape his ideas on international trade and economics.



John Locke

Shaftesbury, as a founder of the Whig movement, exerted great influence on Locke's political ideas. Locke became involved in politics when Shaftesbury became Lord Chancellor in 1672. Following Shaftesbury's fall from favour in 1675, Locke spent some time travelling across France as tutor and medical attendant to Caleb Banks.<sup>[7]</sup> He returned to England in 1679 when Shaftesbury's political fortunes took a brief positive turn. Around this time, most likely at Shaftesbury's prompting, Locke composed the bulk of the *Two Treatises of Government*. While it was once thought that Locke wrote the Treatises to defend the Glorious Revolution of 1688, recent scholarship has shown that the work was composed well before this date,<sup>[8]</sup> however, and it is now viewed as a more general argument against Absolute monarchy (particularly as espoused by Robert Filmer and Thomas Hobbes) and for individual consent as the basis of political legitimacy. Though Locke was associated with the influential Whigs, his ideas about natural rights and government are today considered quite revolutionary for that period in English history.

However, Locke fled to the Netherlands in 1683, under strong suspicion of involvement in the Rye House Plot, although there is little evidence to suggest that he was directly involved in the scheme. In the Netherlands, Locke had time to return to his writing, spending a great deal of time re-working the Essay and composing the Letter on Toleration. Locke did not return home until after the Glorious Revolution. Locke accompanied William of Orange's wife back to England in 1688. The bulk of Locke's publishing took place upon his return from exile – his aforementioned *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the *Two Treatises of Civil Government* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration* all appearing in quick succession.

Locke's close friend Lady Masham invited him to join her at the Mashams' country house in Essex. Although his time there was marked by variable health from asthma attacks, he nevertheless became an intellectual hero of the Whigs. During this period he discussed matters with such figures as John Dryden and Isaac Newton.

He died in 28 October 1704, and is buried in the churchyard of the village of High Laver,<sup>[9]</sup> east of Harlow in Essex, where he had lived in the household of Sir Francis Masham since 1691. Locke never married nor had children.

Events that happened during Locke's lifetime include the English Restoration, the Great Plague of London and the Great Fire of London. He did not quite see the Act of Union of 1707, though the thrones of England and Scotland were held in personal union throughout his lifetime. Constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy were in their infancy during Locke's time.

## Influence

Locke exercised a profound influence on political philosophy, in particular on modern liberalism. Michael Zuckert has argued that Locke launched liberalism by tempering Hobbesian absolutism and clearly separating the realms of Church and State. He had a strong influence on Voltaire who called him "le sage Locke". His arguments concerning liberty and the social contract later influenced the written works of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and other Founding Fathers of the United States. In fact, one passage from the *Second Treatise* is reproduced verbatim in the Declaration of Independence, the reference to a "long train of abuses." Such was Locke's influence that Thomas Jefferson wrote: "Bacon, Locke and Newton ... I consider them as the three greatest men that have ever lived, without any exception, and as having laid the foundation of those superstructures which have been raised in the Physical and Moral sciences".<sup>[10] [11] [12]</sup> Today, most contemporary libertarians claim Locke as an influence.

But Locke's influence may have been even more profound in the realm of epistemology. Locke redefined subjectivity, or self, and intellectual historians such as Charles Taylor and Jerrold Seigel argue that Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) marks the beginning of the modern Western conception of the self.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Theories of religious tolerance

Locke, writing his *Letters Concerning Toleration* (1689–92) in the aftermath of the European wars of religion, formulated a classic reasoning for religious tolerance. Three arguments are central: (1) Earthly judges, the state in particular, and human beings generally, cannot dependably evaluate the truth-claims of competing religious standpoints; (2) Even if they could, enforcing a single "true religion" would not have the desired effect, because belief cannot be compelled by violence; (3) Coercing religious uniformity would lead to more social disorder than allowing diversity.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Constitution of Carolina

Appraisals of Locke have often been tied to appraisals of liberalism in general, and also to appraisals of the United States. Detractors note that (in 1671) he was a major investor in the English slave-trade through the Royal African Company, as well as through his participation in drafting the *Fundamental Constitution of the Carolinas* while Shaftesbury's secretary, which established a feudal aristocracy and gave a master absolute power over his slaves. For example, Martin Cohen notes that as a secretary to the Council of Trade and Plantations (1673–4) and a member of the Board of Trade (1696–1700) Locke was, in fact, "one of just half a dozen men who created and supervised both the colonies and their iniquitous systems of servitude".<sup>[15]</sup> Some see his statements on unenclosed property as having been intended to justify the displacement of the Native Americans.<sup>[16] [17]</sup> Because of his opposition to aristocracy and slavery in his major writings, he is accused of hypocrisy and racism, or of caring only for the liberty of English capitalists.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Theory of value and property

Locke uses the word *property* in both broad and narrow senses. In a broad sense, it covers a wide range of human interests and aspirations; more narrowly, it refers to material goods. He argues that property is a natural right and it is derived from labour.

In Chapter V of his *Second Treatise*, Locke argues that the individual ownership of goods and property is justified by the labour exerted to produce those goods or utilise property to produce goods beneficial to human society.<sup>[19]</sup>

Locke stated his belief, in his *Second Treatise*, that nature on its own provides little of value to society; he provides the implication that the labour expended in the creation of goods gives them their value. This is used as supporting evidence for the interpretation of Locke's labour theory of property as a labour theory of value, in his implication that goods produced by nature are of little value, unless combined with labour in their production and that labour is what gives goods their value.<sup>[19]</sup>

Locke believed that ownership of property is created by the application of labour. In addition, he believed property precedes government and government cannot "dispose of the estates of the subjects arbitrarily." Karl Marx later critiqued Locke's theory of property in his own social theory.

## Political theory

Locke's political theory was founded on social contract theory. Unlike Thomas Hobbes, Locke believed that human nature is characterised by reason and tolerance. Like Hobbes, Locke believed that human nature allowed men to be selfish. This is apparent with the introduction of currency. In a natural state all people were equal and independent, and everyone had a natural right to defend his "Life, health, Liberty, or Possessions". This became the basis for the phrase in the American Declaration of Independence: "*Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*".<sup>[20]</sup>

Like Hobbes, Locke assumed that the sole right to defend in the state of nature was not enough, so people established a civil society to resolve conflicts in a civil way with help from government in a state of society. However, Locke never refers to Hobbes by name<sup>[21]</sup> and may instead have been responding to other writers of the day.<sup>[22]</sup> Locke also advocated governmental separation of powers and believed that revolution is not only a right but

an obligation in some circumstances. These ideas would come to have profound influence on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

### **Limits to accumulation**

Labour creates property, but it also does contain limits to its accumulation: man's capacity to produce and man's capacity to consume. According to Locke, unused property is waste and an offence against nature.<sup>[23]</sup> However, with the introduction of "durable" goods, men could exchange their excessive perishable goods for goods that would last longer and thus not offend the natural law. The introduction of money marks the culmination of this process. Money makes possible the unlimited accumulation of property without causing waste through spoilage.<sup>[24]</sup> He also includes gold or silver as money because they may be "hoarded up without injury to anyone,"<sup>[25]</sup> since they do not spoil or decay in the hands of the possessor. The introduction of money eliminates the limits of accumulation. Locke stresses that inequality has come about by tacit agreement on the use of money, not by the social contract establishing civil society or the law of land regulating property. Locke is aware of a problem posed by unlimited accumulation but does not consider it his task. He just implies that government would function to moderate the conflict between the unlimited accumulation of property and a more nearly equal distribution of wealth and does not say which principles that government should apply to solve this problem. However, not all elements of his thought form a consistent whole. For example, labour theory of value of the Two Treatises of Government stands side by side with the demand-and-supply theory developed in a letter he wrote titled *Some Considerations on the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest and the Raising of the Value of Money*. Moreover, Locke anchors property in labour but in the end upholds the unlimited accumulation of wealth.<sup>[26]</sup>

### **On price theory**

Locke's general theory of value and price is a supply and demand theory, which was set out in a letter to a Member of Parliament in 1691, titled *Some Considerations on the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest and the Raising of the Value of Money*.<sup>[27]</sup> Supply is quantity and demand is rent. "The price of any commodity rises or falls by the proportion of the number of buyer and sellers." and "that which regulates the price... [of goods] is nothing else but their quantity in proportion to their rent." The quantity theory of money forms a special case of this general theory. His idea is based on "money answers all things" (Ecclesiastes) or "rent of money is always sufficient, or more than enough," and "varies very little..." Regardless of whether the demand for money is unlimited or constant, Locke concludes that as far as money is concerned, the demand is exclusively regulated by its quantity. He also investigates the determinants of demand and supply. For supply, goods in general are considered valuable because they can be exchanged, consumed and they must be scarce. For demand, goods are in demand because they yield a flow of income. Locke develops an early theory of capitalisation, such as land, which has value because "by its constant production of saleable commodities it brings in a certain yearly income." Demand for money is almost the same as demand for goods or land; it depends on whether money is wanted as medium of exchange or as loanable funds. For medium of exchange "money is capable by exchange to procure us the necessaries or conveniences of life." For loanable funds, "it comes to be of the same nature with land by yielding a certain yearly income ... or interest."



### Monetary thoughts

Locke distinguishes two functions of money, as a "counter" to measure value, and as a "pledge" to lay claim to goods. He believes that silver and gold, as opposed to paper money, are the appropriate currency for international transactions. Silver and gold, he says, are treated to have equal value by all of humanity and can thus be treated as a pledge by anyone, while the value of paper money is only valid under the government which issues it.

Locke argues that a country should seek a favourable balance of trade, lest it fall behind other countries and suffer a loss in its trade. Since the world money stock grows constantly, a country must constantly seek to enlarge its own stock. Locke develops his theory of foreign exchanges, in addition to commodity movements, there are also movements in country stock of money, and movements of capital determine exchange rates. The latter is less significant and less volatile than commodity movements. As for a country's money stock, if it is large relative to that of other countries, it will cause the country's exchange to rise above par, as an export balance would do.

He also prepares estimates of the cash requirements for different economic groups (landholders, labourers and brokers). In each group the cash requirements are closely related to the length of the pay period. He argues the brokers – middlemen – whose activities enlarge the monetary circuit and whose profits eat into the earnings of labourers and landholders, had a negative influence on both one's personal and the public economy that they supposedly contributed to.

### The self

Locke defines the self as "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 or misery, and so is concerned for itself, as far as that consciousness extends".<sup>[28]</sup> He does not, however, ignore "substance", writing that "the body too goes to the making the man."<sup>[29]</sup> The Lockean self is therefore a self-aware and self-reflective consciousness that is fixed in a body.

In his *Essay*, Locke explains the gradual unfolding of this conscious mind. Arguing against both the Augustinian view of man as originally sinful and the Cartesian position, which holds that man innately knows basic logical propositions, Locke posits an "empty" mind, a *tabula rasa*, which is shaped by experience; sensations and reflections being the two sources of **all** our ideas.<sup>[30]</sup>

John Locke's formulation of *tabula rasa* in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was influenced by a 17th century Latin translation *Philosophus Autodidactus* (published by Edward Pococke) of the Arabic philosophical novel *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* by the 12th century Andalusian-Islamic philosopher and novelist Ibn Tufail (known as "Abubacer" or "Ebn Tophail" in the West). Ibn Tufail demonstrated the theory of *tabula rasa* as a thought experiment through his Arabic philosophical novel *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* in which he depicted the development of the mind of a feral child "from a *tabula rasa* to that of an adult, in complete isolation from society" on a desert island, through experience alone.<sup>[31]</sup>

Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is an outline on how to educate this mind: he expresses the belief that education maketh the man, or, more fundamentally, that the mind is an "empty cabinet", with the statement, "I think I may say that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education."<sup>[32]</sup>

Locke also wrote that "the little and almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies have very important and lasting consequences."<sup>[33]</sup> He argued that the "associations of ideas" that one makes when young are more important than those made later because they are the foundation of the self: they are, put differently, what first mark the *tabula rasa*. In his *Essay*, in which is introduced both of these concepts, Locke warns against, for example, letting "a foolish maid" convince a child that "goblins and sprites" are associated with the night for "darkness shall ever afterwards bring with it those frightful ideas, and they shall be so joined, that he can no more bear the one than the other."<sup>[34]</sup>

"Associationism", as this theory would come to be called, exerted a powerful influence over eighteenth-century thought, particularly educational theory, as nearly every educational writer warned parents not to allow their children to develop negative associations. It also led to the development of psychology and other new disciplines with David Hartley's attempt to discover a biological mechanism for associationism in his *Observations on Man* (1749).

## Religious beliefs

Some scholars have seen Locke's political convictions as deriving from his religious beliefs.<sup>[35]</sup> <sup>[36]</sup> <sup>[37]</sup> Locke's religious trajectory began in Calvinist trinitarianism, but by the time of the *Reflections* (1695) Locke was advocating not just Socinian views on tolerance but also Socinian Christology; with veiled denial of the pre-existence of Christ.<sup>[38]</sup> However Wainwright (Oxford, 1987) notes that in the posthumously published *Paraphrase* (1707) Locke's interpretation of one verse, Ephesians 1:10, is markedly different from that of Socinians like Biddle, and may indicate that near the end of his life Locke returned nearer to an Arian position.<sup>[39]</sup>

## List of major works

- (1689) *A Letter Concerning Toleration*
  - (1690) *A Second Letter Concerning Toleration*
  - (1692) *A Third Letter for Toleration*
- (1689) *Two Treatises of Government*
- (1690) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
- (1693) *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*
- (1695) *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as Delivered in the Scriptures*
  - (1695) *A Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity*

## Major unpublished or posthumous manuscripts

- (1660) *First Tract of Government (or the English Tract)*
- (c.1662) *Second Tract of Government (or the Latin Tract)*
- (1664) *Questions Concerning the Law of Nature* (definitive Latin text, with facing accurate English trans. in Robert Horwitz et al., eds., John Locke, *Questions Concerning the Law of Nature*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).
- (1667) *Essay Concerning Toleration*
- (1706) *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*
- (1707) *A paraphrase and notes on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians*

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- Zuckert, Michael, *Launching Liberalism: On Lockean Political Philosophy*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- *Locke Studies*, appearing annually, publishes scholarly work on John Locke.

## External links

### Works

- Works by John Locke ([http://www.gutenberg.org/author/John+Locke+\(1632-1704\)](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/John+Locke+(1632-1704))) at Project Gutenberg
- Links to online books by John Locke ([http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/search?amode=start&author=Locke, John](http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/search?amode=start&author=Locke,John))
- *The Works of John Locke*
  - 1823 Edition, 10 Volumes on PDF files, and additional resources (<http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/locke/index.html>)
  - 1824 Edition, 9 volumes in multiple formats ([http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com\\_staticxt&staticfile=show.php?person=131&Itemid=28](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php?person=131&Itemid=28))
- John Locke Manuscripts (<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/locke/mss/index.html>)
- Updated versions of *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, *Second Treatise of Government*, and *Letter on Toleration* (<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/>), edited by Jonathan Bennett
- Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Thomas Hollis (A. Millar et al., 1764) *See original text in The Online Library of Liberty* ([http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com\\_staticxt&staticfile=show.php?title=222&Itemid=99999999](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php?title=222&Itemid=99999999))
- Works by or about John Locke (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79-90225>) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)

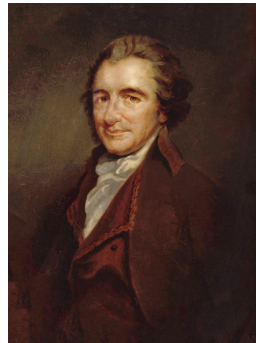
### Resources

- John Locke (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke>) entry by William Uzgalis in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2007-05-05
- Macmillan Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Locke ([http://mind.ucsd.edu/syllabi/99\\_00/Empiricism/Readings/Encyc\\_Phil/Locke.html](http://mind.ucsd.edu/syllabi/99_00/Empiricism/Readings/Encyc_Phil/Locke.html))
- John Locke Bibliography (<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/locke/index.html>)
- John Locke's Theory of Knowledge (<http://thegreatdebate.org.uk/LockeEpistem.html>) by Caspar Hewett
- The Digital Locke Project (<http://www.digitallockeproject.nl/>)
- Portraits of Locke (<http://www.npg.org.uk/live/search/person.asp?LinkID=mp02773>)
- Locke links (<http://www.epistemelinks.com/Main/Philosophers.aspx?PhilCode=Lock>)
- A complex and positive answer to question Was Locke a Liberal? ([http://www.independent.org/pdf/tir/tir\\_01\\_4\\_huyler.pdf](http://www.independent.org/pdf/tir/tir_01_4_huyler.pdf)) – by Jerome Huyler
- Timeline of the Life and Work of John Locke at The Online Library of Liberty ([http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1181&Itemid=273](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1181&Itemid=273))
- Locke on Property: A Bibliographical Essay by Karen Vaughn The Online Library of Liberty. ([http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=166&Itemid=259](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=166&Itemid=259))

# Thomas Paine

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## Thomas Paine



Oil painting by Auguste Millière (1880)

<b>Full name</b>	Thomas Paine
<b>Born</b>	February 9, 1737 <sup>[1]</sup> Thetford, Norfolk, England, Great Britain
<b>Died</b>	June 8, 1809 (aged 72) New York City
<b>Era</b>	18th-century philosophy
<b>Region</b>	Western philosophy
<b>School</b>	Enlightenment, Liberalism, Radicalism, Republicanism
<b>Main interests</b>	Religion, Ethics, Politics
<b>Signature</b>	

**Thomas "Tom" Paine** (February 9, 1737 [O.S. January 29, 1736<sup>[1]</sup>] – June 8, 1809) was an English author, pamphleteer, radical, inventor, intellectual, revolutionary, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.<sup>[2]</sup> He has been called "a corsetmaker by trade, a journalist by profession, and a propagandist by inclination."<sup>[3]</sup>

Born in Thetford, in the English county of Norfolk, Paine emigrated to the British American colonies in 1774 in time to participate in the American Revolution. His principal contributions were the powerful, widely read pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776), the all-time best-selling American book that advocated colonial America's independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain, and *The American Crisis* (1776–1783), a pro-revolutionary pamphlet series. "Common Sense" was so influential that John Adams said, "Without the pen of the author of 'Common Sense,' the sword of Washington would have been raised in vain."<sup>[4]</sup>

Paine lived in France for most of the 1790s, becoming deeply involved in the French Revolution. He wrote the *Rights of Man* (1791), in part a defense of the French Revolution against its critics. His attacks on British writer Edmund Burke led to a trial and conviction *in absentia* for the crime of seditious libel. Despite not speaking French, he was elected to the French National Convention in 1792. The Girondists regarded him as an ally, so, the Montagnards, especially Robespierre, regarded him as an enemy. In December of 1793, he was arrested and imprisoned in Paris, then released in 1794. He became notorious because of *The Age of Reason* (1793–94), his book that advocates deism, promotes reason and freethinking, argues against institutionalized religion and Christian doctrines. He also wrote the pamphlet *Agrarian Justice* (1795), discussing the origins of property, and introduced the concept of a guaranteed minimum income.

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In 1802 he returned to America where he died on June 8, 1809. Only six people attended his funeral as he had been ostracized due to his ridicule of Christianity.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Early life

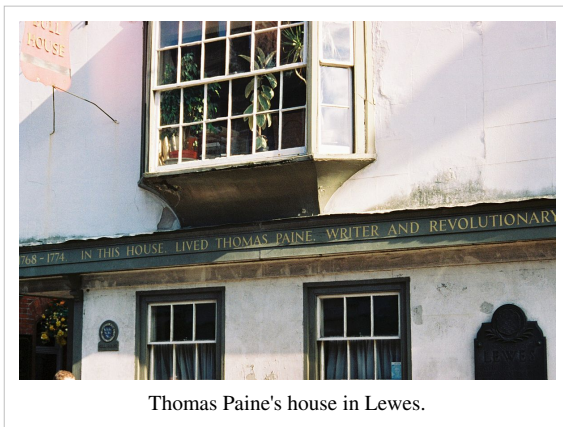
Paine was born February 9, 1737 [O.S. January 29, 1736] the son of Joseph Pain, or Paine, a Quaker, and Frances (née Cocke), an Anglican, in Thetford, an important market town and coach stage-post, in rural Norfolk, England.<sup>[6]</sup> Born Thomas Pain, despite claims that he changed his family name upon his emigration to America in 1774,<sup>[7]</sup> he was using Paine in 1769, whilst still in Lewes, Sussex.<sup>[8]</sup>

He attended Thetford Grammar School (1744–1749), at a time when there was no compulsory education.<sup>[9]</sup> At age thirteen, he was apprenticed to his stay-maker father; in late adolescence, he enlisted and briefly served as a privateer,<sup>[10]</sup> <sup>[11]</sup> before returning to Britain in 1759. There, he became a master stay-maker, establishing a shop in Sandwich, Kent. On September 27, 1759, Thomas Paine married Mary Lambert. His business collapsed soon after. Mary became pregnant, and, after they moved to Margate, she went into early labor, in which she and their child died.

In July 1761, Paine returned to Thetford to work as a supernumerary officer. In December 1762, he became an excise officer in Grantham, Lincolnshire; in August 1764, he was transferred to Alford, at a salary of £50 per annum. On August 27, 1765, he was fired as an Excise Officer for "claiming to have inspected goods he did not inspect." On July 31, 1766, he requested his reinstatement from the Board of Excise, which they granted the next day, upon vacancy. While awaiting that, he worked as a stay maker in Diss, Norfolk, and later as a servant (per the records, for a Mr. Noble, of Goodman's Fields, and for a Mr. Gardiner, at Kensington). He also applied to become an ordained minister of the Church of England and, per some accounts, he preached in Moorfields.<sup>[12]</sup>



Old School at Thetford Grammar School, where Paine was educated.



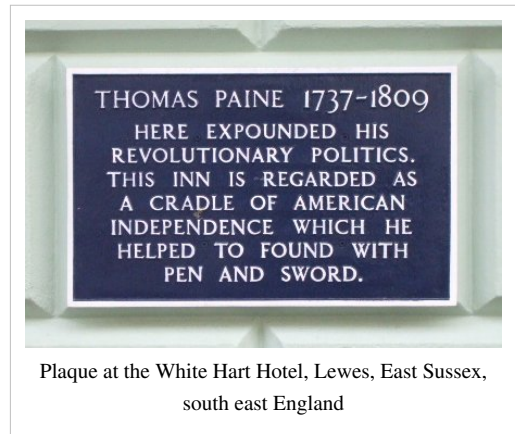
Thomas Paine's house in Lewes.

In 1767, he was appointed to a position in Grampound, Cornwall; subsequently, he asked to leave this post to await a vacancy, thus, he became a schoolteacher in London. On February 19, 1768, he was appointed to Lewes, East Sussex, living above the fifteenth-century Bull House, the tobacco shop of Samuel Ollive and Esther Ollive.

There, Paine first became involved in civic matters, he appears in the Town Book as a member of the Court Leet, the governing body for the Town. He also was in the influential vestry church group that collected taxes and tithes to distribute among the poor. On March 26, 1771, at age 34,

he married Elizabeth Ollive, his landlord's daughter.

From 1772 to 1773, Paine joined excise officers asking Parliament for better pay and working conditions, publishing, in summer of 1772, *The Case of the Officers of Excise*, a twenty-one-page article, and his first political work, spending the London winter distributing the 4,000 copies printed to the Parliament and others. In spring of 1774, he was fired from the excise service for being absent from his post without permission; his tobacco shop failed, too. On April 14, to avoid debtor's prison, he sold his household possessions to pay debts. On June 4, he formally separated from wife Elizabeth and moved to London, where, in September, the mathematician, Fellow of the Royal Society, and Commissioner of the Excise George Lewis Scott introduced him to Benjamin Franklin,<sup>[13]</sup> who suggested emigration to British colonial America, and gave him a letter of recommendation. In October, Thomas Paine emigrated from Great Britain to the American colonies, arriving in Philadelphia on November 30, 1774.

