DAVID HUME AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT LEGACY

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Generally acclaimed as the greatest philosopher of the Enlightenment, David Hume has been, nevertheless, a problem for Enlightenment historians. In terms of the Enlightenment's own standards of empiricism and demonstrable philosophical tenets, Hume's is by far the most "legitimate" philosophy of the age, yet it is almost diametrically opposed to the traditional historical characterization of the Enlightenment. Consequently, historians must re-assess the empirical character of the Enlightenment, acknowledging it as yet another Age of Faith rather than science (as Becker contends), or acknowledge Hume's as the most valid Enlightenment philosophy. Such a re-assessment and study of Hume's conclusions would dramatically alter Enlightenment histories and provide meaningful insights into the actual Enlightenment legacy regarding modern man and his society.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE DILEMMA OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Historiography of the Enlightenment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Problem of David Hume</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. METHOD: THE ESSENCE OF ENLIGHTENED PHILOSOPHY</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. HUME'S ENLIGHTENED PHILOSOPHY</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Hume on Reason</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. &quot;Enlightened&quot; Reason and Natural Law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE ENLIGHTENMENT LEGACY</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Failure of Enlightenment History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Enlightenment Legacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hume's Enlightenment Legacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY                                                               221
CHAPTER I

THE DILEMMA OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Historiography of the Enlightenment

More than any other historical era, the "Enlightenment" of the eighteenth century has been analyzed and re-analyzed concerning its relevance to our modern age. Either honoring or deploring this so-called Age of Reason, historians have looked to it for the seeds of modern greatness or the roots of contemporary evil.\(^1\) Considering the significance of such studies for revealing the basis of our twentieth century Western character, it is interesting (and occasionally distressing) to note the wide and varied differences of opinion reflected in historical treatments of the subject. Unanimity of interpretation is certainly not the purpose or even the desired goal of history, but it is intriguing to observe that while most historians perceive a distinct character or unity in the "enlightened movement," the variations on this theme are virtually as numerous as the works published. Most every writer has his favorite or "representative" philosophe ranging from Diderot "more than any other of the philosophes . . . 'the spokesman of the century,'"\(^2\) to Voltaire in whose writings one "will find neatly and often wittily expressed almost all the
ideas with which the Enlightenment started,"\(^3\) to Hume "an authentic *philosophe* and the most original philosopher of the age,"\(^4\) "the most isolated and the most representative of the *philosophes.*"\(^5\) While some writers trace Voltaire's development from optimism to a more brooding pessimism after the Lisbon earthquake,\(^6\) others perceive a change from resignation to a commitment to "polemical action" after *Candide.*\(^7\) Rousseau is the focus of a heated debate as to whether he is of the Age of Reason--the Enlightenment's "consummation"\(^8\)--or the harbinger of the Romantic Era. Some historians have found it easiest to say that he was both.\(^9\) Enlightenment histories further perceive various phases within the age as well as various motives for its principals.

One reason for the "confusion" regarding Enlightenment history may be that historians have dwelt on superficialities and semantics while neglecting a more fundamental approach to the question of Enlightenment unity, that of the discrepancy between what the *philosophes* claimed to be doing and what they actually did. The typical Enlightenment history is preoccupied with ascertaining (which has generally meant imposing) a unity on the variety of phenomena which occurred within the designated period of time referred to as the Enlightenment. In order to substantiate a unified interpretation of this era, historians have taken the *philosophes* at their words especially with
regard to the most critical, the most fundamental aspect of the entire "movement," that is, the re-ordering of philosophy, actually the founding of a new style of thinking, based on the scientific method. The philosophes claimed to have finally released philosophy from the naïve and arbitrary basis of faith or revealed truth and to have grounded it on the only foundation that made sense--empirical observation. For the enlightened philosophes, belief could only be based on what was observable and demonstrable. The question historians have not addressed, especially in terms of the legacy of this era, is that of analyzing the age in terms of its own claims, that is, were the philosophes faithful to their own prescriptions; were they in fact empiricists? This question is critical in analyzing the validity of "enlightened" philosophy, the philosophy modern societies of the West revere and of which they consider themselves the guardians. If the philosophes did establish their conclusions on questionable premises, if they were not empiricists, then their entire philosophy and its legacy becomes suspect. The case of David Hume and his philosophy well illustrates this defect in historical writings for he has been a problem for historians trying to fit him into a "unified" picture. He does not fit. The reason for this is that Hume remained faithful to the method--empiricism--and consequently, produced an "enlightened" view at variance with the accepted
interpretation of unity, but certainly more legitimate in view of the age's representation of itself. The question is an important one because a change in the interpretation of Hume's relationship with the Enlightenment would drastically alter the accepted views as to its legacy. Despite Hume's example, however, the emphasis of recent Enlightenment historiography has been unity and a legacy of liberal ideals.

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

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

Through the science, then, and especially the method of Newton, the philosophes hoped to destroy the illusions and false assumptions of previous philosophy in order to reveal the actual bases of knowledge which were considered
Thought or philosophy was not to be merely reflective, but contributive to the direction of life--a tool for action. Although mindful of the limitations of reason and the influence of the passions on human behavior, Cassirer determines the basic role of reason in the eighteenth century to be unification and defense against doubt. Regarding religion and morality, he reports an adherence to natural religion referring to eighteenth century critical literature as "striv[ing] for the freedom of an all-comprehensive, a truly universal awareness of God." The contract remained basic to political thinking but revised in terms of the prevalent scientific view, rather than accepted according to the ancient and medieval assumptions. Cassirer interprets most philosophes as viewing society as an "artificial body" through which "a new moral order and a new orientation of the political