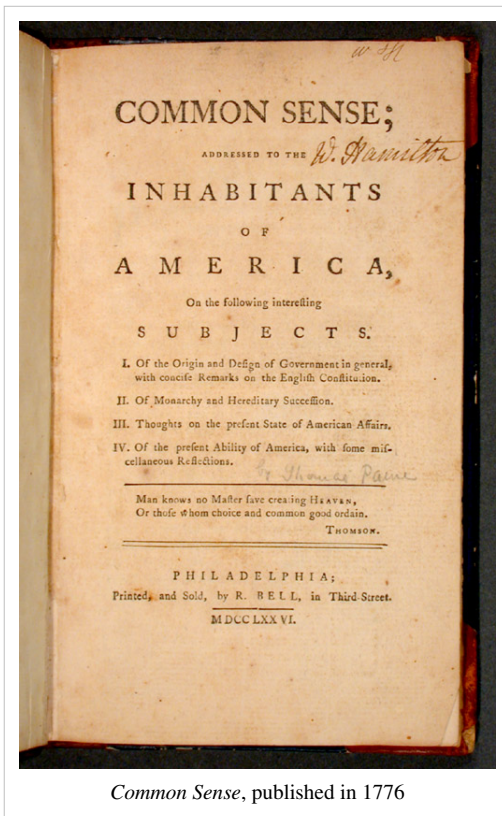


He barely survived the transatlantic voyage. The ship's water supplies were bad, and typhoid fever killed five passengers. On arriving at Philadelphia, he was too sick to debark. Benjamin Franklin's physician, there to welcome Paine to America, had him carried off ship; Paine took six weeks to recover his health. He became a citizen of Pennsylvania "by taking the oath of allegiance at a very early period."<sup>[14]</sup> In January, 1775, he became editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, a position he conducted with considerable ability.

Paine designed the Sunderland Bridge of 1796 over the Wear River at Wearmouth, England. It was patterned after the model he had made for the Schuylkill River Bridge at Philadelphia in 1787, and the Sunderland arch became the prototype for many subsequent voussoir arches made in iron and steel.<sup>[15]</sup> <sup>[16]</sup> He also received a British patent for a single-span iron bridge, developed a smokeless candle,<sup>[17]</sup> and worked with inventor John Fitch in developing steam engines.



## American Revolution



*Common Sense*, published in 1776

### Common Sense (1776)

Thomas Paine has a claim to the title *The Father of the American Revolution* because of *Common Sense*, the pro-independence monograph pamphlet he anonymously published on January 10, 1776; signed "Written by an Englishman", the pamphlet became an immediate success.<sup>[18]</sup> It quickly spread among the literate, and, in three months, 100,000 copies (estimated 500,000 total including pirated editions sold during the course of the Revolution<sup>[19]</sup>) sold throughout the American British colonies (with only two million free inhabitants), making it the best-selling American book.<sup>[19]</sup> [20] Paine's original title for the pamphlet was *Plain Truth*; Paine's friend, pro-independence advocate Benjamin Rush, suggested *Common Sense* instead.

The pamphlet appeared in January 1776, after the Revolution had started. It was passed around, and often read aloud in taverns, contributing significantly to spreading the idea of republicanism, bolstering enthusiasm for separation from Britain, and encouraging recruitment for the Continental Army. Paine provided a new and convincing argument for independence by advocating a complete break with history. *Common Sense* is oriented to the

future in a way that compels the reader to make an immediate choice. It offers a solution for Americans disgusted and alarmed at the threat of tyranny.<sup>[21]</sup>

Paine was not, on the whole, expressing original ideas in *Common Sense*, but rather employing rhetoric as a means to arouse resentment of the Crown. To achieve these ends, he pioneered a style of political writing suited to the democratic society he envisioned, with *Common Sense* serving as a primary example. Part of Paine's work was to render complex ideas intelligible to average readers of the day, with clear, concise writing unlike the formal, learned style favored by many of Paine's contemporaries.<sup>[22]</sup> Scholars have put forward various explanations to account for its success, including the historic moment, Paine's easy-to-understand style, his democratic ethos, and his use of psychology and ideology.<sup>[23]</sup>

*Common Sense* was immensely popular in disseminating to a very wide audience ideas that were already in common use among the elite who comprised Congress and the leadership cadre of the emerging nation. They rarely cited Paine's arguments in their public calls for independence.<sup>[24]</sup> The pamphlet probably had little direct influence on the Continental Congress's decision to issue a Declaration of Independence, since that body was more concerned with how declaring independence would affect the war effort.<sup>[25]</sup> Paine's great contribution was in initiating a public debate about independence, which had previously been rather muted.

One distinctive idea in "Common Sense" is Paine's beliefs regarding the peaceful nature of republics; his views were an early and strong conception of what scholars would come to call the democratic peace theory.<sup>[26]</sup>

Loyalists vigorously attacked *Common Sense*; one attack, titled *Plain Truth* (1776), by Marylander James Chalmers, said Paine was a political quack<sup>[27]</sup> and warned that without monarchy, the government would "degenerate into democracy".<sup>[28]</sup> Even some American revolutionaries objected to *Common Sense*; late in life John Adams called it a "crapulous mass." Adams disagreed with the type of radical democracy promoted by Paine (that men who did not own property should still be allowed to vote and hold public office), and published *Thoughts on Government* in 1776 to advocate a more conservative approach to republicanism.

## Crisis (1776)

In late 1776 Paine published *The Crisis* pamphlet series, to inspire the Americans in their battles against the British army. He juxtaposed the conflict between the good American devoted to civic virtue and the selfish provincial man.<sup>[29]</sup> To inspire his soldiers, General George Washington had *The American Crisis*, first *Crisis* pamphlet, read aloud to them.<sup>[30]</sup> It begins:

These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.

## Foreign Affairs

In 1777, Paine became secretary of the Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs. The following year, he alluded to continuing secret negotiation with France in his pamphlets; the resultant scandal and Paine's conflict with Robert Morris eventually led to Paine's expulsion from the Committee in 1779. However, in 1781, he accompanied John Laurens on his mission to France. Eventually, after much pleading from Paine, New York State recognised his political services by presenting him with an estate, at New Rochelle, New York, and Paine received money from Pennsylvania and from the US Congress at George Washington's suggestion. During the Revolutionary War, Paine served as an aide to the important general, Nathanael Greene. Paine's later years established him as "a missionary of world revolution."

## Funding the Revolution

Paine accompanied Col. John Laurens to France and is credited with initiating the mission.<sup>[31]</sup> It landed in France in March 1781 and returned to America in August with 2.5 million livres in silver, as part of a "present" of 6 million and a loan of 10 million. The meetings with the French king were most likely conducted in the company and under the influence of Benjamin Franklin. Upon returning to the United States with this highly welcomed cargo, Thomas Paine and probably Col. Laurens, "positively objected" that General Washington should propose that Congress remunerate him for his services, for fear of setting "a bad precedent and an improper mode." Paine made influential acquaintances in Paris, and helped organize the Bank of North America to raise money to supply the army.<sup>[32]</sup> In 1785, he was given \$3,000 by the U.S. Congress in recognition of his service to the nation.<sup>[33]</sup>

Henry Laurens (the father of Col. John Laurens) had been the ambassador to the Netherlands, but he was captured by the British on his return trip there. When he was later exchanged for the prisoner Lord Cornwallis (in late 1781), Paine proceeded to the Netherlands to continue the loan negotiations. There remains some question as to the relationship of Henry Laurens and Thomas Paine to Robert Morris as the Superintendent of Finance and his business associate Thomas Willing who became the first president of the Bank of North America (in Jan. 1782). They had accused Morris of profiteering in 1779 and Willing had voted against the Declaration of Independence. Although Morris did much to restore his reputation in 1780 and 1781, the credit for obtaining these critical loans to "organize" the Bank of North America for approval by Congress in December 1781 should go to Henry or John Laurens and Thomas Paine more than to Robert Morris.

Paine bought his only house in 1783 on the corner of Farnsworth Avenue and Church Streets in Bordentown City, New Jersey, and he lived in it periodically until his death in 1809. This is the only place in the world where Paine purchased real estate.

## *Rights of Man*

Having taken work as a clerk after his expulsion by Congress, Paine eventually returned to London in 1787, living a largely private life. However, his passion was again sparked by revolution, this time in France, which he visited in 1790. Edmund Burke, who had supported the American Revolution, did not likewise support the events taking place in France, and wrote the critical *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, partially in response to a sermon by Richard Price, the radical minister of Newington Green Unitarian Church. Many pens rushed to defend the Revolution and the Dissenting clergyman, including Mary Wollstonecraft, who published *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* only weeks after the *Reflections*. Paine wrote *Rights of Man*, an abstract political tract critical of monarchies and European social institutions. He completed the text on January 29, 1791. On January 31, he gave the manuscript to publisher Joseph Johnson for publication on February 22.

Meanwhile, government agents visited him, and, sensing dangerous political controversy, he reneged on his promise to sell the book on publication day; Paine quickly negotiated with publisher J.S. Jordan, then went to Paris, per William Blake's advice, leaving three good friends, William Godwin, Thomas Brand Hollis, and Thomas Holcroft, charged with concluding publication in Britain. The book appeared on March 13, three weeks later than scheduled, and sold well.

Undeterred by the government campaign to discredit him, Paine issued his *Rights of Man, Part the Second, Combining Principle and Practice* in February 1792. It detailed a representative government with enumerated social programs to remedy the numbing poverty of commoners through progressive tax measures. Radically reduced in price to ensure unprecedented circulation, it was sensational in its impact and gave birth to reform societies. An indictment for seditious libel followed, for both publisher and author, while government agents followed Paine and instigated mobs, hate meetings, and burnings in effigy. The authorities aimed, with ultimate success, to chase Paine out of Great Britain. He was then tried *in absentia*, found guilty though never executed.

In summer of 1792, he answered the sedition and libel charges thus: "If, to expose the fraud and imposition of monarchy ... to promote universal peace, civilization, and commerce, and to break the chains of political superstition, and raise degraded man to his proper rank; if these things be libellous ... let the name of libeller be engraved on my tomb".<sup>[34]</sup>

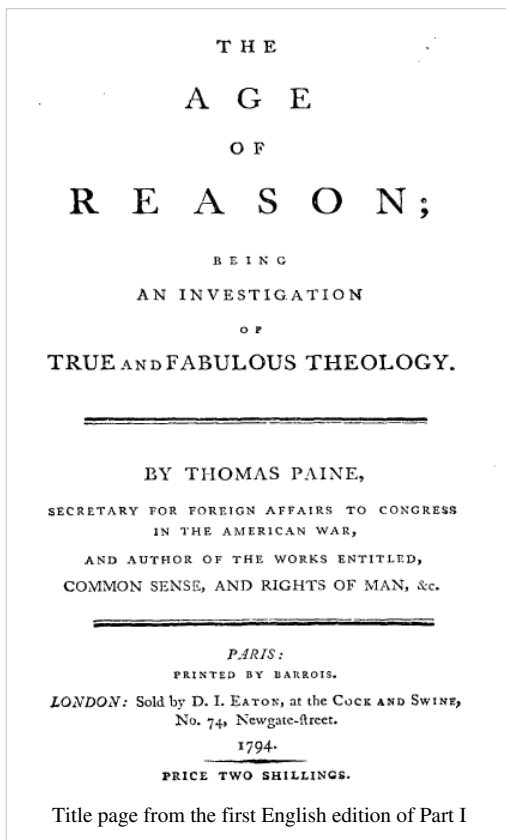
Paine was an enthusiastic supporter of the French Revolution, and was granted, along with Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and others, honorary French citizenship. Despite his inability to speak French, he was elected to the National Convention, representing the district of Pas-de-Calais.<sup>[35]</sup> He voted for the French Republic; but argued against the execution of Louis XVI, saying that he should instead be exiled to the United States: firstly, because of the way royalist France had come to the aid of the American Revolution; and



secondly because of a moral objection to capital punishment in general and to revenge killings in particular. He participated to the Constitution Committee that drafted the Girondin constitutional project.<sup>[36]</sup>

Regarded as an ally of the Girondins, he was seen with increasing disfavor by the Montagnards who were now in power, and in particular by Robespierre. A decree was passed at the end of 1793 excluding foreigners from their places in the Convention (Anacharsis Cloots was also deprived of his place). Paine was arrested and imprisoned in December 1793.

## *The Age of Reason*



Before his arrest and imprisonment in France, knowing that he would probably be arrested and executed, Paine, following in the tradition of early eighteenth-century British deism, wrote the first part of *The Age of Reason*, an assault on organized "revealed" religion combining a compilation of inconsistencies he found in the Bible with his own advocacy of deism, calling for "free rational inquiry" into all subjects, especially religion. *The Age of Reason* critique on institutionalized religion resulted in only a brief upsurge in deistic thought in America, but Paine was derided by the public and abandoned by his friends.

Arrested in France, Paine protested and claimed that he was a citizen of America, which was an ally of Revolutionary France, rather than of Great Britain, which was by that time at war with France. However, Gouverneur Morris, the American ambassador to France, did not press his claim, and Paine later wrote that Morris had connived at his imprisonment. Paine thought that George Washington had abandoned him, and he was to quarrel with Washington for the rest of his life. Years later he wrote a scathing open letter to Washington, accusing him of private betrayal of their friendship and public hypocrisy as general and president, and concluding the letter by saying "the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an impostor;

whether you have abandoned good principles or whether you ever had any."<sup>[37]</sup>

While in prison, Paine narrowly escaped execution. He kept his head and survived the few vital days needed to be spared by the fall of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor (July 27, 1794).<sup>[38]</sup>

Paine was released in November 1794 largely because of the work of the new American Minister to France, James Monroe,<sup>[39]</sup> who successfully argued the case for Paine's American citizenship.<sup>[40]</sup> In July 1795, he was re-admitted into the Convention, as were other surviving Girondins. Paine was one of only three députés to oppose the adoption of the new 1795 constitution, because it eliminated universal suffrage, which had been proclaimed by the Montagnard Constitution of 1793.<sup>[41]</sup>

In 1797, Tom Paine lived in Paris with Nicholas Bonneville and his wife, Margaret. Paine, as well as Bonneville's other controversial guests, aroused the suspicions of authorities. Bonneville hid the Royalist Antoine Joseph Barruel-Beauvert at his home and employed him as a proofreader. Beauvert had been outlawed following the coup of 18 Fructidor on September 4, 1797. Paine believed that America, under John Adams, had betrayed revolutionary France.<sup>[42]</sup> Bonneville was then briefly jailed and his presses were confiscated, which meant financial ruin.

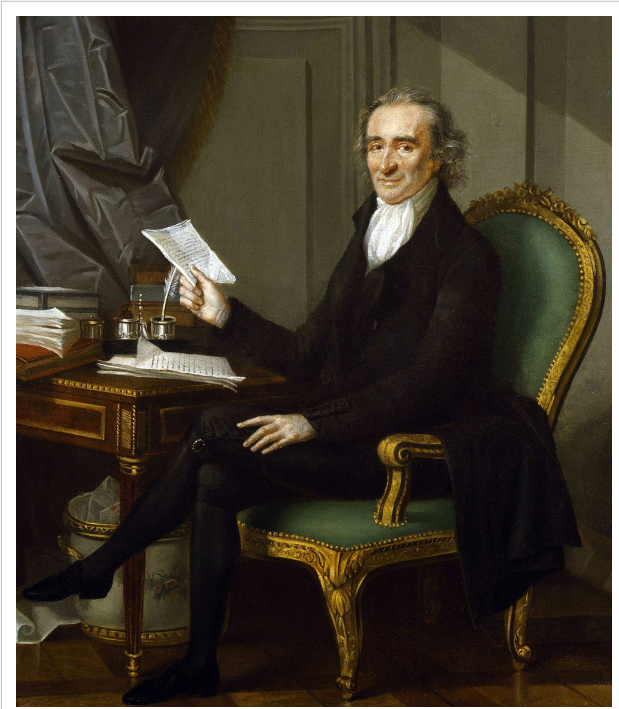
In 1800, still under police surveillance, Bonneville took refuge with his father in Evreux. Paine stayed on with him, helping Bonneville with the burden of translating the *Covenant Sea*. The same year, Paine purportedly had a meeting with Napoleon. Napoleon claimed he slept with a copy of *Rights of Man* under his pillow and went so far as to say to Paine that "a statue of gold should be erected to you in every city in the universe."<sup>[43]</sup> Paine discussed with Napoleon how best to invade England and in December 1797 wrote two essays, one of which was pointedly named *Observations on the Construction and Operation of Navies with a Plan for an Invasion of England and the Final Overthrow of the English Government*,<sup>[44]</sup> in which he promoted the idea to finance 1000 gunboats to carry a French invading army across the English Channel. In 1804 Paine returned to the subject, writing *To the People of England on the Invasion of England* advocating the idea.<sup>[42]</sup>

On noting Napoleon's progress towards dictatorship, he condemned him as: "the completest charlatan that ever existed".<sup>[45]</sup> Thomas Paine remained in France until 1802, returning to the United States only at President Jefferson's invitation.

## Later years

In 1802 or 1803, Tom Paine left France for the United States, paying passage also for Bonneville's wife, Marguerite Brazier and their three sons, seven year old Benjamin, Louis, and Thomas, of whom Paine was godfather. Paine returned to the US in the early stages of the Second Great Awakening and a time of great political partisanship. The *Age of Reason* gave ample excuse for the religiously devout to dislike him, and the Federalists attacked him for his ideas of government stated in *Common Sense*, for his association with the French Revolution, and for his friendship with President Jefferson. Also still fresh in the minds of the public was his *Letter to Washington*, published six years before his return.

Upon his return to America, Paine penned 'On the Origins of Freemasonry.' Nicholas Bonneville printed the essay in French. It was not printed in English until 1810, when Marguerite posthumously published his essay, which she had culled from among his papers, as a pamphlet containing an edited version wherein she omitted his references to the



Oil painting by Laurent Dabos, circa 1791

Christian religion. The document was published in English in its entirety in New York in 1918.<sup>[46]</sup>

Brazier took care of Paine at the end of his life and buried him on his death on June 8, 1809. In his will, Paine left the bulk of his estate to Marguerite, including 100 acres (40.5 ha) of his farm so she could maintain and educate Benjamin and his brother Thomas. In 1814, The fall of Napoleon finally allowed Bonneville to rejoin his wife in the United States where he remained for four years before returning to Paris to open a bookshop.

## Death

**Paine** died at the age of 72, at 59 Grove Street in Greenwich Village, New York City on the morning of June 8, 1809. Although the original building is no longer there, the present building has a plaque noting that Paine died at this location.

After his death, Paine's body was brought to New Rochelle, but no Christian church would receive it for burial, so his remains were buried under a walnut tree on his farm. In 1819, the English agrarian radical journalist William Cobbett dug up his bones and transported them back to England with the intention to give Paine a heroic reburial on his native soil, but this

never came to pass. The bones were still among Cobbett's effects when he died over twenty years later, but were later lost. There is no confirmed story about what happened to them after that, although down the years various people have claimed to own parts of Paine's remains, such as his skull and right hand.<sup>[47] [48] [49]</sup>

At the time of his death, most American newspapers reprinted the obituary notice from the *New York Citizen*, which read in part: "He had lived long, did some good and much harm." Only six mourners came to his funeral, two of whom were black, most likely freedmen. The writer and orator Robert G. Ingersoll wrote:

Thomas Paine had passed the legendary limit of life. One by one most of his old friends and acquaintances had deserted him. Maligned on every side, execrated, shunned and abhorred – his virtues denounced as vices – his services forgotten – his character blackened, he preserved the poise and balance of his soul. He was a victim of the people, but his convictions remained unshaken. He was still a soldier in the army of freedom, and still tried to enlighten and civilize those who were impatiently waiting for his death. Even those who loved their enemies hated him, their friend – the friend of the whole world – with all their hearts. On the 8th of June, 1809, death came – Death, almost his only friend. At his funeral no pomp, no pageantry, no civic procession, no military display. In a carriage, a woman and her son who had lived on the bounty of the dead – on horseback, a Quaker, the humanity of whose heart dominated the creed of his head – and, following on foot, two negroes filled with gratitude – constituted the funeral cortege of Thomas Paine.<sup>[50]</sup>

## Political views

Thomas Paine's natural justice beliefs may have been influenced by his Quaker father.<sup>[51]</sup> In *The Age of Reason* – his treatise supporting deism – he says:

The religion that approaches the nearest of all others to true deism, in the moral and benign part thereof, is that professed by the Quakers ... though I revere their philanthropy, I cannot help smiling at [their] conceit; ... if the taste of a Quaker [had] been consulted at the Creation, what a silent and drab-colored Creation it would have been! Not a flower would have blossomed its gaities, nor a bird been permitted to sing.



Plaque at Paine's original burial location in New Rochelle, New York

Later, his encounters with the Indigenous peoples of the Americas made a deep impression. The ability of the Iroquois to live in harmony with nature while achieving a democratic decision making process, helped him refine his thinking on how to organize society.<sup>[52]</sup>

In the second part of *The Age of Reason*, about his sickness in prison, he says: "... I was seized with a fever, that, in its progress, had every symptom of becoming mortal, and from the effects of which I am not recovered. It was then that I remembered, with renewed satisfaction, and congratulated myself most sincerely, on having written the former part of "The Age of Reason". This quotation encapsulates its gist:

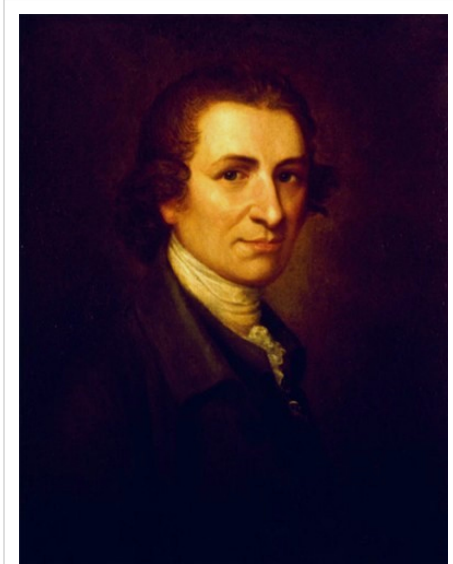
The opinions I have advanced ... are the effect of the most clear and long-established conviction that the Bible and the Testament are impositions upon the world, that the fall of man, the account of Jesus Christ being the Son of God, and of his dying to appease the wrath of God, and of salvation, by that strange means, are all fabulous inventions, dishonorable to the wisdom and power of the Almighty; that the only true religion is Deism, by which I then meant, and mean now, the belief of one God, and an imitation of his moral character, or the practice of what are called moral virtues – and that it was upon this only (so far as religion is concerned) that I rested all my hopes of happiness hereafter. So say I now – and so help me God.

Paine is often credited with writing "African Slavery in America", the first article proposing the emancipation of African slaves and the abolition of slavery. It was published on March 8, 1775 in the *Postscript to the Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser* (aka *The Pennsylvania Magazine and American Museum*).<sup>[53]</sup> Citing a lack of evidence that Paine was the author of this anonymously published essay, some scholars (Eric Foner and Alfred Owen Aldridge) no longer consider this one of his works. By contrast, John Nichols speculates that his "fervent objections to slavery" led to his exclusion from power during the early years of the Republic.<sup>[54]</sup>

His last pamphlet, *Agrarian Justice*, published in the winter of 1795, further developed his ideas in the *Rights of Man*, about how land ownership separated the majority of people from their rightful, natural inheritance, and means of independent survival. The US Social Security Administration recognizes *Agrarian Justice* as the first American proposal for an old-age pension; per *Agrarian Justice*:

In advocating the case of the persons thus dispossessed, it is a right, and not a charity ... [Government must] create a national fund, out of which there shall be paid to every person, when arrived at the age of twenty-one years, the sum of fifteen pounds sterling, as a compensation in part, for the loss of his or her natural inheritance, by the introduction of the system of landed property. And also, the sum of ten pounds per annum, during life, to every person now living, of the age of fifty years, and to all others as they shall arrive at that age.

Note that £10 and £15 would be worth about £800 and £1,200 when adjusted for inflation.<sup>[55]</sup>



Portrait of Thomas Paine by Matthew Pratt, 1785–1795

## Religious views

About religion, *The Age of Reason* says:

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

Though there is no evidence he was himself a Freemason,<sup>[56]</sup> Paine also wrote "An Essay on the Origin of Free-Masonry" (1803–1805), about the Bible being allegorical myth describing astrology:

The Christian religion is a parody on the worship of the sun, in which they put a man called Christ in the place of the sun, and pay him the adoration originally payed to the sun.

He described himself as deist, saying:

How different is [Christianity] to the pure and simple profession of Deism! The true Deist has but one Deity, and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of the Deity in his works, and in endeavoring to imitate him in everything moral, scientific, and mechanical.

and again, in *The Age of Reason*:

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.

## Legacy

Thomas Paine's writing greatly influenced his contemporaries and, especially, the American revolutionaries. His books provoked only a brief upsurge in Deism in America, but in the long term inspired philosophic and working-class radicals in the UK, and US liberals, libertarians, feminists, democratic socialists, social democrats, anarchists, freethinkers, and progressives often claim him as an intellectual ancestor. Paine's critique on institutionalized religion and advocacy of rational thinking influenced many British freethinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as William Cobbett, George Holyoake, Charles Bradlaugh and Bertrand Russell.

The quote "Lead, follow, or get out of the way" is widely but incorrectly attributed to Paine. This can be found nowhere in his published works.

## Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, reports that Lincoln wrote a defense of Paine's deism in 1835, and friend Samuel Hill burned it to save Lincoln's political career.<sup>[57]</sup> Historian Roy Basler, the editor of Lincoln's papers, said Paine had a strong influence on Lincoln's style:

No other writer of the eighteenth century, with the exception of Jefferson, parallels more closely the temper or gist of Lincoln's later thought. In style, Paine above all others affords the variety of eloquence which, chastened and adapted to Lincoln's own mood, is revealed in Lincoln's formal writings.<sup>[58]</sup>



In 1969, a Prominent Americans series stamp honoring Paine was issued.



## Edison

The inventor Thomas Edison said:

I have always regarded Paine as one of the greatest of all Americans. Never have we had a sounder intelligence in this republic ... It was my good fortune to encounter Thomas Paine's works in my boyhood ... it was, indeed, a revelation to me to read that great thinker's views on political and theological subjects. Paine educated me, then, about many matters of which I had never before thought. I remember, very vividly, the flash of enlightenment that shone from Paine's writings, and I recall thinking, at that time, 'What a pity these works are not today the schoolbooks for all children!' My interest in Paine was not satisfied by my first reading of his works. I went back to them time and again, just as I have done since my boyhood days.<sup>[59]</sup>

## Memorials

The first and longest standing memorial to Thomas Paine is the carved and inscribed 12 foot marble column in New Rochelle, New York organized and funded by publisher, educator and reformer Gilbert Vale (1791–1866) and raised in 1839 by the American sculptor and architect James Frazee—The Thomas Paine Monument (see image below).<sup>[60]</sup> New Rochelle is also the original site of Paine's 300 acre farm, confiscated by the State of New York from the Tory and monarchist Frederick Davoe and awarded to Paine for his services in the American Revolution.<sup>[61]</sup> The same site is the home of the Thomas Paine Museum, whose holdings—the subject of a sell-off controversy—were temporarily relocated to the New York Historical Society and are now safely and more permanently archived in the Iona College Library.<sup>[62]</sup>

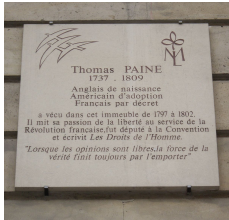
In England a statue of Paine, quill pen and inverted copy of *Rights of Man* in hand, stands in King Street, Thetford, Norfolk, his birth place. Moreover, in Thetford, the Sixth form is named after him.<sup>[63]</sup> Thomas Paine was ranked #34 in the *100 Greatest Britons* 2002 extensive Nationwide poll conducted by the BBC<sup>[64]</sup>

Bronx Community College includes Paine in its Hall of Fame of Great Americans, and there are statues of Paine in Morristown and Bordentown, New Jersey, and in the Parc Montsouris, in Paris.<sup>[65]</sup> <sup>[66]</sup>

Also in Paris, there is a plaque in the street where he lived from 1797 to 1802, that says: "Thomas PAINE / 1737–1809 / Englishman by birth / American by adoption / French by decree".

Yearly, between July 4 and 14, the Lewes Town Council in the United Kingdom celebrates the life and work of Thomas Paine.<sup>[67]</sup>

In the early 1990s, largely through the efforts of citizen activist David Henley of Virginia, legislation (S.Con.Res 110, and H.R. 1628) was introduced in the 102nd Congress by ideological opposites Sen. Steve Symms (R-ID) and Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY). With over 100 formal letters of endorsement by US and foreign historians, philosophers, and organizations, including the Thomas Paine National Historical Society, the legislation garnered 78 original co-sponsors in the Senate and 230 original co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, and was consequently passed by both houses unanimous consent. In October, 1992 the legislation was signed into law (PL102-407 & PL102-459) by President George H.W. Bush authorizing the construction, using private funds, of a memorial to Thomas Paine in "Area 1" of the grounds of the US Capitol. As of January 2011, the memorial has not yet been built.



Plaque honoring Thomas Paine at 10 rue de l'Odéon, Paris



Statue in Thetford, Norfolk, England, Paine's birthplace



Thomas Paine House (formerly the Thomas Paine Museum), 983 North Avenue, New Rochelle, New York



Monument to Paine in New Rochelle



Statue in Bordentown City, New Jersey

## In popular culture

Jack Shepherd's stage play *In Lambeth* dramatised a visit by Thomas Paine to the Lambeth home of William and Catherine Blake in 1789, first performed at the East Dulwich Tavern in London in July 1989.<sup>[68]</sup><sup>[69]</sup> The play was later adapted for television in the BBC Two *Encounters* series - which featured similar fictionalised meetings between historical figures - and was first broadcast on 4 July 1993. It was directed by Sebastian Graham-Jones, and featured Bob Peck as Paine, Mark Rylance as William, and Lesley Claire O'Neill as Katherine (sic).<sup>[70]</sup>

In 2009, Paine's life was dramatized in the play *Citizen of the World*<sup>[71]</sup>, produced for the "Tom Paine 200 Celebrations" festival<sup>[72]</sup> in Thetford, the town of his birth.

Paine's role in the foundation of the United States is depicted in a pseudo-biographical fashion in the educational animated series *Liberty's Kids* produced by DIC Entertainment.

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## External links

- The UK Thomas Paine Society (<http://www.thomaspainesocietyuk.org.uk/>)
- The Thomas Paine Society (<http://www.thomaspainesociety.org/>)
- Who was Thomas Paine? (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8089115.stm>)
- Essays on the Religious and Political Philosophy of Thomas Paine (<http://www.religionpaine.org/>)
- Thomas Paine's Memorial (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=2698>)
- Thomas Paine Quotations (<http://www.quotedb.com/authors/thomas-paine>)
- Books of Our Time: Thomas Paine and the Promise of America by Harvey Kaye (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=1104687536309041716&q=thomas+paine+and+the+promise+of+america>) (video)
- Take a video tour of Thomas Paine's birthplace ([http://www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/content/articles/2007/03/27/abolition\\_thomas\\_paine\\_20070327\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/content/articles/2007/03/27/abolition_thomas_paine_20070327_feature.shtml))
- Office location while in Alford (<http://www.alfordwindmillhotel.co.uk/thomaspaine.htm>)
- Thomas Paine-Passionate Pamphleteer for Liberty by Jim Powell (<http://www.thefreemanonline.org/featured/thomas-paine-passionate-pamphleteer-for-liberty>)
- Thomas Paine on Paper Money, 1786 (<http://mises.org/story/2942>)
- Thomas Paine, Liberty's Hated Torchbearer (<http://mises.org/daily/4438>)
- Lesson plan – *Common Sense*: The Rhetoric of Popular Democracy ([http://edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=721](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=721))
- Books of Our Time: Thomas Paine and the Promise of America (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=1104687536309041716&q=thomas+paine&hl=en>) (video)
- Correspondence between Paine and Samuel Adams regarding the charge of *infidelity* ([http://www.deism.com/paine\\_essay\\_sam\\_adams.htm](http://www.deism.com/paine_essay_sam_adams.htm))
- One Life: Thomas Paine, the Radical Founding Father (<http://www.npg.si.edu/exhibit/paine/>) exhibition from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

## Works

- Complete Works of Thomas Paine (<http://www.thomaspaine.org/contents.html>)
- Works by or about Thomas Paine (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79-21666>) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)
- Works by Thomas Paine ([http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Thomas\\_Paine](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Thomas_Paine)) at Project Gutenberg
- Deistic and Religious Works of Thomas Paine (<http://deism.com/paine.htm>)
- The theological works of Thomas Paine (<http://books.google.com/books?id=6dAXAAAAIAAJ>)
- The theological works of Thomas Paine to which are appended the profession of faith of a savoyard vicar by J.J. Rousseau (<http://books.google.com/books?id=MqAOAAAAIAAJ>)

- *Common Sense* (<http://www.dustylibrary.com/philosophy/25-common-sense-thomas-paine.html>) by Thomas Paine; HTML format, indexed by section
- Rights of Man book on Google books (full-view) ([http://books.google.com/books?id=qEAHAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1&dq=thomas+paine&as\\_brr=1](http://books.google.com/books?id=qEAHAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1&dq=thomas+paine&as_brr=1))
- Listen to Common Sense at Americana Phonic (<http://americanaphonic.com/?feed=rss2&cat=4>). m4a audio format

## *The Age of Reason*

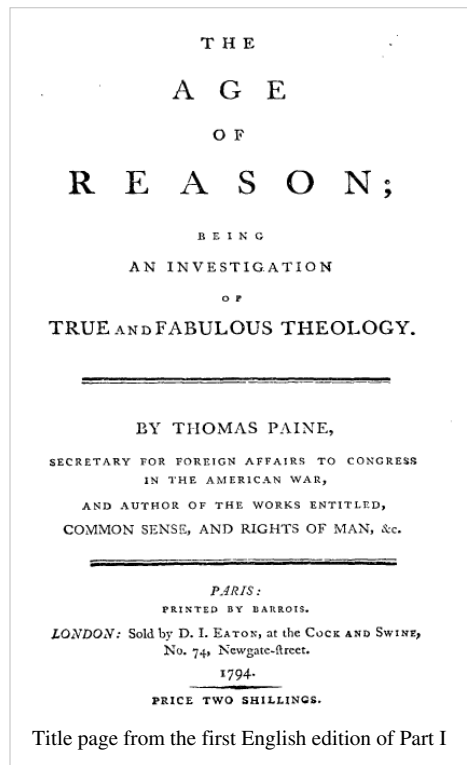
*The Age of Reason; Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology* is a deistic pamphlet, written by eighteenth-century British radical and American revolutionary Thomas Paine, that criticizes institutionalized religion and challenges the legitimacy of the Bible, the central sacred text of Christianity. Published in three parts in 1794, 1795, and 1807, it was a bestseller in the United States, where it caused a short-lived deistic revival. British audiences, however, fearing increased political radicalism as a result of the French Revolution, received it with more hostility. *The Age of Reason* presents common deistic arguments; for example, it highlights what Paine saw as corruption of the Christian Church and criticizes its efforts to acquire political power. Paine advocates reason in the place of revelation, leading him to reject miracles and to view the Bible as an ordinary piece of literature rather than as a divinely inspired text. It promotes natural religion and argues for the existence of a creator-God.

Most of Paine's arguments had long been available to the educated elite, but by presenting them in an engaging and irreverent style, he made deism appealing and accessible to a mass audience. The book was also inexpensive, putting it within the reach of a large number of buyers. Fearing the spread of what they viewed as potentially revolutionary ideas, the British government prosecuted printers and booksellers who tried to publish and distribute it. Paine nevertheless inspired and guided many British freethinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and his influence and spirit endures in the works of contemporary writers like Christopher Hitchens.

### Historical context

#### Intellectual context: eighteenth-century British deism

Paine's book followed in the tradition of early eighteenth-century British deism. These deists, while maintaining individual positions, still shared several sets of assumptions and arguments that Paine articulated in *The Age of Reason*. The most important position that united the early deists was their call for "free rational inquiry" into all subjects, especially religion. Saying that early Christianity was founded on freedom of conscience, they demanded religious toleration and an end to religious persecution. They also demanded that debate rest on reason and rationality. Deists embraced a Newtonian worldview, and they believed all things in the universe, even God, must obey the laws of nature. Without a concept of natural law, the deists argued, explanations of the workings of nature would descend into irrationality. This belief in natural law drove their skepticism of miracles. Because miracles had to be observed to be validated, deists rejected the accounts laid out in the Bible of God's miracles and argued that



such evidence was neither sufficient nor necessary to prove the existence of God. Along these lines, deistic writings insisted that God, as the first cause or prime mover, had created and designed the universe with natural laws as part of his plan. They hold that God does not repeatedly alter his plan by suspending natural laws to (miraculously) intervene in human affairs. Deists also rejected the claim that there was only one revealed religious Truth or "one true faith"; religion could only be "simple, apparent, ordinary, and universal" if it was to be the logical product of a benevolent God. They therefore distinguished between "revealed religions" (which they rejected), such as Christianity, and "natural religion", a set of universal beliefs derived from the natural world that demonstrated God's existence (they were, thus, not atheists).<sup>[1]</sup>

While some deists accepted revelation, most argued that revelation's restriction to small groups or even a single person limited its explanatory power. Moreover, many found the Christian revelations in particular to be contradictory and irreconcilable. According to these writers, revelation could reinforce the evidence for God's existence already apparent in the natural world, but more often it led to superstition among the masses. Most deists argued that priests had deliberately corrupted Christianity for their own gain by promoting the acceptance of miracles, unnecessary rituals, and illogical and dangerous doctrines (these accusations were typically referred to as "priestcraft"). The worst of these doctrines was original sin. By convincing people that they required a priest's help to overcome their innate sinfulness, deists argued, religious leaders had enslaved the human population. Deists therefore typically viewed themselves as intellectual liberators.<sup>[2]</sup>



### Political context: French revolution

By the time Part I of *The Age of Reason* was published in 1794, many British and French citizens had become disillusioned by the French Revolution. The Reign of Terror had begun, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had been tried and executed and Britain was at war with France. Those few British radicals who still supported the French revolution and its ideals were viewed with deep suspicion by their countrymen. *The Age of Reason* belongs to this later, more radical stage of the British political reform movement, one that openly embraced republicanism and atheism<sup>[3]</sup> and is exemplified by such texts as William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793). By the middle of the decade, the moderate voices had disappeared: Richard Price, the Dissenting minister whose sermon on political liberty had prompted Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), had died in 1791, and Joseph Priestley had been forced to flee to America after a Church-and-King mob burned down his home and church.<sup>[4]</sup>

The conservative government, headed by William Pitt, responded to this increasing radicalization by prosecuting several reformers for seditious libel and treason in the famous 1794 Treason Trials. Following the trials and an attack on George III, conservatives were successful in passing the Seditious Meetings Act and the Treasonable Practices Act (also known as the "Two Acts" or the "gagging acts"). These acts prohibited freedom of assembly for groups such as the radical London Corresponding Society (LCS) and encouraged indictments against radicals for "libelous and seditious" statements. Afraid of prosecution and disenchanted with the French revolution, many reformers drifted away from the cause. The LCS, which had previously unified religious Dissenters and political reformers, fractured when Francis Place and other leaders helped Paine publish *The Age of Reason*; the society's more religious members withdrew in protest and the LCS lost around one-fifth of its membership.<sup>[5]</sup>



## Publishing history

In December 1792, Paine's *Rights of Man, part II* was declared seditious in Britain and he was forced to flee to France in order to avoid arrest. Dismayed by the French revolution's turn toward secularism and atheism, he composed Part I of *The Age of Reason* in 1792 and 1793:

It has been my intention, for several years past, to publish my thoughts upon religion. . . . The circumstance that has now taken place in France of the total abolition of the whole national order of priesthood, and of everything appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary, lest in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity and of the theology that is true.<sup>[6]</sup>

Although Paine wrote *The Age of Reason* for the French, he dedicated it to his "Fellow Citizens of the United States of America", alluding to his bond with the American revolutionaries.<sup>[7]</sup>

It is unclear when exactly Paine drafted Part I although he says in the preface to Part II:

Conceiving... that I had but a few days of liberty, I sat down and brought the work to a close as speedily as possible; and I had not finished it more than six hours, in the state it has since appeared, before a guard came there, about three in the morning, with an order... for putting me in arrestation as a foreigner, and conveying me to the prison of the Luxembourg. I contrived, in my way there, to call on Joel Barlow, and I put the Manuscript of the work into his hands...

According to Paine scholars Edward Davidson and William Scheick, he probably wrote the first draft of Part I in late 1793,<sup>[8]</sup> but Paine biographer David Hawke argues for a date of early 1793.<sup>[9]</sup> It is also unclear whether or not a French edition of Part I was published in 1793.<sup>[8]</sup> François Lanthenas, who translated *The Age of Reason* into French in 1794, wrote that it was first published in France in 1793, but no book fitting his description has been positively identified.<sup>[10]</sup> Barlow published the first English edition of *The Age of Reason, Part I* in 1794 in London, selling it for a mere three pence.

Meanwhile, Paine, considered too moderate by the powerful Jacobin wing of the French revolutionaries, was imprisoned for ten months in France. He only escaped the guillotine by accident: the sign marking him out for execution was improperly placed on his cell door.<sup>[11]</sup> When James Monroe, at that time the new American Minister to France, secured his release in 1794,<sup>[12]</sup> Paine immediately began work on Part II of *The Age of Reason*, despite his poor health. Part II was first published in a pirated edition by H.D. Symonds in London in October 1795. In 1796 Daniel Isaac Eaton published Parts I and II, and sold them at a cost of one shilling and six pence. (Eaton was later forced to flee to America after being convicted of seditious libel for publishing other radical works.)<sup>[13]</sup> Paine himself financed the shipping of 15,000 copies of his work to America. Later, Francis Place and Thomas Williams collaborated on an edition which sold about 2,000 copies. Williams also produced his own edition, but the British government indicted him and confiscated the pamphlets.<sup>[14]</sup>

In the late 1790s, Paine fled from France to the United States, where he wrote Part III of *The Age of Reason: An Examination of the Passages in the New Testament, Quoted from the Old and Called Prophecies Concerning Jesus Christ*. Fearing unpleasant and even violent reprisals, Thomas Jefferson convinced him not to publish it in 1802; five years later Paine decided to publish despite the backlash he knew would ensue.<sup>[8]</sup>

Following Thomas Williams's sentence of one year's hard labor for publishing *The Age of Reason* in 1797, no editions were sold openly in Britain until 1818 when Richard Carlile included it in an edition of Paine's complete works. Carlile charged one shilling and sixpence for the work, and the first run of 1,000 copies sold out in a month. He immediately published a second edition of 3,000 copies. Like Williams, he was prosecuted for seditious libel and blasphemous libel. The prosecutions surrounding the printing of *The Age of Reason* in Britain continued for thirty years after its initial release and encompassed numerous publishers as well as over a hundred booksellers.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Structure and major arguments

*The Age of Reason* is divided into three sections. In Part I, Paine outlines his major arguments and personal creed. In Parts II and III he analyzes specific portions of the Bible in order to demonstrate that it is not the revealed word of God.

### Creed

At the beginning of Part I of the *Age of Reason*, Paine lays out his personal creed:

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow-creatures happy.

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish Church, by the Protestant Church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

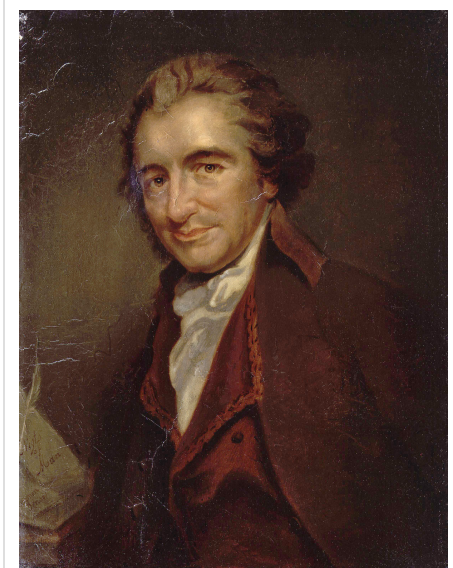
All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise; they have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.<sup>[16]</sup>

Paine's creed encapsulates many of the major themes of the rest of his text: a firm belief in a creator-God; a skepticism regarding most supernatural claims (here the afterlife, later in the text, miracles); a conviction that virtues should be derived from a consideration for others rather than oneself; an animus against corrupt religious institutions; and an emphasis on the individual's right of conscience.<sup>[17]</sup>

### Reason and revelation

Paine begins *The Age of Reason* by attacking revelation. Revelation, he maintains, can only be verified by the individual receivers of the message and is therefore weak evidence for God's existence. Paine rejects prophecies and miracles, writing: "it is revelation to the first person only, and hearsay to every other, and consequently they are not obliged to believe it".<sup>[18]</sup> He also points out that the Christian revelations appear to have altered over time to adjust for changing political circumstances. Urging his readers to employ reason rather than to rely on revelation, Paine argues that the only reliable, unchanging and universal evidence of God's existence is the natural world. "The Bible of the Deist", he contends, should not be a human invention such as the Bible, but rather a divine invention—it should be "creation".<sup>[19]</sup> Paine takes this argument even further, maintaining that the same rules of logic and standards of evidence that govern the analysis of secular texts should be applied to the Bible. In Part II of *The Age of Reason*, he will do just this, pointing out numerous contradictions in the Bible.<sup>[20]</sup>



An oil painting of Thomas Paine by Auguste Millière (1880), after an engraving by William Sharp, after a portrait by George Romney (1792)

### Paine's analysis of the Bible

After establishing that he would refrain from using extra-Biblical sources to inform his criticism, but would instead apply the Bible's own words against itself, Paine questions the sacredness of the Bible, analyzing it as one would any other book. For example, in his analysis of the Book of Proverbs he argues that its sayings are "inferior in keenness to the proverbs of the Spaniards, and not more wise and economical than those of the American Franklin".<sup>[21]</sup> Describing the Bible as "fabulous mythology", Paine questions whether or not it was revealed to its writers and doubts that the original writers can ever be known (he dismisses the idea that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, for example). Using methods that would not become common in Biblical scholarship until the nineteenth century, Paine tested the Bible for internal consistency and questioned its historical accuracy, concluding that it was not divinely inspired.

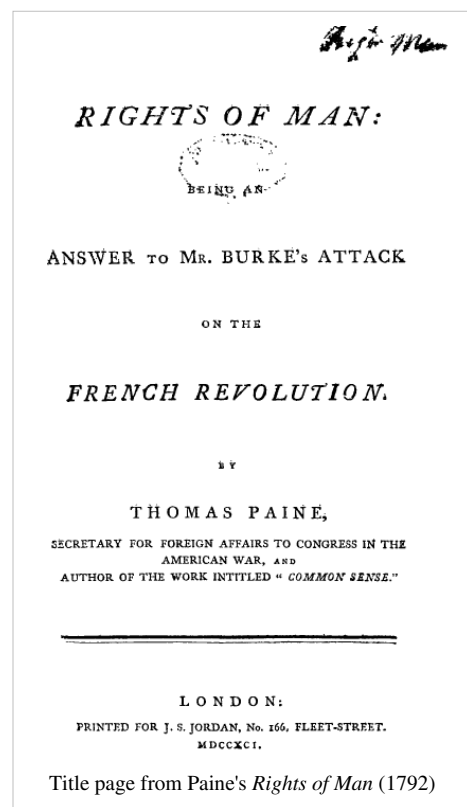
Paine also argues that the Old Testament must be false because it depicts a tyrannical God. The "history of wickedness" pervading the Old Testament convinced Paine that it was simply another set of human-authored myths.<sup>[22]</sup> He deplors people's credulity: "Brought up in habits of superstition," he wrote, "people in general know not how much wickedness there is in this pretended word of God." Citing Numbers 31:13–47 as an example, in which Moses orders the slaughter of thousands of boys and women, and sanctions the rape of thousands of girls, at God's behest,<sup>[23]</sup> Paine calls the Bible a "book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy; for what can be greater blasphemy than to ascribe the wickedness of man to the orders of the Almighty!"<sup>[24]</sup>

### Religion and the state

Paine also attacks religious institutions, indicting priests for their lust for power and wealth and the Church's opposition to scientific investigation. He presents the history of Christianity as one of corruption and oppression.<sup>[25]</sup> Paine criticizes the tyrannical actions of the Church as he had those of governments in the *Rights of Man* and *Common Sense*, stating that "the Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient Mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue."<sup>[26]</sup> This kind of attack distinguishes Paine's book from other deistic works, which were less interested in challenging social and political hierarchies.<sup>[9]</sup> He argues that the Church and the State are a single corrupt institution which does not act in the best interests of the people—both must be radically altered:

Soon after I had published the pamphlet "Common Sense," in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a revolution in the system of government would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of Church and State, wherever it has taken place . . . has so effectually prohibited by pains and penalties every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priestcraft would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.<sup>[27]</sup>

As Jon Mee, a scholar of British radicalism, writes: "Paine believed . . . a revolution in religion was the natural corollary, even prerequisite, of a fully successful political revolution."<sup>[28]</sup> Paine lays out a vision of, in Davidson and



Scheick's words, "an age of intellectual freedom, when reason would triumph over superstition, when the natural liberties of humanity would supplant priestcraft and kingship, which were both secondary effects of politically managed foolish legends and religious superstitions."<sup>[29]</sup> It is this vision that scholars have called Paine's "secular millennialism" and it appears in all of his works—he ends the *Rights of Man*, for example, with the statement: "From what we now see, nothing of reform in the political world ought to be held improbable. It is an age of revolutions, in which everything may be looked for."<sup>[30]</sup> Paine "transformed the millennial Protestant vision of the rule of Christ on earth into a secular image of utopia," emphasizing the possibilities of "progress" and "human perfectibility" that could be achieved by humankind, without God's aid.<sup>[31]</sup>

### Paine's intellectual debts

Although Paine liked to say that he read very little, his writings belie this statement;<sup>[32]</sup> *The Age of Reason* has intellectual roots in the traditions of David Hume, Spinoza, and Voltaire. Since Hume had already made many of the same "moral attacks upon Christianity" that Paine popularized in *The Age of Reason*, scholars have concluded that Paine probably read Hume's works on religion or had at least heard about them through the Joseph Johnson circle.<sup>[33]</sup> Paine would have been particularly drawn to Hume's description of religion as "a positive source of harm to society" that "led men to be factious, ambitious and intolerant".<sup>[34]</sup> More of an influence on Paine than Hume, however, was Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-politicus* (1678). Paine would have been exposed to Spinoza's ideas through the works of other eighteenth-century deists, most notably Conyers Middleton.<sup>[35]</sup> Paine would also more than likely have been familiar with Voltaire's mocking wit and the works of other deistic French *philosophes*.

Though these larger philosophical traditions are clear influences on *The Age of Reason*, Paine owes the greatest intellectual debt to the English deists of the early eighteenth century, such as Peter Annet.<sup>[36]</sup> John Toland had argued for the use of reason in interpreting scripture, Matthew Tindal had argued against revelation, Middleton had described the Bible as mythology and questioned the existence of miracles, Thomas Morgan had disputed the claims of the Old Testament, Thomas Woolston had questioned the believability of miracles and Thomas Chubb had maintained that Christianity lacked morality. All of these arguments appear in *The Age of Reason*, albeit less coherently.<sup>[37]</sup>

### Rhetoric and style

The most distinctive feature of *The Age of Reason*, like all of Paine's works, is its linguistic style. Historian Eric Foner argues that Paine's works "forged a new political language" designed to bring politics to the people, using a "clear, simple and straightforward" style.<sup>[38]</sup> Paine outlined "a new vision—a utopian image of an egalitarian republican society" and his language reflected these ideals.<sup>[38]</sup> He originated such phrases as "the rights of man", "the age of reason", "the age of revolution", and "the times that try men's souls".<sup>[39]</sup> Foner also maintains that with *The Age of Reason* Paine "gave deism a new, aggressive, explicitly anti-Christian tone".<sup>[40]</sup> He did this by employing "vulgar" (that is, "low" or "popular") language, an irreverent tone, and even religious rhetoric.

In a letter to Elihu Palmer, one of his most loyal followers in America, Paine describes part of his rhetorical philosophy:

The hinting and intimidating manner of writing that was formerly used on subjects of this kind [religion], produced skepticism, but not conviction. It is necessary to be bold. Some people can be reasoned into sense, and others must be shocked into it. Say a bold thing that will stagger them, and they will begin to think.<sup>[41]</sup>

Paine's rhetoric had broad appeal; his "pithy" lines were "able to bridge working-class and middle-class cultures" and become common quotations.<sup>[42]</sup>

Part of what makes Paine's style so memorable is his effective use of repetition and rhetorical questions<sup>[42]</sup> in addition to the profusion of "anecdote, irony, parody, satire, feigned confusion, folk matter, concrete vocabulary, and . . . appeals to common sense".<sup>[43]</sup> Paine's conversational style draws the reader into the text. His use of "we"

conveys an "illusion that he and the readers share the activity of constructing an argument".<sup>[44]</sup> By thus emphasizing the presence of the reader and leaving images and arguments half-formed, Paine encourages his readers to complete them independently.<sup>[45]</sup>

### "Vulgar" language

The most distinctive element of Paine's style in *The Age of Reason* is its "vulgarity". In the eighteenth century "vulgarity" was associated with the middling and lower classes and not with obscenity; thus, when Paine celebrates his "vulgar" style and his critics attack it, the dispute is over class accessibility, not profanity. For example, Paine describes the Fall this way:

The Christian Mythologists, after having confined Satan in a pit, were obliged to let him out again to bring on the sequel of the fable. He is then introduced into the Garden of Eden, in the shape of a snake or a serpent, and in that shape he enters into familiar conversation with Eve, who is no way surprised to hear a snake talk; and the issue of this tête-à-tête is that he persuades her to eat an apple, and the eating of that apple damns all mankind. After giving Satan this triumph over the whole creation, one would have supposed that the Church Mythologists would have been kind enough to send him back again to the pit: or, if they had not done this, that they would have put a mountain upon him (for they say that their faith can remove a mountain), or have put him *under* a mountain, as the former mythologists had done, to prevent his getting again among the women and doing more mischief. But instead of this they leave him at large, without even obliging him to give his parole—the secret of which is that they could not do without him; and after being at the trouble of making him, they bribed him to stay. They promised him ALL the Jews, ALL the Turks by anticipation, nine-tenths of the world beside, and Mahomet into the bargain. After this, who can doubt the bountifulness of the Christian Mythology? Having thus made an insurrection and a battle in heaven, in which none of the combatants could be either killed or wounded—put Satan into the pit—let him out again—gave him a triumph over the whole creation—damned all mankind by the eating of an apple, these Christian Mythologists bring the two ends of their fable together. They represent this virtuous and amiable man, Jesus Christ, to be at once both God and Man, and also the Son of God, celestially begotten, on purpose to be sacrificed, because they say that Eve in her longing had eaten an apple.<sup>[46]</sup> [emphasis Paine's]

The irreverent tone that Paine combined with this vulgar style set his work apart from its predecessors. It took "deism out of the hands of the aristocracy and intellectuals and [brought] it to the people".<sup>[47]</sup>

Paine's rhetorical appeal to "the people" attracted almost as much criticism as his ridicule of the Bible. Bishop Richard Watson, forced to address this new audience in his influential response to Paine, *An Apology for the Bible*, writes: "I shall, designedly, write this and the following letters in a popular manner; hoping that thereby they may stand a chance of being perused by that class of readers, for whom your work seems to be particularly calculated, and who are the most likely to be injured by it."<sup>[48]</sup> But it was not only the style that concerned Watson and others, it was also the cheapness of Paine's book. At one sedition trial in the early 1790s, the Attorney-General tried to prohibit Thomas Cooper from publishing his response to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, arguing that "although there was no exception to be taken to his pamphlet when in the hands of the upper classes, yet the government would not allow it to appear at a price which would insure its circulation among the people."<sup>[49]</sup> Similar concerns drove the prosecution of those who printed, published, and distributed *The Age of Reason*.

## Irreverent tone

Paine's style is not only "vulgar", it is also irreverent. For example, he says that once one dismisses the false idea of Moses being the author of Genesis, "The story of Eve and the serpent, and of Noah and his ark, drops to a level with the Arabian tales, without the merit of being entertaining."<sup>[50]</sup> Although many early English deists had relied on ridicule to attack the Bible and Christianity, theirs was a refined wit rather than the broad humor Paine employed. It was the early Deists of the middling ranks, and not the educated elite, who initiated the kind of ridicule Paine would make famous.<sup>[51]</sup>

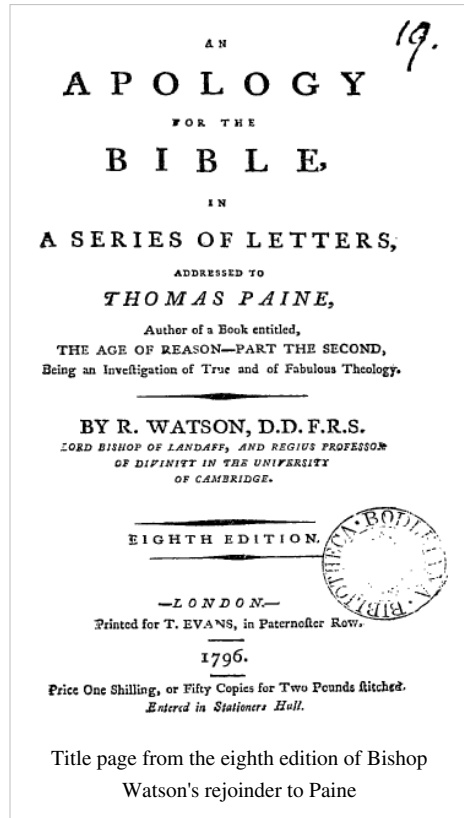
It was Paine's "ridiculing" tone that most angered Churchmen. As John Redwood, a scholar of deism, puts it: "the age of reason could perhaps more eloquently and adequately be called the age of ridicule, for it was ridicule, not reason, that endangered the Church."<sup>[52]</sup> Significantly, Watson's *Apology* directly chastises Paine for his mocking tone:

I am unwilling to attribute bad designs, deliberate wickedness, to you or to any man; I cannot avoid believing, that you think you have truth on your side, and that you are doing service to mankind in endeavouring to root out what you esteem superstition. What I blame you for is this—that you have attempted to lessen the authority of the Bible by ridicule, more than by reason.<sup>[53]</sup>

## Religious influences

Paine's Quaker upbringing predisposed him to deistic thinking at the same time that it positioned him firmly within the tradition of religious Dissent. Paine acknowledged that he was indebted to his Quaker background for his skepticism, but the Quakers' esteem for plain speaking, a value expressed both explicitly and implicitly in *The Age of Reason*, influenced his writing even more. As the historian E. P. Thompson has put it, Paine "ridiculed the authority of the Bible with arguments which the collier or country girl could understand".<sup>[54]</sup> His description of the story of the Virgin Birth demystifies Biblical language and suggests that Mary was just another unfortunate fallen woman: it is "an account of a young woman engaged to be married, and while under this engagement she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost".<sup>[55]</sup> Quaker conversion narratives also influenced the style of *The Age of Reason*; Davidson and Scheick argue that its "introductory statement of purpose, a fervid sense of inward inspiration, a declared expression of conscience, and an evangelical intention to instruct others" resemble the personal confessions of American Quakers.<sup>[56]</sup>

Paine takes advantage of several religious rhetorics beyond those associated with Quakerism in *The Age of Reason*, most importantly a millennial language that appealed to his lower-class readers. Claiming that true religious language is universal, Paine uses elements of the Christian rhetorical tradition to undermine the hierarchies perpetuated by religion itself.<sup>[57]</sup> The sermonic quality of Paine's writing is one of its most recognizable traits. Sacvan Bercovitch, a scholar of the sermon, argues that Paine's writing often resembles that of the jeremiad or "political sermon". He contends that Paine draws on the Puritan tradition in which "theology was wedded to politics and politics to the progress of the kingdom of God".<sup>[58]</sup> One reason Paine may have been drawn to this style is because he may have briefly been a Methodist preacher, although this suspicion cannot be verified.<sup>[59]</sup>



Title page from the eighth edition of Bishop Watson's rejoinder to Paine

## Reception and legacy

*The Age of Reason* provoked a hostile reaction from most readers and critics, although the intensity of that hostility varied by locality. There were four major factors for this animosity: Paine denied that the Bible was a sacred, inspired text; he argued that Christianity was a human invention; his ability to command a large readership frightened those in power; and his irreverent and satirical style of writing about Christianity and the Bible offended many believers.<sup>[29]</sup> <sup>[60]</sup>



A George Cruikshank cartoon attacking Paine; The caption reads: "The Age of Reason; or, the World turned Topsy-turvy exemplified in Tom Paine's Works!"

## Britain

Paine's *Age of Reason* sparked enough anger in Britain to initiate not only a series of government prosecutions but also a pamphlet war. Around 50 unfavorable replies appeared between 1795 and 1799 alone and refutations were still being published in 1812. Many of these responded specifically to Paine's attack on the Bible in Part II (when Thomas Williams was prosecuted for printing Part II, it became clear its circulation had far exceeded that of Part I).<sup>[61]</sup> Although critics responded to Paine's analysis of the Bible, they did not usually address his specific arguments.

Instead, they advocated a literal reading of

the Bible, citing the Bible's long history as evidence of its authority. They also issued *ad hominem* attacks against Paine, describing him "as an enemy of proper thought and of the morality of decent, enlightened people".<sup>[62]</sup> Dissenters such as Joseph Priestley who had endorsed the arguments of the *Rights of Man* turned away from those presented in *The Age of Reason*. Even the liberal *Analytical Review* was skeptical of Paine's claims and distanced itself from the book. Paine's deism was simply too radical for these more moderate reformers and they feared being tarred with the brush of extremism.<sup>[63]</sup>

Despite the outpouring of antagonistic replies to *The Age of Reason*, some scholars have argued that Constantin Volney's deistic *The Ruins* (translations of excerpts from the French original appeared in radical papers such as Thomas Spence's *Pig's Meat* and Daniel Isaac Eaton's *Politics for the People*) was actually more influential than *The Age of Reason*.<sup>[64]</sup> According to David Bindman, *The Ruins* "achieved a popularity in England comparable to *Rights of Man* itself".<sup>[65]</sup> However, one minister complained that "the mischief arising from the spreading of such a pernicious publication [as *The Age of Reason*] was infinitely greater than any that could spring from limited suffrage and septennial parliaments" (other popular reform causes).<sup>[66]</sup>

It was not until Richard Carlile's 1818 trial for publishing *The Age of Reason* that Paine's text became "the anti-Bible of all lower-class nineteenth-century infidel agitators".<sup>[67]</sup> Although the book had been selling well before the trial, once Carlile was arrested and charged, 4,000 copies were sold in just a few months.<sup>[68]</sup> At the trial itself, which created a media frenzy, Carlile read the entirety of *The Age of Reason* into the court record, ensuring it an even wider publication. Between 1818 and 1822, Carlile claimed to have "sent into circulation near 20,000 copies of the *Age of Reason*".<sup>[69]</sup> Just as in the 1790s, it was the language that most angered the authorities in 1818. As Joss Marsh, in her study of blasphemy in the nineteenth century, points out, "at these trials plain English was reconfigured as itself 'abusive' and 'outrageous.' The *Age of Reason* struggle almost tolled the hour when the words 'plain,' 'coarse,' 'common,' and 'vulgar' took on a pejorative meaning."<sup>[70]</sup> Carlile was convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to one

year in prison, but spent six years instead because he refused any "legal conditions" on his release.<sup>[71]</sup>

Paine's new rhetoric came to dominate popular nineteenth-century radical journalism, particularly that of freethinkers, Chartists and Owenites. Its legacy can be seen in Thomas Wooler's radical periodical *The Black Dwarf*, Richard Carlile's numerous newspapers and journals, the radical works of William Cobbett, Henry Hetherington's periodicals the *Penny Papers* and the *Poor Man's Guardian*, the works of the Chartist William Lovett, George Holyoake's newspapers and books on Owenism, and freethinker Charles Bradlaugh's *New Reformer*.<sup>[72]</sup> A century after the publication of *The Age of Reason*, Paine's rhetoric was still being used: George Foote's *Bible Handbook* (1888) . . . systematically manhandles chapters and verses to bring out 'Contradictions,' 'Absurdities,' 'Atrocities,' and 'Obscenities,' exactly in the manner of Paine's *Age of Reason*.<sup>[73]</sup> The periodical *The Freethinker* (founded in 1881 by George Foote) argued, like Paine, that the "absurdities of faith" could be "slain with laughter".<sup>[74]</sup> In Britain, it was this freethinking tradition that continued Paine's legacy.

## France

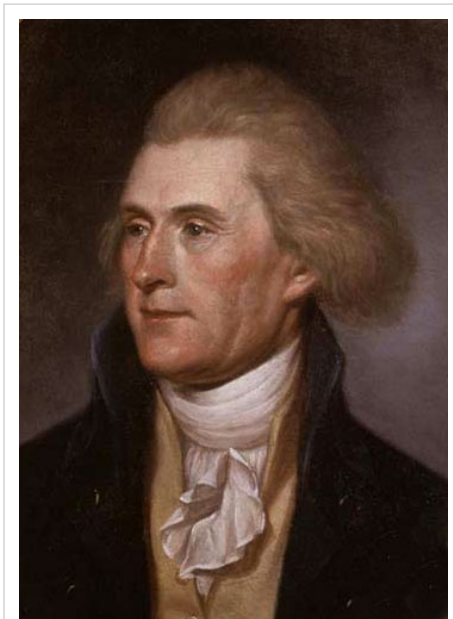
*The Age of Reason*, despite having been written for the French, made very little, if any, impact on revolutionary France. Paine wrote that "the people of France were running headlong into atheism and I had the work translated into their own language, to stop them in that career, and fix them to the first article . . . of every man's creed who has any creed at all – *I believe in God*" (emphasis Paine's).<sup>[75]</sup> Paine's arguments were already common and accessible in France; they had, in a sense, already been rejected.<sup>[76]</sup>

While still in France, Paine formed the Church of Theophilanthropy with five other families; this civil religion held as its central dogma that man should worship God's wisdom and benevolence and imitate those divine attributes as much as possible. The church had no priest or minister, and the traditional Biblical sermon was replaced by scientific lectures or homilies on the teachings of philosophers. It celebrated four festivals honoring St. Vincent de Paul, George Washington, Socrates, and Rousseau.<sup>[77]</sup> Samuel Adams articulated the goals of this church when he wrote that Paine aimed "to renovate the age by inculcating in the minds of youth the fear and love of the Deity and universal philanthropy".<sup>[78]</sup> The church closed, however, in 1801, when Napoleon concluded a concordat with the Vatican.<sup>[79]</sup>

## United States

In the United States, *The Age of Reason* initially caused a deistic "revival", but was then viciously attacked and soon forgotten. Paine became so reviled that he could still be maligned as a "filthy little atheist" by Theodore Roosevelt over one hundred years later.<sup>[80]</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century, America was ripe for Paine's arguments. The First Great Awakening had, in demolishing the "Calvinist hegemony, created a climate of theological and speculative ambivalence"<sup>[81]</sup> that welcomed deism. Ethan Allen published the first American defense of deism, the *Oracles of Reason* (1784), but deism remained primarily a philosophy of the educated elite. Men such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson espoused its tenets, while at the same time arguing that religion served the useful purpose of "social control".<sup>[82]</sup> It was not until the publication of Paine's more entertaining and popular work that deism reached into the middling and lower classes in America. The public was receptive, in part, because they approved of the secular ideals of the French



Thomas Jefferson, an American deist



Revolution.<sup>[83]</sup> *The Age of Reason* went through seventeen editions and sold thousands of copies in the United States.<sup>[84]</sup> Elihu Palmer, "a blind renegade minister" and Paine's most loyal follower in America, promoted deism throughout the country. Palmer published what became "the bible of American deism", *The Principles of Nature*,<sup>[85]</sup> established deistic societies from Maine to Georgia, built Temples of Reason throughout the nation, and founded two deistic newspapers for which Paine eventually wrote seventeen essays.<sup>[86]</sup> Foner writes that "*The Age of Reason* became the most popular deist work ever written. . . . Before Paine it had been possible to be both a Christian and a deist; now such a religious outlook became virtually untenable."<sup>[40]</sup> Paine presented deism to the masses and, as in Britain, educated elites feared the consequences of such material in the hands of so many. Their fear helped to drive the backlash which soon followed.<sup>[87]</sup>

Almost immediately after this deistic upsurge, the Second Great Awakening began. George Spater explains that "the revulsion felt for Paine's *Age of Reason* and for other anti-religious thought was so great that a major counter-revolution had been set underway in America before the end of the eighteenth century." By 1796 every student at Harvard was given a copy of Bishop Watson's rebuttal of *The Age of Reason*.<sup>[88]</sup> In 1815, Parson Weems, an early American novelist and moralist, published *God's Revenge Against Adultery*, in which one of the major characters "owed his early downfall to reading 'PAINE'S AGE OF REASON'".<sup>[89]</sup> Paine's "libertine" text leads the young man to "bold slanders of the bible", even to the point that he "threw aside his father's good old family bible, and for a surer guide to pleasure took up the AGE OF REASON!"<sup>[89]</sup>

Paine could not publish part III of *The Age of Reason* in America until 1807 because of the deep antipathy against him. Hailed only a few years earlier as a hero of the American Revolution, Paine was now lambasted in the press and called "the scavenger of faction", a "lilly-livered sinical [sic] rogue", a "loathsome reptile", a "demi-human archbeast", "an object of disgust, of abhorrence, of absolute loathing to every decent man except the President of the United States [Thomas Jefferson]".<sup>[90]</sup> In October 1805 John Adams wrote to his friend Benjamin Waterhouse, an American physician and scientist:

I am willing you should call this the Age of Frivolity as you do, and would not object if you had named it the Age of Folly, Vice, Frenzy, Brutality, Daemons, Buonaparte [sic], Tom Paine, or the Age of the Burning Brand from Bottomless Pit, or anything but the Age of Reason. I know not whether any man in the world has had more influence on its inhabitants or affairs for the last thirty years than Tom Paine. There can be no severer satyr [sic] on the age. For such a mongrel between pig and puppy, begotten by a wild boar on a bitch wolf, never before in any age of the world was suffered by the poltroonery of mankind, to run through such a career of mischief. Call it then the Age of Paine.<sup>[91]</sup>

Adams viewed Paine's *Age of Reason* not as the embodiment of the Enlightenment but as a "betrayal" of it.<sup>[92]</sup> Despite all of these attacks, Paine never wavered in his beliefs; when he was dying, a woman came to visit him, claiming that God had instructed her to save his soul. Paine dismissed her in the same tones that he had used in *The Age of Reason*: "pooh, pooh, it is not true. You were not sent with any such impertinent message. . . . Pshaw, He would not send such a foolish ugly old woman as you about with His message."<sup>[93]</sup>

*The Age of Reason* was largely ignored after 1820, except by radical groups in Britain and freethinkers in America, among them Robert G. Ingersoll<sup>[94]</sup> and the abolitionist Moncure Daniel Conway, who edited his works and wrote the first biography of Paine, favorably reviewed by *The New York Times*.<sup>[95]</sup> Not until the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859, and the large-scale abandonment of the literal reading of the Bible that it caused in Britain, did many of Paine's ideas take hold.<sup>[96]</sup> As writer Mark Twain said, "It took a brave man before the Civil War to confess he had read the *Age of Reason*...I read it first when I was a cub pilot, read it with fear and hesitation, but marveling at its fearlessness and wonderful power." Paine's criticisms of the church, the monarchy, and the aristocracy appear most clearly in Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889).<sup>[97]</sup>

Paine's text is still published today, one of the few eighteenth-century religious texts to be widely available.<sup>[98]</sup> Its message still resonates, evidenced by Christopher Hitchens's statement that "if the rights of man are to be upheld in a dark time, we shall require an age of reason". His 2006 book on the *Rights of Man* ends with the claim that "in a time

. . . when both rights and reason are under several kinds of open and covert attack, the life and writing of Thomas Paine will always be part of the arsenal on which we shall need to depend."<sup>[99]</sup>

## Notes

- [1] Herrick, 26–29; see also Claeys, 178–79; Kuklick, xiii. (reference covers entire paragraph)
- [2] Herrick, 30–39; see also Claeys, 178–79. (reference covers entire paragraph)
- [3] Paine, however, was not an atheist; nor were other deists.
- [4] Butler, Marilyn. *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760–1830*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1981), 49; Bindman, 118. (reference covers entire paragraph)
- [5] Thompson, 148; Claeys, 190. (reference covers entire paragraph)
- [6] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 49–50.
- [7] Smylie, 210; see also Davidson and Scheick, 70.
- [8] Davidson and Scheick, 103–6.
- [9] Hawke, 292–94.
- [10] See Gimbel for a discussion of one possible copy of the 1793 French text.
- [11] Kuklick, xix–xxi.
- [12] Foot and Kramnick. 1987. *The Thomas Paine Reader*, p.16
- [13] Smith, 108.
- [14] Claeys, 187–88.
- [15] Bronowski, Julius. *William Blake and the Age of Revolution*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (1965), 81; Claeys, 190; Wiener, 108–9.
- [16] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 50.
- [17] As Walter Woll has noted in his book on Paine, there are "remarkable similarities" between Paine's creed and his friend Benjamin Franklin's; Woll, 138, note 1. Franklin's creed: "I believe in one God, the creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this."
- [18] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 52.
- [19] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 185.
- [20] Smylie, 207–209; Claeys, 181–82; Davidson and Scheick, 70–71.
- [21] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 60–61; see also Davidson and Scheick, 49 and Fruchtman, 3–4; 28–9.
- [22] Smylie, 207–209; Claeys, 181–82; Davidson and Scheick, 64–65; 72–73.
- [23] Numbers 31:13–47
- [24] Vickers, Vikki J. (2006). *"My pen and my soul have ever gone together": Thomas Paine and the American Revolution*. Routledge. p. 75. ISBN 978-0-415-97652-7.
- [25] Smylie, 207–209; Claeys, 181; Davidson and Scheick, 79–82.
- [26] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 53.
- [27] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 51.
- [28] Mee, 162.
- [29] Davidson and Scheick, 18–19.
- [30] Qtd. in Foner, 216; see also Fruchtman, 157–8; Harrison, 80.
- [31] Foner, 91; see also Fruchtman, 157–8; Claeys, 183.
- [32] Robbins, 135–42.
- [33] Robbins, 135–42; Davidson and Scheick, 58–60.
- [34] Hole, 69.
- [35] Robbins, 140–41; Davidson and Scheick, 58.
- [36] In Annet, Paine is said to have a direct "forerunner" in deistic argumentation, advocacy of "freedom of expression and religious inquiry" and emphasis on "social reforms." Annet even concerned himself with the price of one of his controversial religious pamphlets. Such a concern is worthy of Paine. (Herrick 130–4)
- [37] Smylie, 209; Davidson and Scheick, 60ff.
- [38] Foner, xvi.
- [39] Foner, xv.
- [40] Foner, 247.
- [41] Qtd. in Clark, 317.
- [42] Kuklick, xi–xii.
- [43] Davidson and Scheick, 100–101.
- [44] Smith, 53–4.
- [45] Smith, 56.
- [46] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 56.
- [47] Foner, "Introduction," *The Age of Reason* (1974), 35; see also Foot and Kramnick, 399.

- [48] Watson, 3.
- [49] Qtd. in Leslie Chard, "Bookseller to publisher: Joseph Johnson and the English book trade, 1760–1810." *The Library* (5th series) 32 (1977), 147.
- [50] Paine, *The Age of Reason*, Part II, Section 4.
- [51] Herrick, 52; 61–65; 80–81; Claeys, 104–105.
- [52] Redwood, 196.
- [53] Watson, 34.
- [54] Thompson, 98.
- [55] Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1974), 156; see also Claeys, 102–103.
- [56] Davidson and Scheick, 99.
- [57] Smith, 183; Fruchtman, 4; 157.
- [58] Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press (1978), xiv; see also Fruchtman, xi.
- [59] Davidson and Scheick, 28.
- [60] Smylie, 210; Claeys, 185–86.
- [61] Claeys, 187–8; Davidson and Scheick, 88.
- [62] Davidson and Scheick, 89.
- [63] Claeys, 184–85; 189.
- [64] Mee, 138
- [65] Bindman, 129.
- [66] Qtd. in Claeys, 185.
- [67] Marsh, 61.
- [68] Marsh, 67.
- [69] Qtd. in Marsh, 71.
- [70] Marsh, 74.
- [71] Wiener, 108–9.
- [72] Thompson, 94; Wilson, Chapter 4.
- [73] Marsh, 172.
- [74] Qtd. in Marsh, 137.
- [75] Qtd. in Claeys, 180.
- [76] Davidson and Scheick 88; Claeys 177.
- [77] Woll 149; Claeys, 183–84.
- [78] Qtd. in Harrison, 80.
- [79] Claeys, 34.
- [80] Foner, 270.
- [81] Walters, 31.
- [82] Walters, 8; Kuklick, xiii; xxii.
- [83] Walters, 27; 35–6.
- [84] Foner, 256; see also Claeys, 191.
- [85] Walters, 192.
- [86] Walters, 10.
- [87] Foner, 256.
- [88] Spater, 10; see also Claeys, 191–92.
- [89] Qtd. in Samuels, 184.
- [90] Qtd. in Foner, "Introduction," *The Age of Reason* (1974), 40; see also Claeys, 192.
- [91] Qtd. in Hawke, 7.
- [92] Gaustad, Edwin S. *Neither King nor Prelate: Religion and the New Nation, 1776–1826*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (1993), 89.
- [93] Qtd. in Hawke, 390.
- [94] Schwartz, Thomas D. "Mark Twain and Robert Ingersoll: The Freethought Connection". *American Literature* 48.2 (1976): 183–84.
- [95] Review: Conway's Life of Thomas Paine (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9C03E6D61E31E033A2575AC1A9609C94639ED7CF>). *The New York Times*. 19 June 1892. Retrieved on 13 October 2007.
- [96] Woll, 197.
- [97] Kaye, Harvey J. *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America*. (Hill and Wang, 2005), 171.
- [98] Claeys, 193.
- [99] Qtd. in Barrell, John. "The Positions He Takes ([http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n23/barr01\\_.html](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n23/barr01_.html))." *London Review of Books*. 28.23 (30 November 2006). Retrieved on 20 July 2007.

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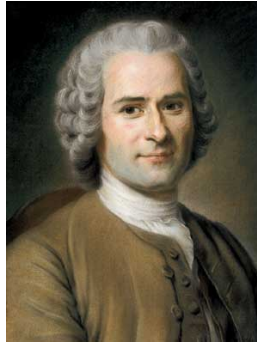
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- *Writings of Thomas Paine — Volume 4 (1794–1796): The Age of Reason* (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/3743>) at Project Gutenberg

## Jean-Jacques Rousseau

### Jean-Jacques Rousseau



Rousseau in 1753, by Maurice Quentin de La Tour

<b>Born</b>	28 June 1712 Geneva, Republic of Geneva
<b>Died</b>	2 July 1778 (aged 66) Ermenonville, Kingdom of France
<b>Era</b>	18th century philosophy (Modern philosophy)
<b>Region</b>	Western Philosophers
<b>School</b>	Social contract theory Romanticism
<b>Main interests</b>	Political philosophy, music, education, literature, autobiography
<b>Notable ideas</b>	General will, amour-propre, moral simplicity of humanity, child-centered learning, civil religion, popular sovereignty, positive liberty

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (28 June 1712 – 2 July 1778) was a Genevan philosopher, writer, and composer of 18th-century Romanticism. His political philosophy influenced the French Revolution as well as the overall development of modern political, sociological and educational thought.

His novel *Émile: or, On Education* is a treatise on the education of the whole person for citizenship. His sentimental novel *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* was of importance to the development of pre-romanticism<sup>[1]</sup> and romanticism in fiction.<sup>[2]</sup> Rousseau's autobiographical writings — his *Confessions*, which initiated the modern autobiography, and his *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* — exemplified the late 18th-century movement known as the *Age of Sensibility*, featuring an increasing focus on subjectivity and introspection that has characterized the modern age. His *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* and his *On the Social Contract* are cornerstones in modern political and social thought and make a strong case for democratic government and social empowerment.

Rousseau was a successful composer of music, besides. He wrote seven operas as well as music in other forms, and he made contributions to music as a theorist.

During the period of the French Revolution, Rousseau was the most popular of the *philosophes* among members of the Jacobin Club. He was interred as a national hero in the Panthéon in Paris, in 1794, 16 years after his death.

## Biography

### Youth

Rousseau was born in Geneva, which was at the time a city-state and a Protestant associate of the Swiss Confederacy. Since 1536, Geneva had been a Huguenot republic and the seat of Calvinism. Rousseau was proud that his family, of the *moyen* order (or middle-class), had voting rights in the city. Throughout his life, he described himself as a citizen of Geneva.

In theory, Geneva was governed democratically by its male voting citizens, a minority of the population. In fact, the city was ruled by a secretive executive committee, called the "Little Council", which was made up of 25 members of its wealthiest families. In 1707, a patriot called Pierre Fatio protested at this situation, and the Little Council had him shot. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's father Isaac was not in the city at this time, but Jean-Jacques's grandfather supported Fatio and was penalized for it.<sup>[3]</sup>



The house where Rousseau was born  
at number 40, place du  
Bourg-de-Four

Rousseau's father, Isaac Rousseau, was a watchmaker who, notwithstanding his artisan status, was well educated and a lover of music. "A Genevan watchmaker," Rousseau wrote, "is a man who can be introduced anywhere; a Parisian watchmaker is only fit to talk about watches."<sup>[4]</sup>

Rousseau's mother, Suzanne Bernard Rousseau, the daughter of a Calvinist preacher, died of puerperal fever nine days after his birth. He and his older brother François were brought up by their father and a paternal aunt, also named Suzanne.

Rousseau had no recollection of learning to read, but he remembered how when he was 5 or 6 his father encouraged his love of reading:

“Every night, after supper, we read some part of a small collection of romances [i.e., adventure stories], which had been my mother's. My father's design was only to improve me in reading, and he thought these entertaining works were calculated to give me a fondness for it; but we soon found ourselves so interested in the adventures they contained, that we alternately read whole nights together and could not bear to give over until at the conclusion of a volume. Sometimes, in the morning, on hearing the swallows at our window, my father, quite ashamed of this weakness, would cry, "Come, come, let us go to bed; I am more a child than thou art.”

— Confessions, Book 1

Not long afterward, Rousseau abandoned his taste for escapist stories in favor of the antiquity of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, which he would read to his father while he made watches.

When Rousseau was 10, his father, an avid hunter, got into a legal quarrel with a wealthy landowner on whose lands he had been caught trespassing. To avoid certain defeat in the courts, he moved away to Nyon in the territory of Bern, taking Rousseau's aunt Suzanne with him. He remarried, and from that point Jean-Jacques saw little of him.<sup>[5]</sup> Jean-Jacques was left with his maternal uncle, who packed him, along with his own son, Abraham Bernard, away to board for two years with a Calvinist minister in a hamlet outside Geneva. Here the boys picked up the elements of mathematics and drawing. Rousseau, who was always deeply moved by religious services, for a time even dreamed of becoming a Protestant minister.

Virtually, all our information about Rousseau's youth has come from his posthumously published *Confessions*, in which the chronology is somewhat confused, though recent scholars have combed the archives for confirming evidence to fill in the blanks. At age 13, Rousseau was apprenticed first to a notary and then to an engraver who beat him. At 15, he ran away from Geneva (on 14 March 1728) after returning to the city and finding the city gates locked due to the curfew. In adjoining Savoy he took shelter with a Roman Catholic priest, who introduced him to Françoise-Louise de Warens, age 29. She was a noblewoman of Protestant background who was separated from her husband. As professional lay proselytizer, she was paid by the King of Piedmont to help bring Protestants to Catholicism. They sent the boy to Turin, the capital of Savoy (which included Piedmont, in what is now Italy), to complete his conversion. This resulted in his having to give up his Genevan citizenship, although he would later revert to Calvinism in order to regain it.



Les Charmettes: where Rousseau lived with Mme de Warens in 1735-6, now a museum dedicated to Rousseau

In converting to Catholicism, both De Warens and Rousseau were likely reacting to the severity of Calvinism's insistence on the total depravity of man. Leo Damrosch writes, "an eighteenth-century Genevan liturgy still required believers to declare 'that we are miserable sinners, born in corruption, inclined to evil, incapable by ourselves of doing good'."<sup>[6]</sup> De Warens, a deist by inclination, was attracted to Catholicism's doctrine of forgiveness of sins.

## Independence

Finding himself on his own, since his father and uncle had more or less disowned him, the teenage Rousseau supported himself for a time as a servant, secretary, and tutor, wandering in Italy (Piedmont and Savoy) and France. During this time, he lived on and off with De Warens, whom he idolized and called his "*maman*". Flattered by his devotion, De Warens tried to get him started in a profession, and arranged formal music lessons for him. At one point, he briefly attended a seminary with the idea of becoming a priest. When Rousseau reached 20, De Warens took him as her lover, while intimate also with the steward of her house. The sexual aspect of their relationship (in fact a *ménage à trois*) confused Rousseau and made him uncomfortable, but he always considered De Warens the greatest love of his life. A rather profligate spender, she had a large library and loved to entertain and listen to music. She and her circle, comprising educated members of the Catholic clergy, introduced Rousseau to the world of letters and ideas. Rousseau had been an indifferent student, but during his 20s, which were marked by long bouts of hypochondria, he applied himself in earnest to the study of philosophy, mathematics, and music. At 25, he came into a small inheritance from his mother and used a portion of it to repay De Warens for her financial support of him. At 27, he took a job as a tutor in Lyon.

In 1742, Rousseau moved to Paris in order to present the Académie des Sciences with a new system of numbered musical notation he believed would make his fortune. His system, intended to be compatible with typography, is based on a single line, displaying numbers representing intervals between notes and dots and commas indicating rhythmic values. Believing the system was impractical, the Academy rejected it, though they praised his mastery of the subject, and urged him to try again.



From 1743 to 1744, Rousseau had an honorable but ill-paying post as a secretary to the Comte de Montaigu, the French ambassador to Venice. This awoke in him a lifelong love for Italian music, particularly opera:

I had brought with me from Paris the prejudice of that city against Italian music; but I had also received from nature a sensibility and niceness of distinction which prejudice cannot withstand. I soon contracted that passion for Italian music with which it inspires all those who are capable of feeling its excellence. In listening to barcaroles, I found I had not yet known what singing was...

—*Confessions*

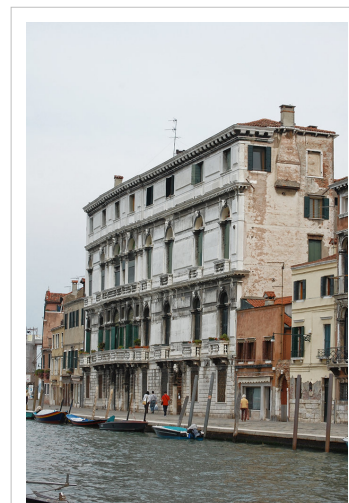
Rousseau's employer routinely received his stipend as much as a year late and paid his staff irregularly.<sup>[7]</sup> After 11 months, Rousseau quit, taking from the experience a profound distrust of government bureaucracy.

Returning to Paris, the penniless Rousseau befriended and became the lover of Thérèse Levasseur, a seamstress who was the sole support of her termagant mother and numerous ne'er-do-well siblings. At first, they did not live together, though later Rousseau took Thérèse and her mother in to live with him as his servants, and himself assumed the burden of supporting her large family. According to his *Confessions*, before she moved in with him, Thérèse bore him a son and as many as four other children (there is no independent verification for this number<sup>[8]</sup>). Rousseau wrote that he persuaded Thérèse to give each of the newborns up to a foundling hospital, for the sake of her "honor". "Her mother, who feared the inconvenience of a brat, came to my aid, and she [Thérèse] allowed herself to be overcome" (*Confessions*). In his letter to Madame de Francueil in 1751, he first pretended that he wasn't rich enough to raise his children but in book IX of the confessions, he gave the true reasons of his choice: "*I trembled at the thought of intrusting them to a family ill brought up, to be still worse educated. The risk of the education of the foundling hospital was much less.*"

Ten years later, Rousseau made inquiries about the fate of his son, but no record could be found. When Rousseau subsequently became celebrated as a theorist of education and child-rearing, his abandonment of his children was used by his critics, including Voltaire and Edmund Burke, as the basis for *ad hominem* attacks. In an irony of fate, Rousseau's later injunction to women to breastfeed their own babies (as had previously been recommended by the French natural scientist Buffon), probably saved the lives of thousands of infants.

While in Paris, Rousseau became a close friend of French philosopher Diderot and, beginning with some articles on music in 1749,<sup>[9]</sup> contributed numerous articles to Diderot and D'Alembert's great *Encyclopédie*, the most famous of which was an article on political economy written in 1755.

Rousseau's ideas were the result of an almost obsessive dialogue with writers of the past, filtered in many cases through conversations with Diderot. His genius lay in his strikingly original way of putting things rather than in the originality, *per se*, of his thinking. In 1749, Rousseau was paying daily visits to Diderot, who had been thrown into the fortress of Vincennes under a *lettre de cachet* for opinions in his "*Lettre sur les aveugles*," that hinted at materialism, a belief in atoms, and natural selection. Rousseau had read about an essay competition sponsored by the Académie de Dijon to be published in the *Mercur de France* on the theme of whether the development of the arts and sciences had been morally beneficial. He wrote that while walking to Vincennes (about three miles from Paris), he had a revelation that the arts and sciences were responsible for the moral degeneration of mankind, who were basically good by nature. According to Diderot, writing much later, Rousseau had originally intended to answer this in the conventional way, but his discussions with Diderot convinced him to propose the paradoxical negative answer that catapulted him into the public eye. Rousseau's 1750 "Discourse on the Arts and Sciences" was awarded the first prize and gained him significant fame.



Palazzo belonging to Tommaso Querini at 968 Cannaregio Venice that served as the French Embassy during Rousseau's period as Secretary to the Ambassador

Rousseau continued his interest in music. He wrote both the words and music of his opera *Le Devin du Village* (*The Village Soothsayer*), which was performed for King Louis XV in 1752. The king was so pleased by the work that he offered Rousseau a lifelong pension. To the exasperation of his friends, Rousseau turned down the great honor, bringing him notoriety as "the man who had refused a king's pension." He also turned down several other advantageous offers, sometimes with a brusqueness bordering on truculence that gave offense and caused him problems. The same year, the visit of a troupe of Italian musicians to Paris, and their performance of Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*, prompted the Querelle des Bouffons, which pitted protagonists of French music against supporters of the Italian style. Rousseau as noted above, was an enthusiastic supporter of the Italians against Jean-Philippe Rameau and others, making an important contribution with his *Letter on French Music*.

On returning to Geneva in 1754, Rousseau reconverted to Calvinism and regained his official Genevan citizenship. In 1755, Rousseau completed his second major work, the *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men* (the *Discourse on Inequality*), which elaborated on the arguments of the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*.

He also pursued an unconsummated romantic attachment with the 25-year-old Sophie d'Houdetot, which partly inspired his epistolary novel, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (also based on memories of his idyllic youthful relationship with Mme de Warens). Sophie was the cousin and houseguest of Rousseau's patroness and landlady Madame d'Epainay, whom he treated rather highhandedly. He resented being at Mme d'Epainay's beck and call and detested the insincere conversation and shallow atheism of the *Encyclopedistes* whom he met at her table. Wounded feelings gave rise to a bitter three-way quarrel between Rousseau and Madame d'Epainay; her lover, the philologist Grimm; and their mutual friend, Diderot, who took their side against Rousseau. Diderot later described Rousseau as being, "false, vain as Satan, ungrateful, cruel, hypocritical, and wicked ... He sucked ideas from me, used them himself, and then affected to despise me".<sup>[10]</sup>



The mestizo Pierre Alexandre du Peyrou, rich inhabitant of Neuchâtel, plantation owner, writer, friend and publisher of some of Rousseau's oeuvre. His mansion was Le Palais du Peyrou

Rousseau's break with the *Encyclopedistes* coincided with the composition of his three major works, in all of which he emphasized his fervent belief in a spiritual origin of man's soul and the universe, in contradistinction to the materialism of Diderot, La Mettrie, and d'Holbach. During this period Rousseau enjoyed the support and patronage of the Duc de Luxembourg, and the Prince de Conti, two of the richest and most powerful nobles in France. These men truly liked Rousseau and enjoyed his ability to converse on any subject, but they also used him as a way of getting back at Louis XV and the political faction surrounding his mistress, Mme de Pompadour. Even with them, however, Rousseau went too far, courting rejection when he criticized the practice of tax farming, in which some of them engaged.<sup>[11]</sup>

Rousseau's 800-page novel of sentiment, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, was published in 1761 to immense success. The book's rhapsodic descriptions of the natural beauty of the Swiss countryside struck a chord in the public and may have helped spark the subsequent nineteenth century craze for Alpine scenery. In 1762, Rousseau published *Du Contrat Social, Principes du droit politique* (in English, literally *Of the Social Contract, Principles of Political Right*) in April. Even his friend Antoine-Jacques Roustan felt impelled to write a polite rebuttal of the chapter on Civil Religion in the *Social Contract*, which implied that the concept of a Christian Republic was paradoxical since Christianity taught submission rather than participation in public affairs. Rousseau even helped Roustan find a publisher for the rebuttal.<sup>[12]</sup>

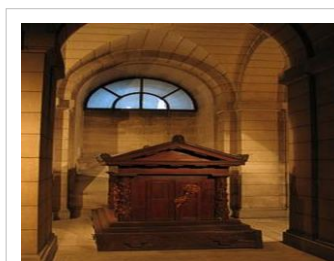
Rousseau published *Emile: or, On Education* in May. The final section of *Émile*, "The Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar," was intended to be a defense of religious belief. Rousseau's choice of a Catholic vicar of humble peasant background (plausibly based on a kindly prelate he had met as a teenager) as a spokesman for the defense of religion was in itself a daring innovation for the time. The vicar's creed was that of Socinianism (or Unitarianism as

it is called today). Because it rejected original sin and divine Revelation, both Protestant and Catholic authorities took offense. Moreover, Rousseau advocated the opinion that, insofar as they lead people to virtue, all religions are equally worthy, and that people should therefore conform to the religion in which they have been brought up. This religious indifferentism caused Rousseau and his books to be banned from France and Geneva. He was condemned from the pulpit by the Archbishop of Paris, his books were burned, and warrants were issued for his arrest.<sup>[13]</sup> Former friends such as Jacob Vernes of Geneva could not accept his views, and wrote violent rebuttals.<sup>[14]</sup>

A sympathetic observer, British philosopher David Hume, "professed no surprise when he learned that Rousseau's books were banned in Geneva and elsewhere." Rousseau, he wrote, "has not had the precaution to throw any veil over his sentiments; and, as he scorns to dissemble his contempt for established opinions, he could not wonder that all the zealots were in arms against him. The liberty of the press is not so secured in any country ... as not to render such an open attack on popular prejudice somewhat dangerous."<sup>[15]</sup> Rousseau, who thought he had been defending religion, was crushed. Forced to flee arrest he made his way, with the help of the Duc of Luxembourg and Prince de Conti, to Neuchâtel, a Canton of the Swiss Confederation that was a protectorate of the Prussian crown. His powerful protectors discreetly assisted him in his flight and they helped to get his banned books (published in Holland by Marc-Michel Rey) distributed in France disguised as other works using false covers and title pages. In the town of Môtiers, he sought and found protection under Lord Keith, who was the local representative of the free-thinking Frederick the Great of Prussia. While in Môtiers, Rousseau wrote the *Constitutional Project for Corsica* (*Projet de Constitution pour la Corse*, 1765).

After his house in Môtiers was stoned on the night of 6 September 1765, Rousseau took refuge in Great Britain with Hume, who found lodgings for him at a friend's country estate in Wootton in Staffordshire. Neither Thérèse nor Rousseau was able to learn English or make friends. Isolated, Rousseau, never emotionally very stable, suffered a serious decline in his mental health and began to experience paranoid fantasies about plots against him involving Hume and others. "He is plainly mad, after having long been maddish", Hume wrote to a friend.<sup>[16]</sup> Rousseau's letter to Hume, in which he articulates the perceived misconduct, sparked an exchange which was published in Paris and received with great interest at the time.

Although officially barred from entering France before 1770, Rousseau returned in 1767 under a false name. In 1768 he went through a marriage of sorts to Thérèse (marriages between Catholics and Protestants were illegal), whom he had always hitherto referred to as his "housekeeper". Though she was illiterate, she had become a remarkably good cook, a hobby her husband shared. In 1770 they were allowed to return to Paris. As a condition of his return he was not allowed to publish any books, but after completing his *Confessions*, Rousseau began private readings in 1771. At the request of Madame d'Epainay, who was anxious to protect her privacy, however, the police ordered him to stop, and the *Confessions* was only partially published in 1782, four years after his death. All his subsequent works were to appear posthumously.



The tomb of Rousseau in the crypt of the Panthéon, Paris



The statue of Rousseau on the Île Rousseau, Geneva

In 1772, Rousseau was invited to present recommendations for a new constitution for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, resulting in the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, which was to be his last major political work. In 1776, he completed *Dialogues: Rousseau Judge of Jean-Jacques* and began work on the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. In order to support himself, he returned to copying music, spending his leisure time in the study of botany.

Although a celebrity, Rousseau's mental health did not permit him to enjoy his fame. His final years were largely spent in deliberate withdrawal. However, he did respond favorably to an approach from the composer Gluck, whom he met in 1774. Gluck admired Rousseau as "a pioneer of the expressive natural style" in music.<sup>[17]</sup> By One of Rousseau's last pieces of writing was a critical yet enthusiastic analysis of Gluck's opera *Alceste*. While taking a morning walk on the estate of the marquis René Louis de Girardin at Ermenonville (28 miles

northeast of Paris), Rousseau suffered a hemorrhage and died, aged 66.

Rousseau was initially buried at Ermenonville on the Ile des Peupliers, which became a place of pilgrimage for his many admirers. Sixteen years after his death, his remains were moved to the Panthéon in Paris in 1794, where they are located directly across from those of his contemporary, Voltaire. His tomb, in the shape of a rustic temple, on which, in bas relief an arm reaches out, bearing the torch of liberty, evokes Rousseau's deep love of nature and of classical antiquity. In 1834, the Genevan government somewhat reluctantly erected a statue in his honor on the tiny Île Rousseau in Lake Geneva. Today he is proudly claimed as their most celebrated native son. In 2002, the Espace Rousseau <sup>[18]</sup> was established at 40 Grand-Rue, Geneva, Rousseau's birthplace.



Île Rousseau, Geneva

## Philosophy

### Theory of Natural Human



A 1766 portrait of Rousseau by Allan Ramsay

“The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said "This is mine," and found people naïve enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.”

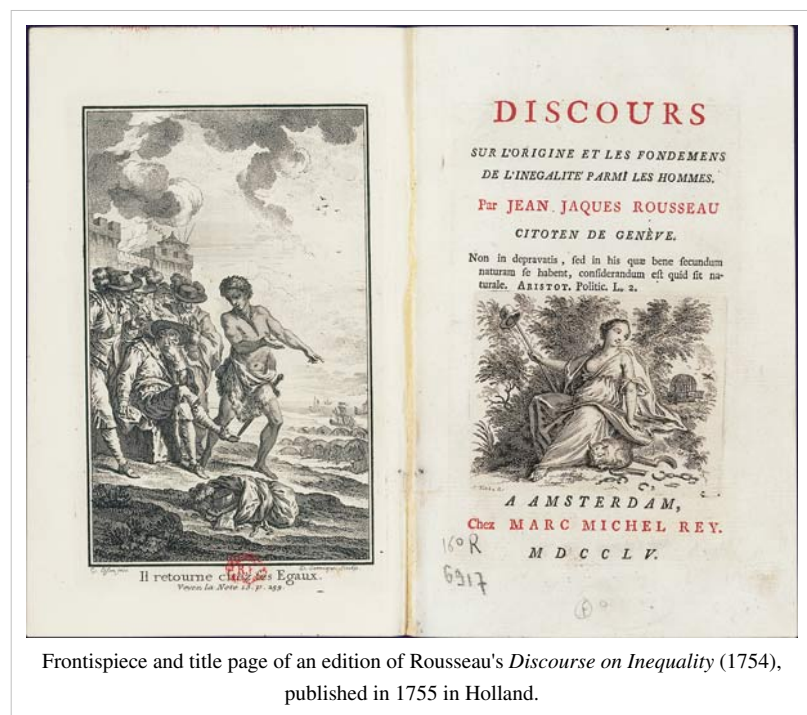
— Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 1754

In common with other philosophers of the day, Rousseau looked to a hypothetical State of Nature as a normative guide.

Rousseau criticized Hobbes for asserting that since man in the "state of nature . . . has no idea of goodness he must be naturally wicked; that he is vicious because he does not know virtue". On the contrary, Rousseau holds that "uncorrupted morals" prevail in the "state of nature" and he especially praised the admirable moderation of the Caribbeans in expressing the sexual urge<sup>[19]</sup> despite the fact that they live in a hot climate, which "always seems to inflame the passions".<sup>[20]</sup> This has led Anglophone critics to erroneously attribute to Rousseau the invention of the idea of the noble savage, an oxymoronic expression that was never used in France<sup>[21]</sup> and which grossly misrepresents Rousseau's thought.<sup>[22]</sup> The expression, "the noble savage" was first used in 1672 by British poet John Dryden in his play *The Conquest of Granada*.

Rousseau wrote that morality was not a societal construct, but rather "natural" in the sense of "innate," an outgrowth from man's instinctive disinclination to witness suffering, from which arise the emotions of compassion or empathy. These were sentiments shared with animals, and whose existence even Hobbes acknowledged.<sup>[23]</sup>

Contrary to what his many detractors have claimed, Rousseau never suggests that humans in the state of nature act morally; in fact, terms such as "justice" or "wickedness" are inapplicable to prepolitical society as Rousseau understands it. Morality proper, i.e., self-restraint, can only develop through careful education in a civil state. Humans "in a state of Nature" may act with all of the ferocity of an animal. They are good only in a negative sense, insofar as they are self-sufficient and thus not subject to the vices of political society. In fact, Rousseau's natural man is virtually identical to a solitary chimpanzee or other ape, such as the orangutan as described by Buffon; and the "natural" goodness of



Frontispiece and title page of an edition of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* (1754), published in 1755 in Holland.

humanity is thus the goodness of an animal, which is neither good nor bad. Rousseau, a deteriorationist, proposed that, except perhaps for brief moments of balance, at or near its inception, when a relative equality among men prevailed, human civilization has always been artificial, creating inequality, envy, and unnatural desires.

In Rousseau's philosophy, society's negative influence on men centers on its transformation of *amour de soi*, a positive self-love, into *amour-propre*, or pride. *Amour de soi* represents the instinctive human desire for self-preservation, combined with the human power of reason. In contrast, *amour-propre* is artificial and encourages man to compare himself to others, thus creating unwarranted fear and allowing men to take pleasure in the pain or weakness of others. Rousseau was not the first to make this distinction. It had been invoked by Vauvenargues,

among others.

In *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* Rousseau argues that the arts and sciences have not been beneficial to humankind, because they arose not from authentic human needs but rather as a result of pride and vanity. Moreover, the opportunities they create for idleness and luxury have contributed to the corruption of man. He proposed that the progress of knowledge had made governments more powerful and had crushed individual liberty; and he concluded that material progress had actually undermined the possibility of true friendship by replacing it with jealousy, fear, and suspicion.

In contrast to the optimistic view of other Enlightenment figures, for Rousseau, progress has been inimical to the well-being of humanity, that is, unless it can be counteracted by the cultivation of civic morality and duty.

Only in civil society, can man be ennobled—through the use of reason:

The passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and right of appetite, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is forced to act on different principles, and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations. Although, in this state, he deprives himself of some advantages which he got from nature, he gains in return others so great, his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his whole soul so uplifted, that, did not the abuses of this new condition often degrade him below that which he left, he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took him from it for ever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man.<sup>[24]</sup>

Society corrupts men only insofar as the Social Contract has not *de facto* succeeded, as we see in contemporary society as described in the *Discourse on Inequality* (1754).

In this essay, which elaborates on the ideas introduced in the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, Rousseau traces man's social evolution from a primitive state of nature to modern society. The earliest solitary humans possessed a basic drive for self preservation and a natural disposition to compassion or pity. They differed from animals, however, in their capacity for free will and their potential perfectibility. As they began to live in groups and form clans they also began to experience family love, which Rousseau saw as the source of the greatest happiness known to humanity. As long as differences in wealth and status among families were minimal, the first coming together in groups was accompanied by a fleeting golden age of human flourishing. The development of agriculture, metallurgy, private property, and the division of labour and resulting dependency on one another, however, led to economic inequality and conflict. As population pressures forced them to associate more and more closely, they underwent a psychological transformation: They began to see themselves through the eyes of others and came to value the good opinion of others as essential to their self esteem. Rousseau posits that the original, deeply flawed Social Contract (i.e., that of Hobbes), which led to the modern state, was made at the suggestion of the rich and powerful, who tricked the general population into surrendering their liberties to them and instituted inequality as a fundamental feature of human society. Rousseau's own conception of the Social Contract can be understood as an alternative to this fraudulent form of association. At the end of the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau explains how the desire to have value in the eyes of others comes to undermine personal integrity and authenticity in a society marked by interdependence, and hierarchy. In the last chapter of the *Social Contract*, Rousseau would ask "What is to be done?" He answers that now all men can do is to cultivate virtue in themselves and submit to their lawful rulers. To his readers, however, the inescapable conclusion was that a new and more equitable Social Contract was needed.

## Political theory

Perhaps Rousseau's most important work is *The Social Contract*, which outlines the basis for a legitimate political order within a framework of classical republicanism. Published in 1762, it became one of the most influential works of political philosophy in the Western tradition. It developed some of the ideas mentioned in an earlier work, the article *Economie Politique* (*Discourse on Political Economy*), featured in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*. The treatise begins with the dramatic opening lines, "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains. Those who think themselves the masters of others are indeed greater slaves than they."

Rousseau claimed that the state of nature was a primitive condition without law or morality, which human beings left for the benefits and necessity of cooperation. As society developed, division of labor and private property required the human race to adopt institutions of law. In the degenerate phase of society, man is prone to be in frequent competition with his fellow men while also becoming increasingly dependent on them. This double pressure threatens both his survival and his freedom. According to Rousseau, by joining together into civil society through the social contract and abandoning their claims of natural right, individuals can both preserve themselves and remain free. This is because submission to the authority of the general will of the people as a whole guarantees individuals against being subordinated to the wills of others and also ensures that they obey themselves because they are, collectively, the authors of the law.

Although Rousseau argues that sovereignty (or the power to make the laws) should be in the hands of the people, he also makes a sharp distinction between the sovereign and the government. The government is composed of magistrates, charged with implementing and enforcing the general will. The "sovereign" is the rule of law, ideally decided on by direct democracy in an assembly. Under a monarchy, however, the real sovereign is still the law. Rousseau was opposed to the idea that the people should exercise sovereignty via a representative assembly (Book III, Chapter XV). The kind of republican government of which Rousseau approved was that of the city state, of which Geneva was a model, or would have been, if renewed on Rousseau's principles. France could not meet Rousseau's criterion of an ideal state because it was too big. Much subsequent controversy about Rousseau's work has hinged on disagreements concerning his claims that citizens constrained to obey the general will are thereby rendered free:

The notion of the general will is wholly central to Rousseau's theory of political legitimacy. ... It is, however, an unfortunately obscure and controversial notion. Some commentators see it as no more than the dictatorship of the proletariat or the tyranny of the urban poor (such as may perhaps be seen in the French Revolution). Such was not Rousseau's meaning. This is clear from the *Discourse on Political Economy*, where Rousseau emphasizes that the general will exists to protect individuals against the mass, not to require them to be sacrificed to it. He is, of course, sharply aware that men have selfish and sectional interests which will lead them to try to oppress others. It is for this reason that loyalty to the good of all alike must be a supreme (although not exclusive) commitment by everyone, not only if a truly general will is to be heeded but also if it is to be formulated successfully in the first place".<sup>[25]</sup>

## Education and child rearing

“The noblest work in education is to make a reasoning man, and we expect to train a young child by making him reason! This is beginning at the end; this is making an instrument of a result. If children understood how to reason they would not need to be educated.” —Rousseau, *Emile*.

Rousseau's philosophy of education is not concerned with particular techniques of imparting information and concepts, but rather with developing the pupil's character and moral sense, so that he may learn to practice self-mastery and remain virtuous even in the unnatural and imperfect society in which he will have to live. The hypothetical boy, *Émile*, is to be raised in the countryside, which, Rousseau believes, is a more natural and healthy environment than the city, under the guardianship of a tutor who will guide him through various learning experiences

arranged by the tutor. Today we would call this the disciplinary method of "natural consequences" since, like modern psychologists, Rousseau felt that children learn right and wrong through experiencing the consequences of their acts rather than through physical punishment. The tutor will make sure that no harm results to *Émile* through his learning experiences.

Rousseau was one of the first to advocate developmentally appropriate education; and his description of the stages of child development mirrors his conception of the evolution of culture. He divides childhood into stages: the first is to the age of about 12, when children are guided by their emotions and impulses. During the second stage, from 12 to about 16, reason starts to develop; and finally the third stage, from the age of 16 onwards, when the child develops into an adult. Rousseau recommends that the young adult learn a manual skill such as carpentry, which requires creativity and thought, will keep him out of trouble, and will supply a fallback means of making a living in the event of a change of fortune. (The most illustrious aristocratic youth to have been educated this way may have been Louis XVI, whose parents had him learn the skill of locksmithing.<sup>[26]</sup>) The sixteen-year-old is also ready to have a companion of the opposite sex.

Although his ideas foreshadowed modern ones in many ways, in one way they do not: Rousseau was a believer in the moral superiority of the patriarchal family on the antique Roman model. Sophie, the young woman *Émile* is destined to marry, as a representative of ideal womanhood, is educated to be governed by her husband while *Émile*, as representative of the ideal man, is educated to be self-governing. This is not an accidental feature of Rousseau's educational and political philosophy; it is essential to his account of the distinction between private, personal relations and the public world of political relations. The private sphere as Rousseau imagines it depends on the subordination of women, in order for both it and the public political sphere (upon which it depends) to function as Rousseau imagines it could and should. Rousseau anticipated the modern idea of the bourgeois nuclear family, with the mother at home taking responsibility for the household and for childcare and early education.

Feminists, beginning in the late 18th century with Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792<sup>[27]</sup> have criticized Rousseau for his confinement of women to the domestic sphere—unless women were domesticated and constrained by modesty and shame, he feared<sup>[28]</sup> "men would be tyrannized by women... For, given the ease with which women arouse men's senses... men would finally be their victims..."<sup>[29]</sup> His contemporaries saw it differently because Rousseau thought that mothers should breastfeed their children.<sup>[30]</sup> Marmontel wrote that his wife thought, "One must forgive something," she said, "in one who has taught us to be mothers."<sup>[31]</sup>

Rousseau's detractors have blamed him for everything they do not like in what they call modern "child-centered" education. John Darling's 1994 book *Child-Centered Education and its Critics* argues that the history of modern educational theory is a series of footnotes to Rousseau, a development he regards as bad. Good or bad, the theories of educators such as Rousseau's near contemporaries Pestalozzi, Mme de Genlis, and later, Maria Montessori, and John Dewey, which have directly influenced modern educational practices do have significant points in common with those of Rousseau.

## Religion

Having converted to Roman Catholicism early in life and returned to the austere Calvinism of his native Geneva as part of his period of moral reform, Rousseau maintained a profession of that religious philosophy and of John Calvin as a modern lawgiver throughout the remainder of his life.<sup>[32]</sup> His views on religion presented in his works of philosophy, however, may strike some as discordant with the doctrines of both Catholicism and Calvinism.

At the time, however, Rousseau's strong endorsement of religious toleration, as expounded by the Savoyard vicar in *Émile*, was interpreted as advocating indifferentism, a heresy, and led to the condemnation of the book in both Calvinist Geneva and Catholic Paris. His assertion in the *Social Contract* that true followers of Jesus would not make good citizens may have been another reason for Rousseau's condemnation in Geneva.

Unlike many of the more radical Enlightenment philosophers, Rousseau affirmed the necessity of religion. But he repudiated the doctrine of original sin, which plays so large a part in Calvinism (in *Émile*, Rousseau writes "there is



no original perversity in the human heart").<sup>[33]</sup>

In the 18th century, many deists viewed God merely as an abstract and impersonal creator of the universe, which they likened to a giant machine. Rousseau's deism differed from the usual kind in its intense emotionality. He saw the presence of God in his creation, including mankind, which, apart from the harmful influence of society, is good, because God is good. Rousseau's attribution of a spiritual value to the beauty of nature anticipates the attitudes of 19th-century Romanticism towards nature and religion.

Rousseau was upset that his deistic views were so forcefully condemned, while those of the more atheistic *philosophes* were ignored. He defended himself against critics of his religious views in his "Letter to Christophe de Beaumont, the Archbishop of Paris in which he insists that freedom of discussion in religious matters is essentially more religious than the attempt to impose belief by force."<sup>[34]</sup>

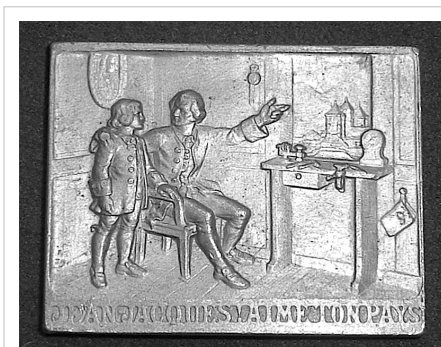
## Legacy

Rousseau's idea of the *volonté générale* ("general will") was not original with him but rather belonged to a well-established technical vocabulary of juridical and theological writings in use at the time. The phrase was used by Diderot and also by Montesquieu (and by his teacher, the Oratorian friar Nicolas Malebranche). It served to designate the common interest embodied in legal tradition, as distinct from and transcending people's private and particular interests at any particular time. The concept was also an important aspect of the more radical 17th-century republican tradition of Spinoza, from whom Rousseau differed in important respects, but not in his insistence on the importance of equality. This emphasis on equality is Rousseau's most important and consequential legacy, causing him to be both reviled and applauded:

While Rousseau's notion of the progressive moral degeneration of mankind from the moment civil society established itself diverges markedly from Spinoza's claim that human nature is always and everywhere the same ... for both philosophers the pristine equality of the state of nature is our ultimate goal and criterion ... in shaping the "common good", *volonté générale*, or Spinoza's *mens una*, which alone can ensure stability and political salvation. Without the supreme criterion of equality, the general will would indeed be meaningless. ... When in the depths of the French Revolution the Jacobin clubs all over France regularly deployed Rousseau when demanding radical reforms. and especially anything – such as land redistribution – designed to enhance equality, they were at the same time, albeit unconsciously, invoking a radical tradition which reached back to the late seventeenth century.<sup>[35]</sup>

The cult that grew up around Rousseau after his death, and particularly the radicalized versions of Rousseau's ideas that were adopted by Robespierre and Saint-Just during the Reign of Terror, caused him to become identified with the most extreme aspects of the French Revolution.<sup>[36]</sup> Among other things, the 1795 launched ship of the line Jean-Jacques Rousseau was named after the philosopher. The revolutionaries were also inspired by Rousseau to introduce Deism as the new official civil religion of France, scandalizing traditionalists:

Ceremonial and symbolic occurrences of the more radical phases of the Revolution invoked Rousseau and his core ideas.



A plaque commemorating the bicentenary of Rousseau's birth. Issued by the city of Geneva on 28 June 1912. The legend at the bottom says "Jean-Jacques, aime ton pays" ("love your country"), and shows Rousseau's father gesturing towards the window. The scene is drawn from a footnote to the Letter to d'Alembert where Rousseau recalls witnessing the popular celebrations following the exercises of the St Gervais regiment.

Thus the ceremony held at the site of the demolished Bastille, organized by the foremost artistic director of the Revolution, Jacques-Louis David, in August 1793 to mark the inauguration of the new republican constitution, an event coming shortly after the final abolition of all forms of feudal privilege, featured a cantata based on Rousseau's democratic pantheistic deism as expounded in the celebrated "*Profession de foi d'un vicaire savoyard*" in Book Four of *Émile*.<sup>[37]</sup>

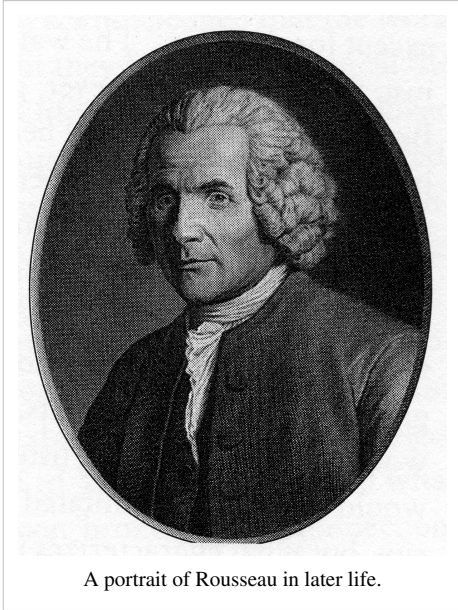
Opponents of the Revolution and defenders of religion, most influentially the Irish essayist Edmund Burke, therefore placed the blame for the excesses of the French Revolution directly on the revolutionaries' misplaced (as he considered it) adulation of Rousseau. Burke's "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly", published in February 1791, was a diatribe against Rousseau, whom he considered the paramount influence on the French Revolution (his *ad hominem* attack did not really engage with Rousseau's political writings). Burke maintained that the excesses of the Revolution were not accidents but were designed from the beginning and were rooted in Rousseau's personal vanity, arrogance, and other moral failings. He recalled Rousseau's visit to Britain in 1766, saying: "I had good opportunities of knowing his proceedings almost from day to day and he left no doubt in my mind that he entertained no principle either to influence his heart or to guide his understanding, but vanity". Conceding his gift of eloquence, Burke deplored Rousseau's lack of the good taste and finer feelings that would have been imparted by the education of a gentleman:

Taste and elegance ... are of no mean importance in the regulation of life. A moral taste ... infinitely abates the evils of vice. Rousseau, a writer of great force and vivacity, is totally destitute of taste in any sense of the word. Your masters [i.e., the leaders of the Revolution], who are his scholars, conceive that all refinement has an aristocratic character. The last age had exhausted all its powers in giving a grace and nobleness to our mutual appetites, and in raising them into a higher class and order than seemed justly to belong to them. Through Rousseau, your masters are resolved to destroy these aristocratic prejudices.<sup>[38]</sup>

In America, where there was no such cult, the direct influence of Rousseau was arguably less. The American founders rarely cited Rousseau, but came independently to their Republicanism and enthusiastic admiration for the austere virtues described by Livy and in Plutarch's portrayals of the great men of ancient Sparta and the classical republicanism of early Rome, as did most other enlightenment figures. Rousseau's praise of Switzerland and Corsica's economies of isolated and self-sufficient independent homesteads, and his endorsement of a well-regulated citizen militia, such as Switzerland's, recall the ideals of Jeffersonian democracy. To Rousseau we owe the invention of the concept of a "civil religion", one of whose key tenets is religious toleration. Yet despite their mutual insistence on the self-evidence that "all men are created equal", their insistence that the citizens of a republic be educated at public expense, and the evident parallel between the concepts of the "general welfare" and Rousseau's "general will", some scholars maintain there is little to suggest that Rousseau had that much effect on Thomas Jefferson and other founding fathers.<sup>[39]</sup> They argue that the American constitution owes as much or more to the English Liberal philosopher John Locke's emphasis on the rights of property and to Montesquieu's theories of the separation of powers.<sup>[40]</sup> Rousseau's writings had an indirect influence on American literature through the writings of Wordsworth and Kant, whose works were important to the New England Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, as well as on such Unitarians as theologian William Ellery Channing. American novelist James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* and other novels reflect republican and egalitarian ideals present alike in Rousseau, Thomas Paine, and also in English Romantic primitivism.<sup>[41]</sup> Another American admirer was lexicographer Noah Webster.<sup>[42]</sup> The Paraguayan dictator José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia sought to found a society based on the principles set forth in Rousseau's *Social Contract*.<sup>[43]</sup>

The Australian biologist Jeremy Griffith in his 'Beyond the Human Condition' has formulated a thesis that seeks to ground Rousseau's concept of the noble savage and the artificiality of modern urban living in evolutionary psychology.

## Criticisms of Rousseau



A portrait of Rousseau in later life.

The first to criticize Rousseau were his fellow *Philosophes*, above all, Voltaire. According to Jacques Barzun:

Voltaire, who had felt annoyed by the first essay [*On the Arts and Sciences*], was outraged by the second, [*Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men*], declaring that Rousseau wanted us to “walk on all fours” like animals and behave like savages, believing them creatures of perfection. From these interpretations, plausible but inexact, spring the clichés Noble Savage and Back to Nature.<sup>[44]</sup>

Barzun states that, contrary to myth, Rousseau was no primitivist; for him:

The model man is the independent farmer, free of superiors and self-governing. This was cause enough for the *philosophes'* hatred of their former friend. Rousseau's

unforgivable crime was his rejection of the graces and luxuries of civilized existence. Voltaire had sung “The superfluous, that most necessary thing.” For the high bourgeois standard of living Rousseau would substitute the middling peasant's. It was the country versus the city – an exasperating idea for them, as was the amazing fact that every new work of Rousseau's was a huge success, whether the subject was politics, theater, education, religion, or a novel about love.<sup>[45]</sup>

Following the French Revolution, other commentators fingered a potential danger of Rousseau's project of realizing an “antique” conception of virtue amongst the citizenry in a modern world (e.g. through education, physical exercise, a citizen militia, public holidays, and the like). Taken too far, as under the Jacobins, such social engineering could result in tyranny. As early as 1819, in his famous speech “On Ancient and Modern Liberty,” the political philosopher Benjamin Constant, a proponent of constitutional monarchy and representative democracy, criticized Rousseau, or rather his more radical followers (specifically the Abbé de Mably), for allegedly believing that “everything should give way to collective will, and that all restrictions on individual rights would be amply compensated by participation in social power.”

Common also were attacks by defenders of social hierarchy on Rousseau's “romantic” belief in equality. In 1860, shortly after the Sepoy Rebellion in India, two British white supremacists, John Crawfurd and James Hunt, mounted a defense of British imperialism based on “scientific racism”.<sup>[46]</sup> Crawfurd, in alliance with Hunt, took over the presidency of the British Anthropological Society, which had been founded with the mission to defend indigenous peoples against slavery and colonial exploitation. Invoking “science” and “realism”, the two men derided their “philanthropic” predecessors for believing in human equality and for not recognizing that mankind was divided into superior and inferior races. Crawfurd, who opposed Darwinian evolution, “denied any unity to mankind, insisting on immutable, hereditary, and timeless differences in racial character, principal amongst which was the ‘very great’ difference in ‘intellectual capacity.’” For Crawfurd, the races had been created separately and were different species. Since Crawfurd was Scottish, he thought the Scottish “race” superior and all others inferior; whilst Hunt, on the other hand, believed in the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon “race”. Crawfurd and Hunt routinely accused those who disagreed with them of believing in “Rousseau's Noble Savage”. (The pair ultimately quarreled because Hunt believed in slavery and Crawfurd did not). “As Ter Ellinson demonstrates, Crawfurd was responsible for re-introducing the Pre-Rousseauian concept of ‘the Noble Savage’ to modern anthropology, attributing it wrongly and quite deliberately to Rousseau.”<sup>[47]</sup>

In 1919 Irving Babbitt, founder of a movement called the "New Humanism", wrote a critique of what he called "sentimental humanitarianism", for which he blamed Rousseau.<sup>[48]</sup> Babbitt's depiction of Rousseau was countered in a celebrated and much reprinted essay by A. O. Lovejoy in 1923.<sup>[49]</sup> In France, fascist theorist and anti-Semite Charles Maurras, founder of *Action Française*, "had no compunctions in laying the blame for both *Romantisme et Révolution* firmly on Rousseau in 1922."<sup>[50]</sup>

During the Cold War, Karl Popper criticized Rousseau for his association with nationalism and its attendant abuses. This came to be known among scholars as the "totalitarian thesis". An example is J. L. Talmon's, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (1952).<sup>[51]</sup> Political scientist J. S. Maloy states that "the twentieth century added Nazism and Stalinism to Jacobinism on the list of horrors for which Rousseau could be blamed. ... Rousseau was considered to have advocated just the sort of invasive tampering with human nature which the totalitarian regimes of mid-century had tried to instantiate." But Maloy adds that "The totalitarian thesis in Rousseau studies has, by now, been discredited as an attribution of real historical influence."<sup>[52]</sup> Arthur Melzer, however, while conceding that Rousseau would not have approved of modern nationalism, observes that his theories do contain the "seeds of nationalism", insofar as they set forth the "politics of identification", which are rooted in sympathetic emotion. Melzer also believes that in admitting that people's talents are unequal, Rousseau therefore tacitly condones the tyranny of the few over the many.<sup>[53]</sup> For Stephen T. Engel, on the other hand, Rousseau's nationalism anticipated modern theories of "imagined communities" that transcend social and religious divisions within states.<sup>[54]</sup>

On similar grounds, one of Rousseau's strongest critics during the second half of the 20th century was political philosopher Hannah Arendt. Using Rousseau's thought as an example, Arendt identified the notion of sovereignty with that of the general will. According to her, it was this desire to establish a single, unified will based on the stifling of opinion in favor of public passion that contributed to the excesses of the French Revolution.<sup>[55]</sup>

## Major works

- *Dissertation sur la musique moderne*, 1736
- *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences (Discours sur les sciences et les arts)*, 1750
- *Narcissus, or The Self-Admirer: A Comedy*, 1752
- *Le Devin du Village: an opera*, 1752, score <sup>[56]</sup>PDF (21.7 MB)
- *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men (Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes)*, 1754
- *Discourse on Political Economy*, 1755
- *Letter to M. D'Alembert on Spectacles*, 1758 (*Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles*)
- *Julie, or the New Heloise (Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse)*, 1761
- *Émile: or, on Education (Émile ou de l'éducation)*, 1762
- *The Creed of a Savoyard Priest*, 1762 (in *Émile*)
- *The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right (Du contrat social)*, 1762
- *Four Letters to M. de Malesherbes*, 1762
- *Pygmalion: a Lyric Scene*, 1762
- *Letters Written from the Mountain*, 1764 (*Lettres de la montagne*)
- *Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Les Confessions)*, 1770, published 1782
- *Constitutional Project for Corsica*, 1772
- *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, 1772
- *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, published 1781 (*Essai sur l'origine des langues*)
- *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, incomplete, published 1782 (*Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*)
- *Dialogues: Rousseau Judge of Jean-Jacques*, published 1782

## Editions in English

- *Basic Political Writings*, trans. Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987.
- *Collected Writings*, ed. Roger Masters and Christopher Kelly, Dartmouth: University Press of New England, 1990–2010, 13 vols.
- *The Confessions*, trans. Angela Scholar. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- *Emile, or On Education*, trans. with an introd. by Allan Bloom, New York: Basic Books, 1979.
- "On the Origin of Language," trans. John H. Moran. In *On the Origin of Language: Two Essays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, trans. Peter France. London: Penguin Books, 1980.
- *'The Discourses' and Other Early Political Writings*, trans. Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- *'The Social Contract' and Other Later Political Writings*, trans. Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston. Penguin: Penguin Classics Various Editions, 1968–2007.
- *The Political writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, edited from the original MCS and authentic editions with introduction and notes by C.E. Vaughan, Blackwell, Oxford, 1962. (In French but the introduction and notes are in English).

## Online texts

- A Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences <sup>[57]</sup> English translation
- Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau <sup>[58]</sup> English translation, as published by Project Gutenberg, 2004 [EBook #3913]
- Considerations on the Government of Poland <sup>[59]</sup> English translation
- Constitutional Project for Corsica <sup>[60]</sup> English translation
- Discourse on Political Economy <sup>[61]</sup> English translation
- Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men <sup>[62]</sup> English translation
- *Du contrat social* <sup>[63]</sup> at MetaLibri Digital Library.
- 'Elementary Letters on Botany', 1771-3 <sup>[64]</sup>PDF (4.23 MB) English translation
- Emile <sup>[65]</sup> French text and English translation (Grace G. Roosevelt's revision and correction of Barbara Foxley's Everyman translation, at Columbia)
- Full Ebooks of Rousseau in french <sup>[66]</sup> on the website 'La philosophie'
- Mondo Politico Library's presentation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book, *The Social Contract* (G.D.H. Cole translation; full text) <sup>[67]</sup>
- Narcissus, or The Self-Admirer: A Comedy <sup>[68]</sup> English translation
- Project Concerning New Symbols for Music <sup>[69]</sup> French text and English translation
- The Creed of a Savoyard Priest <sup>[70]</sup> English translation
- The Social Contract, Or Principles of Political Right <sup>[71]</sup> English translation
- Works by Jean-Jacques Rousseau <sup>[72]</sup> at Project Gutenberg

## Notes

- [1] "Preromanticism Criticism" (<http://www.enotes.com/literary-criticism/preromanticism>). Enotes.com. . Retrieved 23 February 2009.
- [2] See also Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, chapter 6: "Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensitivity" for some interesting examples of contemporary reactions to this novel.
- [3] Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005) p. 31.
- [4] "And indeed, a British visitor commented, 'Even the lower class of people [of Geneva] are exceedingly well informed, and there is perhaps no city in Europe where learning is more universally diffused'; another at midcentury noticed that Genevan workmen were fond of reading the works of Locke and Montesquieu." See Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius*, p. 14.
- [5] Damrosch, p. 24.
- [6] *Rousseau: Restless Genius*, p. 121.
- [7] Leo Damrosch describes the count as "a virtual parody of a parasitic aristocrat, incredibly stupid, irascible, and swollen with self importance." He spoke no Italian, a language in which Rousseau was fluent. Although Rousseau did most of the work of the embassy, he was treated like a valet. (See Damrosch, p. 168).
- [8] Some of Rousseau's contemporaries believed the babies were not his. George Sand has written an *essai*, "Les Charmettes" (1865. Printed in the same volume as "Laura" from the same year) in which she explains why Rousseau may have accused himself falsely. She quotes her grandmother, in whose family Rousseau had been a tutor, and who stated that Rousseau could not get children.
- [9] Rousseau in his musical articles in the *Encyclopédie* engaged in lively controversy with other musicians, e.g. with Rameau, as in his article on Temperament, for which see *Encyclopédie: Tempérament* (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=did;cc=did;rgn=main;view=text;idno=did2222.0000.897>) (English translation), also *Temperament Ordinaire*.
- [10] Damrosch (2005), p. 304.
- [11] *Damrosch (2005)*, p. 357.
- [12] Helena Rosenblatt (1997). *Rousseau and Geneva: from the first discourse to the social contract, 1749–1762* (<http://books.google.ca/books?id=0hGoNncv-CkC&pg=PA264>). Cambridge University Press. pp. 264–5. ISBN 0521570042. .
- [13] Rousseau's biographer Leo Damrosch, believes that the authorities chose to condemn him on religious rather than political grounds for tactical reasons. See Damrosch *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Restless Genius* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).
- [14] *Protestantism in Geneva* (<http://books.google.ca/books?id=f7ECAAAIAAJ&pg=PA165>). . *Blackwood's magazine, Volume 51*: 165. 1842. .
- [15] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment, The Science of Freedom*, p. 72.
- [16] Quoted in Damrosch, p. 432
- [17] Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007, p.473
- [18] <http://www.espace-rousseau.ch/e/jean-jacques-rousseau.asp>
- [19] Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 72–73
- [20] *Discourse*, 78.
- [21] Anglophone writers still use the term "Noble Savage" in describing race relations in New France, see for example: *The Libertine Colony* by Doris Garraway, *There are No Slaves in France* by Sue Peabody, *The Avengers of the New World* by Laurent Dubois, and *The French Atlantic Triangle* by Christopher Miller; for information about the relationship between the French and English colonial contexts, see *Sentimental Figures of Empire* by Lynn Festa.
- [22] See A. O. Lovejoy's essay on "The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's Discourse on Inequality" in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1948, 1960). For a history of how the phrase became associated with Rousseau, see Ter Ellinson's, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001)
- [23] In locating the basis of ethics in emotions rather than reason Rousseau agreed with Adam Smith's 1759 *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.
- [24] *The Social Contract*, Book I Chapter 8 ([http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon\\_01.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_01.htm))
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- [29] Rousseau, *Emile*, book V, p. 359
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- [32] Britannica.com (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/510932/Jean-Jacques-Rousseau/23965/Major-works-of-political-philosophy>)
- [33] *il n'y a point de perversité originelle dans le cœur humain* *Émile*, ou De l'éducation/Édition 1852/Livre II

- [34] The full text of the letter is available online only in the French original: Lettre à Mgr De Beaumont Archevêque de Paris (1762) (<http://alain-leger.mageos.com/docs/Rousseau.pdf>)
- [35] Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 274.
- [36] Robspierre and Saint-Just's conception of *L'intérêt général*, or the will of the people, was derived from Rousseau's "general will", and they considered themselves "highly principled republicans, charged with stripping away what was superfluous and corrupt, inspired above all by Rousseau", Jonathan Israel, p. 717.
- [37] Jonathan Israel, p. 717.
- [38] Edmund Burke. "A letter to a member of the National Assembly, 1791" (<http://ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/burkee/tonatass/index.htm>). Ourcivilisation.com. . Retrieved 23 February 2009.
- [39] "Rousseau, whose romantic and egalitarian tenets had practically no influence on the course of Jefferson's, or indeed any American, thought." Nathan Schachner, *Thomas Jefferson: A Biography*. (1957), p. 47. Jefferson never mentioned Rousseau in any of his writings, but made frequent references to Locke. On the other hand, he did have a well-thumbed copy of Rousseau's work in his library and was known to have been influenced by "French philosophers."
- [40] A case for Rousseau as an enemy of the Enlightenment is made in Graeme Garrard, *Rousseau's Counter-Enlightenment: A Republican Critique of the Philosophes* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003).
- [41] Cooper was a follower of Tom Paine, who in turn was an admirer of Rousseau. For the classical origins of American ideals of liberty, see also "Sibi Imperiosus: Cooper's Horatian Ideal of Self-Governance in The Deerslayer"(Villa Julie College) Placed on line July 2005 external.oneonta.edu (<http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/2003sunny-tamer.html>)
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- [43] War of The Triple Alliance (<http://warofthepacific.com/warofthetriplealliance.htm>) Retrieved 14 November 2010
- [44] *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life: 1500 to the Present* (Harper Collins, 2001), p. 384
- [45] Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence* (2001) p. 384
- [46] see Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage*, 2001.
- [47] "John Crawford – 'two separate races'" ([http://epress.anu.edu.au/foreign\\_bodies/mobile\\_devices/ch03s02.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/foreign_bodies/mobile_devices/ch03s02.html)). Epress.anu.edu.au. . Retrieved 23 February 2009.
- [48] *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919).
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- [50] See R. Simon Harvey, who goes on: "and mere concern for the facts has not inhibited others from doing likewise. Irving Babbitt's *Rousseau & Romanticism* still remains the only general work on this subject though printed as long ago as 1919, but it is grossly inaccurate, discursive and biased ...."See *Reappraisals of Rousseau: studies in honor of R. A. Leigh*, R. Simon Harvey, Editor (Manchester University press. 1980).
- [51] Talmon's thesis is rebutted by Ralph A. Leigh in "*Liberté et autorité dans le Contrat Social*" in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et son oeuvre* (Paris 1963). Another tenacious proponent of the totalitarian thesis was Lester C. Crocker, author of *Rousseau's Social Contract, An interpretive Essay* (Case Western Reserve Press, Cleveland, 1968). Two reviews of the debate are: J. W. Chapman, *Rousseau: Totalitarian or Liberal?* (AMS Press New York, 1968) and Richard Fralin, *Rousseau and Representation* (Columbia University Press, NY, 1978).
- [52] J. S. Maloy, "The Very Order of Things: Rousseau's Tutorial Republicanism," *Polity*, Vol. 37 (2005).
- [53] Arthur Melzer, "Rousseau, Nationalism, and the Politics of Sympathetic Identification" in *Educating the Prince: Essays in Honor of Harvey C. Mansfield*, Mark Kristol and William Blitz, editors (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000). Others counter, however, that Rousseau was concerned with the concept of equality under the law, not equality of talents.
- [54] "Rousseau and Imagined Communities", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Summer, 2005), pp. 515–537.
- [55] Hannah Arendt, *On revolution* (1990) p. 76
- [56] [http://www.library.unt.edu/music/virtual/Rousseau\\_Devin/Rousseau.pdf](http://www.library.unt.edu/music/virtual/Rousseau_Devin/Rousseau.pdf)
- [57] [http://www.4literature.net/Jean\\_Jacques\\_Rousseau/Discourse\\_on\\_the\\_Moral\\_Effects/](http://www.4literature.net/Jean_Jacques_Rousseau/Discourse_on_the_Moral_Effects/)
- [58] <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/3913>
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- [60] <http://www.constitution.org/jjt/corsica.htm>
- [61] <http://www.constitution.org/jjt/polecon.htm>
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- [66] <http://www.laphilosophie.fr/livres-de-Rousseau-texte-integral.html>
- [67] <http://www.mondopolitico.com/library/thesocialcontract/thesocialcontracttoc.htm>
- [68] <http://userwww.service.emory.edu/~cjcampb/sourcedocs/narcissus.html>
- [69] <http://www.normanschmidt.net/%7Eabc/Rousseau.htm>
- [70] <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/rousseau.htm>
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- [72] [http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Jean-Jacques\\_Rousseau](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau)

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## External links

- Jean Jacques Rousseau (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rousseau>) entry by Christopher Bertram in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- Rousseau Association/Association Rousseau (<http://www.rousseauassociation.org/>), a bilingual association (**English**) (**French**) devoted to the study of Rousseau's life and works
- Encyclopedia Britannica (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9109503/Jean-Jacques-Rousseau>) entry of the Internet version
- Philosophy Bites Audio Lecture, Professor Melissa Lane, Princeton University (<http://philosophybites.com/2008/07/melissa-lane-on.html>)
- Science Live Audio Lecture, Professor Timothy O'Hogan, Oxford University ([http://www.sciencelive.org/component?option=com\\_mediadb/task/play/idstr,Open-feeds\\_aa311\\_political\\_philosophy\\_aa311philosophy04\\_mp3/vv,-1/Itemid,26](http://www.sciencelive.org/component?option=com_mediadb/task/play/idstr,Open-feeds_aa311_political_philosophy_aa311philosophy04_mp3/vv,-1/Itemid,26))
- Free scores by Jean-Jacques Rousseau at the International Music Score Library Project
- A version of The Social Contract, slightly modified for easier reading (<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com>)

# Baruch Spinoza

## Baruch de Spinoza



<b>Full name</b>	Baruch de Spinoza
<b>Born</b>	November 24, 1632 Amsterdam, Dutch Republic
<b>Died</b>	February 21, 1677 (aged 44) The Hague, Dutch Republic
<b>Era</b>	17th-century philosophy
<b>Region</b>	Western Philosophy
<b>School</b>	Rationalism, founder of Spinozism
<b>Main interests</b>	Ethics, Epistemology, Metaphysics
<b>Notable ideas</b>	Pantheism, Pantheism, Determinism, Deism, neutral monism, intellectual and religious freedom / separation of church and state, Criticism of Mosaic authorship of some books of the Hebrew Bible, Political society derived from power, not contract

**Baruch de Spinoza** (Hebrew: ברוך שפינוזה *Baruch Spinoza*, Portuguese: *Benedito or Bento de Espinosa*, Latin: *Benedictus de Spinoza*) and later **Benedict de Spinoza** (in all mentioned languages the given name means "the Blessed") (November 24, 1632 – February 21, 1677) was a Dutch Jewish philosopher.<sup>[1]</sup> Revealing considerable scientific aptitude, the breadth and importance of Spinoza's work was not fully realized until years after his death. By laying the groundwork for the 18th century Enlightenment<sup>[2]</sup> and modern biblical criticism,<sup>[2]</sup> he came to be considered one of the great rationalists<sup>[2]</sup> of the 17th-century philosophy. And his magnum opus, the posthumous *Ethics*, in which he opposed Descartes' mind–body dualism, has also earned him recognition as one of Western philosophy's most important contributors. Philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel said of all contemporary philosophers, "You are either a Spinozist or not a philosopher at all."<sup>[3]</sup>

Spinoza was raised in the Dutch Jewish community. In time he developed highly controversial ideas regarding the authenticity of the Hebrew Bible and the nature of the Divine. The Jewish religious authorities issued a *cherem* (Hebrew: חרם, a kind of excommunication) against him, effectively dismissing him from Jewish society at age 23. His books were also later put on the Catholic Church's Index of Forbidden Books.

Spinoza lived quietly as a lens grinder, turning down rewards and honors throughout his life, including prestigious teaching positions, and gave his family inheritance to his sister. Spinoza's philosophical accomplishments and moral character prompted 20th century philosopher Gilles Deleuze to name him "the 'prince' of philosophers."<sup>[4]</sup>

Spinoza died at the age of 44 allegedly of a lung illness, perhaps tuberculosis or silicosis exacerbated by fine glass dust inhaled while grinding optical lenses. Spinoza is buried in the churchyard of the Christian Nieuwe Kerk in The Hague.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Biography

### Family origins

Spinoza's ancestors were of Sephardic Jewish descent, and were a part of the community of Portuguese Jews that grew in the city of Amsterdam after the Alhambra Decree in Spain (1492) and the Portuguese Inquisition (1536) had led to forced conversions and expulsions from the Iberian peninsula.<sup>[6]</sup>

Some historians argue the Spinoza family ("Espinosa" in Portuguese) had its origins in Espinosa de los Monteros, near Burgos, Spain.<sup>[7]</sup> Others claim they were Portuguese Jews who had moved to Spain and then were expelled back to their home country in 1492, only to be forcibly converted to Catholicism in 1498. Spinoza's father was born roughly a century after this forced conversion in the small Portuguese city of Vidigueira, near Beja in Alentejo. When Spinoza's father was still a child, Spinoza's grandfather, Isaac de Spinoza (who was from Lisbon), took his family to Nantes in France. They were expelled in 1615 and moved to Rotterdam, where Isaac died in 1627. Spinoza's father, Miguel, and his uncle, Manuel, then moved to Amsterdam where they reassumed their Judaism. Manuel changed his name to *Abraão de Spinoza*, though his "commercial" name was still the same.

### Early life and career

Baruch de Spinoza was born in the Jodenbuurt in Amsterdam, Netherlands. His mother Ana Débora, Miguel's second wife, died when Baruch was only six years old. Miguel was a successful importer/merchant and Baruch had a traditional Jewish upbringing.

Spinoza attended the Keter Torah yeshiva headed by Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira, and maintained a connection with Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel, whose home was a center for Jewish scholars in Amsterdam.<sup>[3]</sup> In time, however, his critical, curious nature would come into conflict with the Jewish community.

Wars with England and France took the life of his father and decimated his family's fortune but he was eventually able to relinquish responsibility for the business and its debts to his brother, Gabriel, and devote himself to philosophy and optics.

## Controversial ideas and Jewish reaction

On 27 July 1656, the Jewish community issued him the writ of *cherem* (Hebrew: חרם, a kind of excommunication).

While the language of the *cherem* is unusually harsh, the exact reason for expelling Spinoza is not stated.<sup>[8]</sup> However, according to philosopher Steven Nadler an educated guess is quite straightforward: "No doubt he was giving utterance to just those ideas that would soon appear in his philosophical treatises. In those works, Spinoza denies the immortality of the soul; strongly rejects the notion of a providential God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and claims that the Law was neither literally given by God nor any longer binding on Jews. Can there be any mystery as to why one of history's boldest and most radical thinkers was sanctioned by an orthodox Jewish community?"<sup>[9]</sup>

Spinoza's *cherem* was effected by way of public denunciation; the following document translates the official record of that denunciation:<sup>[10]</sup>

The Lords of the ma'amad, having long known of the evil opinions and acts of Baruch de Espinoza, have endeavored by various means and promises, to turn him from his evil ways. But having failed to make him mend his wicked ways, and, on the contrary, daily receiving more and more serious information about the abominable heresies which he practiced and taught and about his monstrous deeds, and having for this numerous trustworthy witnesses who have deposed and born witness to this effect in the presence of the said Espinoza, they became convinced of the truth of the matter; and after all of this has been investigated in the presence of the honorable chachamin, they have decided, with their consent, that the said Espinoza should be excommunicated and expelled from the people of Israel. By the decree of the angels, and by the command of the holy men, we excommunicate, expel, curse and damn Baruch de Espinoza, with the consent of God, Blessed be He, and with the consent of all the Holy Congregation, in front of these holy Scrolls with the six-hundred-and-thirteen precepts which are written therein, with the excommunication with which Joshua banned Jericho, with the curse with which Elisha cursed the boys, and with all the curses which are written in the Book of the Law. Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lies down, and cursed be he when he rises up; cursed be he when he goes out, and cursed be he when he comes in. The Lord will not spare him; the anger and wrath of the Lord will rage against this man, and bring upon him all the curses which are written in this book, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven, and the Lord will separate him to his injury from all the tribes of Israel with all the curses of the covenant, which are written in the Book of the Law. But you who cleave unto the Lord God are all alive this day. We order that no one should communicate with him orally or in writing, or show him any favor, or stay with him under the same roof, or within four ells of him, or read anything composed or written by him.

After his *cherem*, it is reported that Spinoza lived and worked in the school of Franciscus van den Enden, who taught him Latin in his youth and may have introduced him to modern philosophy, although Spinoza never mentions Van den Enden anywhere in his books or letters. In the early 1660s Van den Enden was considered to be a Cartesian and atheist<sup>[11]</sup> who was forbidden by the city government to propagate his doctrines publicly. His books were put on the Catholic Index of banned books.



Statue of Spinoza, near his house on the Paviljoensgracht in The Hague.

The philosopher Richard Popkin questions the historical veracity of the *cherem*, which Popkin claims emerged close to 300 years after Spinoza's death.<sup>[12]</sup>

During the 1650s, Spinoza Latinized his name to become "Benedictus".<sup>[13]</sup>

During this period Spinoza also became acquainted with several Collegiants, members of an eclectic sect with tendencies towards rationalism. Many of his friends belonged to dissident Christian groups which met regularly as discussion groups and which typically rejected the authority of established churches as well as traditional dogmas.<sup>[1]</sup>

Textbooks and encyclopedias often depict Spinoza as a solitary soul who eked out a living as a lens grinder; in reality, he had many friends but kept his needs to a minimum.<sup>[1]</sup> The reviewer M. Stuart Phelps noted "No one has ever come nearer to the ideal life of the philosopher than Spinoza."<sup>[14]</sup> Another reviewer, Harold Bloom, wrote: "As a teacher of reality, he practiced his own wisdom, and was surely one of the most exemplary human beings ever to have lived."<sup>[15]</sup> According to the New York Times "In outward appearance he was unpretending, but not careless. His way of living was exceedingly modest and retired; often he did not leave his room for many days together. He was likewise almost incredibly frugal; his expenses sometimes amounted only to a few pence a day."<sup>[16]</sup> According to Harold Bloom and the Chicago Tribune "He appears to have had no sexual life."<sup>[15]</sup> <sup>[17]</sup> Spinoza also corresponded with Peter Serrarius, a radical Protestant and millenarian merchant. Serrarius is believed to have been a patron of Spinoza at some point after his conversion. By the beginning of the 1660s, Spinoza's name became more widely known, and eventually Gottfried Leibniz<sup>[18]</sup> and Henry Oldenburg paid him visits, as stated in Matthew Stewart's *The Courtier and the Heretic*.<sup>[18]</sup> Spinoza corresponded with Oldenburg for the rest of his short life.

The writings of Rene Descartes have been described as "Spinoza's starting point."<sup>[15]</sup> Spinoza's first publication was his geometric exposition (formal math proofs) of Descartes, *Parts I and II of Descartes' Principles of Philosophy* (1663). Spinoza has been associated with Leibniz and Descartes as "rationalists" in contrast to "empiricists".<sup>[19]</sup> From December 1664 to June 1665, Spinoza engaged in correspondence with Blyenbergh, an amateur Calvinist theologian, who questioned Spinoza on the definition of evil. Later in 1665, Spinoza notified Oldenburg that he had started to work on a new book, the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, published in 1670. Leibniz disagreed harshly with Spinoza in Leibniz's own published Refutation of Spinoza<sup>[20]</sup>, but he is also known to have met with Spinoza on at least one occasion<sup>[18]</sup> <sup>[19]</sup> (as mentioned above), and his own work bears some striking resemblances to specific important parts of Spinoza's philosophy (see: Monadology).

When the public reactions to the anonymously published *Theologico-Political Treatise* were extremely unfavourable to his brand of Cartesianism, Spinoza was compelled to abstain from publishing more of his works. Wary and independent, he wore a signet ring engraved with his initials, a rose, and the word "caute"<sup>[21]</sup> (Latin for "cautiously"). The *Ethics* and all other works, apart from the *Descartes' Principles of Philosophy* and the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, were published after his death, in the *Opera Posthuma* edited by his friends in secrecy to avoid confiscation and destruction of manuscripts. The *Ethics* contains many still-unresolved obscurities and is written with a forbidding mathematical structure modeled on Euclid's geometry<sup>[1]</sup> and has been described as a "superbly cryptic masterwork."<sup>[15]</sup>

## Later life and career

Spinoza spent his remaining 21 years writing and studying as a private scholar.<sup>[1]</sup> He preached a philosophy of tolerance and benevolence. Anthony Gottlieb described him as living "a saintly life."<sup>[1]</sup>

Spinoza relocated from Amsterdam to Rijnsburg (near Leiden) around 1661 and later lived in Voorburg and The Hague. He earned a comfortable living from lens-grinding. While the lens-grinding aspect of Spinoza's work is uncontested, the type of lenses he made is in question. Many have said he produced excellent magnifying glasses, while some historians describe him as a maker of lenses for eyeglasses. He was also supported by small, but regular, donations from close friends.<sup>[1]</sup>

He died in 1677 while still working on a political thesis. His premature death was said to be due to lung illness, possibly Silicosis as a result of breathing in glass dust from the lenses he ground. Later, a shrine was made of his home in The Hague.<sup>[22]</sup>

Only a year earlier, Spinoza had met with Leibniz at The Hague for a discussion of his principal philosophical work, *Ethics*, which had been completed in 1676. Leibniz then began to plagiarize the as-yet unpublished work when he returned to Germany.<sup>[23]</sup> This meeting was described in Matthew Stewart's *The Courtier and the Heretic*.<sup>[18]</sup> Spinoza never married, nor did he father any children. When he died, he was considered a saint by the general Christian population, and was buried in holy ground.



Spinoza's house in Rijnsburg from 1661-3, now a museum

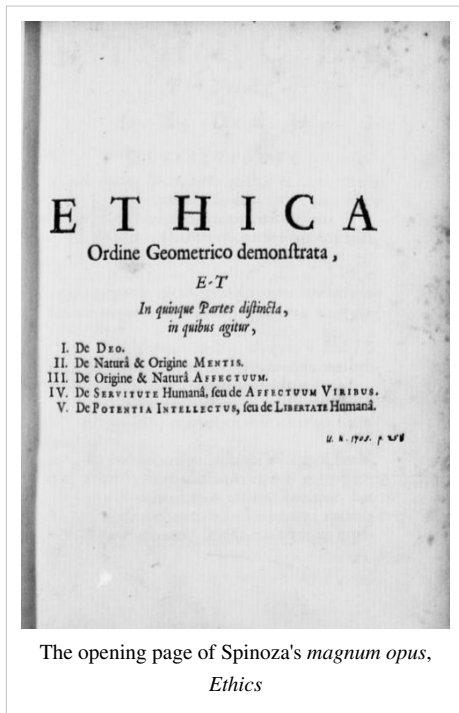


Study room of Spinoza

## Dutch port cities as sites of free thought

Amsterdam and Rotterdam operated as important cosmopolitan centers where merchant ships from many parts of the world brought people of various customs and beliefs. This hustle and bustle ensured, as in the Mediterranean region during the Renaissance, some possibility of free thought and shelter from the crushing hand of ecclesiastical authority. Spinoza may have had access to a circle of friends who were basically heretics in the eyes of tradition. One of the people he may have known was Niels Stensen, a brilliant Danish student in Leiden; others included Coenraad van Beuningen and his cousin Albert Burgh, with whom Spinoza is known to have corresponded.

## Philosophy



The opening page of Spinoza's *magnum opus*,  
*Ethics*

### Substance, attributes and modes

“These are the fundamental concepts with which Spinoza sets forth a vision of Being, illuminated by his awareness of God. They may seem strange at first sight. To the question “What is?” he replies: “Substance, its attributes, and modes”.

— Karl Jaspers<sup>[24]</sup>

Spinoza believed God exists and is abstract and impersonal.<sup>[1]</sup> Spinoza's system imparted order and unity to the tradition of radical thought, offering powerful weapons for prevailing against “received authority.” As a youth he first subscribed to Descartes's dualistic belief that body and mind are two separate substances, but later changed his view and asserted that they were not separate, being a single identity. He contended that everything that exists in Nature (i.e., everything in the Universe) is one Reality (substance) and there is only one set of rules governing the whole of the reality which surrounds us and of which we are part. Spinoza viewed God and Nature as two names for the same reality,<sup>[15]</sup> namely the single substance (meaning “that which stands beneath” rather than “matter”) that is the basis of the universe and of which all lesser “entities” are actually modes or modifications, that all things are determined by Nature to exist and cause effects, and that the complex chain of cause and effect is understood only in part. His identification of God with nature was more fully explained in his posthumously published *Ethics*.<sup>[1]</sup> That humans presume themselves to have free will, he argues, is a result of their awareness of appetites while being unable to understand the reasons why they want and act as they do. Spinoza has been described by one writer as an “Epicurean materialist.”<sup>[15]</sup>

Spinoza contends that “*Deus sive Natura*” (“God or Nature”) is a being of infinitely many attributes, of which thought and extension are two. His account of the nature of reality, then, seems to treat the physical and mental worlds as one and the same. The universal substance consists of both body and mind, there being no difference between these aspects. This formulation is a historically significant solution to the mind-body problem known as neutral monism. Spinoza's system also envisages a God that does not rule over the universe by providence, but a God which itself is the deterministic system of which everything in nature is a part. Thus, according to this understanding of Spinoza's system, God would be the natural world and have no personality.

In addition to substance, the other two fundamental concepts Spinoza presents and develops in the *Ethics* are attribute – that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance, and mode – the modifications of substance, or that which exists in, and is conceived through, something other than itself.

Spinoza was a thoroughgoing determinist who held that absolutely everything that happens occurs through the operation of necessity. For him, even human behaviour is fully determined, with freedom being our capacity to know we are determined and to understand *why* we act as we do. So freedom is not the possibility to say "no" to what happens to us but the possibility to say "yes" and fully understand why things should necessarily happen that way. By forming more "adequate" ideas about what we do and our emotions or affections, we become the adequate cause of our effects (internal or external), which entails an increase in activity (versus passivity). This means that we become both more free and more like God, as Spinoza argues in the Scholium to Prop. 49, Part II. However, Spinoza also held that everything must necessarily happen the way that it does. Therefore, humans have no free will. They believe, however, that their will is free. In his letter to G. H. Schuller (Letter 58), he wrote: "men are conscious of their desire and unaware of the causes by which [their desires] are determined."<sup>[25]</sup>

Spinoza's philosophy has much in common with Stoicism inasmuch as both philosophies sought to fulfill a therapeutic role by instructing people how to attain happiness. However, Spinoza differed sharply from the Stoics in one important respect: he utterly rejected their contention that reason could defeat emotion. On the contrary, he contended, an emotion can only be displaced or overcome by a stronger emotion. For him, the crucial distinction was between active and passive emotions, the former being those that are rationally understood and the latter those that are not. He also held that knowledge of true causes of passive emotion can transform it to an active emotion, thus anticipating one of the key ideas of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis.<sup>[26]</sup>

Some of Spinoza's philosophical positions are:

- The natural world is infinite.
- Good and evil are related to human pleasure and pain.
- Everything done by humans and other animals is excellent and divine.
- All rights are derived from the State.
- Animals can be used in any way by people for the benefit of the human race, according to a rational consideration of the benefit as well as the animal's status in nature.<sup>[27] [28]</sup>

## Ethical philosophy

Encapsulated at the start in his *Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding (Tractatus de intellectus emendatione)* is the core of Spinoza's ethical philosophy, what he held to be the true and final good. Spinoza held good and evil to be relative concepts, claiming that nothing is intrinsically good or bad except relative to a particular individual. Things that had classically been seen as good or evil, Spinoza argued, were simply good or bad for humans. Spinoza believes in a deterministic universe in which "All things in nature proceed from certain [definite] necessity and with the utmost perfection." Nothing happens by chance in Spinoza's world, and nothing is contingent.

## Spinoza's *Ethics*

In the universe anything that happens comes from the essential nature of objects, or of God/Nature. According to Spinoza, reality is perfection. If circumstances are seen as unfortunate it is only because of our inadequate conception of reality. While components of the chain of cause and effect are not beyond the understanding of human reason, human grasp of the infinitely complex whole is limited because of the limits of science to empirically take account of the whole sequence. Spinoza also asserted that sense perception, though practical and useful for rhetoric, is inadequate for discovering universal truth; Spinoza's mathematical and logical approach to metaphysics, and therefore ethics, concluded that emotion is formed from inadequate understanding. His concept of "conatus" states that human beings' natural inclination is to strive toward preserving an essential being and an assertion that virtue/human power is defined by success in this preservation of being by the guidance of reason as one's central



ethical doctrine. According to Spinoza, the highest virtue is the intellectual love or knowledge of God/Nature/Universe.

In the final part of the "Ethics", his concern with the meaning of "true blessedness", and his explanation of how emotions must be detached from external cause and so master them, give some prediction of psychological techniques developed in the 1900s. His concept of three types of knowledge – opinion, reason, intuition – and his assertion that intuitive knowledge provides the greatest satisfaction of mind, lead to his proposition that the more we are conscious of ourselves and Nature/Universe, the more perfect and blessed we are (in reality) and that only intuitive knowledge is eternal. His unique contribution to understanding the workings of mind is extraordinary, even during this time of radical philosophical developments, in that his views provide a bridge between religions' mystical past and psychology of the present day.

Given Spinoza's insistence on a completely ordered world where "necessity" reigns, Good and Evil have no absolute meaning. Human catastrophes, social injustices, etc., are merely apparent. The world as it exists looks imperfect only because of our limited perception.

However, Schopenhauer contended that Spinoza's book is the opposite of ethics. "...[I]t is precisely *ethics* on which all *pantheism* is wrecked. If the world is a theophany, then everything that man does, and indeed every animal does, is equally divine; nothing can be censurable and nothing can be more praiseworthy than anything else."<sup>[29]</sup> According to Schopenhauer, Spinoza's "teaching amounts to saying; 'The world is because it is; and it is as it is because it is so.'...Yet the deification of the world...did not admit of any true ethics; moreover, it was in flagrant contradiction with the physical evils and moral wickedness of this world."<sup>[30]</sup>

## History of reception

### Pantheist, pantheist, or atheist?

- On this same topic as it relates to Spinoza's philosophy, see also Pantheism controversy.

It is a widespread belief that Spinoza equated God with the material universe. However, in a letter to Henry Oldenburg he states that: "as to the view of certain people that I identify god with nature (taken as a kind of mass or corporeal matter), they are quite mistaken".<sup>[31]</sup> For Spinoza, our universe (cosmos) is a *mode* under two *attributes* of Thought and Extension. God has infinitely many other attributes which are not present in our world. According to German philosopher Karl Jaspers, when Spinoza wrote "*Deus sive Natura*" (God or Nature) Spinoza meant God was *Natura naturans* not *Natura naturata*, and Jaspers believed that Spinoza, in his philosophical system, did not mean to say that God and Nature are interchangeable terms, but rather that God's transcendence was attested by his infinitely many attributes, and that two attributes known by humans, namely Thought and Extension, signified God's *immanence*.<sup>[32]</sup> Even God under the attributes of thought and extension cannot be identified strictly with our world. That world is of course "divisible"; it has parts. But Spinoza insists that "no attribute of a substance can be truly conceived from which it follows that the substance can be divided" (Which means that one cannot conceive an attribute in a way that leads to division of substance), and that "a substance which is absolutely infinite is



An early engraving of philosopher Spinoza, captioned in Latin, "A Jew and an Atheist".

indivisible" (Ethics, Part I, Propositions 12 and 13).<sup>[33]</sup> Following this logic, our world should be considered as a mode under two attributes of thought and extension. Therefore the pantheist formula "One and All" would apply to Spinoza only if the "One" preserves its transcendence and the "All" were not interpreted as the totality of finite things.<sup>[32]</sup>

Martial Guérout suggested the term "Panentheism", rather than "Pantheism" to describe Spinoza's view of the relation between God and the world. The world is not God, but it is, in a strong sense, "in" God. Not only do finite things have God as their cause; they cannot be conceived without God.<sup>[33]</sup> In other words, the world is a subset of God.

In 1785, Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi published a condemnation of Spinoza's pantheism, after Lessing was thought to have confessed on his deathbed to being a "Spinozist", which was the equivalent in his time of being called an atheist. Jacobi claimed that Spinoza's doctrine was pure materialism, because all Nature and God are said to be nothing but extended substance. This, for Jacobi, was the result of Enlightenment rationalism and it would finally end in absolute atheism. Moses Mendelssohn disagreed with Jacobi, saying that there is no actual difference between theism and pantheism. The issue became a major intellectual and religious concern for European civilization at the time.

The attraction of Spinoza's philosophy to late 18th-century Europeans was that it provided an alternative to materialism, atheism, and deism. Three of Spinoza's ideas strongly appealed to them:

- the unity of all that exists;
- the regularity of all that happens; and
- the identity of spirit and nature.

Spinoza's "God or Nature" [*Deus sive Natura*] provided a living, natural God, in contrast to the Newtonian mechanical "First Cause" or the dead mechanism of the French "Man Machine." Coleridge and Shelley saw in Spinoza's philosophy a *religion of nature*<sup>[1]</sup> and called him the "God-intoxicated Man."<sup>[15]</sup><sup>[34]</sup> Spinoza inspired the poet Shelley to write his essay "The Necessity of Atheism."<sup>[15]</sup>

Spinoza was considered to be an atheist because he used the word "God" [Deus] to signify a concept that was different from that of traditional Judeo-Christian monotheism. "Spinoza expressly denies personality and consciousness to God; he has neither intelligence, feeling, nor will; he does not act according to purpose, but everything follows necessarily from his nature, according to law...."<sup>[35]</sup> Thus, Spinoza's cool, indifferent God<sup>[36]</sup> is the antithesis to the concept of an anthropomorphic, fatherly God who cares about humanity.

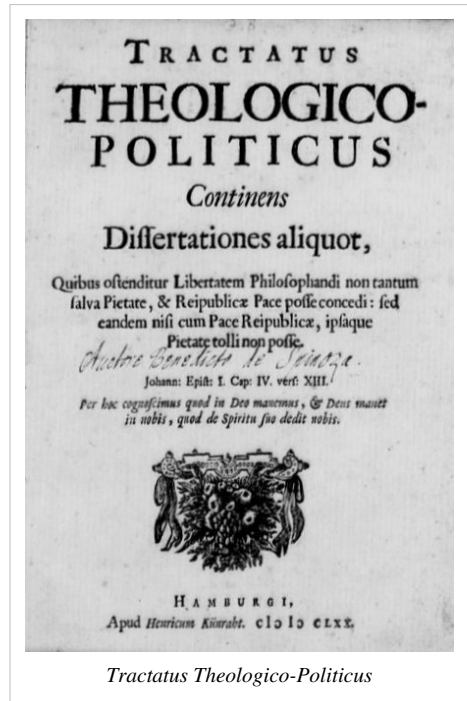
## Spinoza's political theory

Late 20th century Europe demonstrated a greater philosophical interest in Spinoza, often from a left-wing or Marxist perspective. Karl Marx liked his materialistic account of the universe.<sup>[1]</sup> Notable philosophers Louis Althusser, Gilles Deleuze, Antonio Negri, Étienne Balibar and Marilena Chauvi have each drawn upon Spinoza's philosophy. Deleuze's doctoral thesis, published in 1968, refers to him as "the prince of philosophers."<sup>[37]</sup> Other philosophers heavily influenced by Spinoza include Constantin Brunner and John David Garcia. Stuart Hampshire wrote a major English language study of Spinoza, though H. H. Joachim's work is equally valuable. Unlike most philosophers, Spinoza and his work were highly regarded by Nietzsche.

Spinoza was an important philosophical inspiration for George Santayana. When Santayana graduated from college, he published an essay, "The Ethical Doctrine of Spinoza," in *The Harvard Monthly*.<sup>[38]</sup> Later, he wrote an introduction to *Spinoza's Ethics and 'De intellectus emendatione'*.<sup>[39]</sup> In 1932, Santayana was invited to present an essay (published as "Ultimate Religion,")<sup>[40]</sup> at a meeting at The Hague celebrating the tricentennial of Spinoza's birth. In Santayana's autobiography, he characterized Spinoza as his "master and model" in understanding the naturalistic basis of morality.<sup>[41]</sup>

## Spinoza's religious criticism and its effect on the philosophy of language

Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein evoked Spinoza with the title (suggested to him by G. E. Moore) of the English translation of his first definitive philosophical work, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, an allusion to Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. Elsewhere, Wittgenstein deliberately borrowed the expression *sub specie aeternitatis* from Spinoza (*Notebooks, 1914-16*, p. 83). The structure of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* does have some structural affinities with Spinoza's *Ethics* (though, admittedly, not with the latter's own *Tractatus*) in erecting complex philosophical arguments upon basic logical assertions and principles. Furthermore, in propositions 6.4311 and 6.45 he alludes to a Spinozian understanding of eternity and interpretation of the religious concept of eternal life, stating that "If by eternity is understood not eternal temporal duration, but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present." (6.4311) "The contemplation of the world sub specie aeterni is its contemplation as a limited whole." (6.45) Furthermore, Wittgenstein's interpretation of religious language, in both his early and later career, may be said to bear a family resemblance to Spinoza's pantheism.



*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*

Leo Strauss dedicated his first book ("Spinoza's Critique of Religion") to an examination of the latter's ideas. In the book, Strauss identified Spinoza as part of the tradition of Enlightenment rationalism that eventually produced Modernity. Moreover, he identifies Spinoza and his works as the beginning of Jewish Modernity.<sup>[15]</sup> More recently Jonathan Israel, Professor of Modern European History at Princeton, has made a detailed case that from 1650-1750 Spinoza was "the chief challenger of the fundamentals of revealed religion, received ideas, tradition, morality, and what was everywhere regarded, in absolutist and non-absolutist states alike, as divinely constituted political authority."<sup>[42]</sup>

The events leading to Spinoza's excommunication are the basis for a 2010 play by David Ives. The play "New Jerusalem: The Interrogation of Baruch De Spinoza at Talmud Torah Congregation: Amsterdam, July 27, 1656" was first performed at Theater J in Washington, D.C.<sup>[43]</sup>

## Spinoza in literature

Spinoza has had influence beyond the confines of philosophy. The 19th century novelist George Eliot produced her own translation of the *Ethics*, the first known English translation of it. Eliot liked Spinoza's vehement attacks on superstition.<sup>[1]</sup> In his Autobiography 'From My Life: Poetry and Truth', Goethe recounts the way in which Spinoza's *Ethics* calmed the sometimes unbearable emotional turbulence of his youth. Goethe later displayed his grasp of Spinoza's metaphysics in a fragmentary elucidation of some Spinozist ontological principles entitled *Study After Spinoza*.<sup>[44]</sup> Moreover, he cited Spinoza alongside Shakespeare and Carl Linnaeus as one of the three strongest influences on his life and work.<sup>[45]</sup> The 20th century novelist, W. Somerset Maugham, alluded to one of Spinoza's central concepts with the title of his novel, *Of Human Bondage*. Albert Einstein named Spinoza as the philosopher who exerted the most influence on his world view (Weltanschauung). Spinoza equated God (infinite substance) with Nature, consistent with Einstein's belief in an impersonal deity. In 1929, Einstein was asked in a telegram by Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein whether he believed in God. Einstein responded by telegram: "I believe in Spinoza's God who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fates and actions of human beings."<sup>[46]</sup> <sup>[47]</sup> Spinoza's pantheism has also influenced environmental theory; Arne Næss, the father of the deep ecology movement, acknowledged Spinoza as an important inspiration.

Moreover, the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges was greatly influenced by Spinoza's world view. Borges makes allusions to the philosopher's work in many of his poems and short stories, as does Isaac Bashevis Singer in his short story *The Spinoza of Market Street*.<sup>[48]</sup> The title character of *Hoffman's Hunger*, the fifth novel by the Dutch novelist Leon de Winter, reads and comments upon the *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* over the course of the novel. Spinoza has been the subject of numerous biographies and scholarly treatises.<sup>[34] [49] [50] [51]</sup>

Spinoza is an important historical figure in the Netherlands, where his portrait was featured prominently on the Dutch 1000-guilder banknote, legal tender until the euro was introduced in 2002. The highest and most prestigious scientific award of the Netherlands is named the *Spinoza prijs* (Spinoza prize). Spinoza was included in a 50 theme canon that attempts to summarise the history of the Netherlands.<sup>[52]</sup>

Spinoza's work is also mentioned as the favourite reading material for Bertie Wooster's valet Jeeves in the P. G. Wodehouse novels.<sup>[53]</sup> Spinoza's life has been the subject of plays and has been honored by educators.<sup>[2] [12]</sup>

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## Works

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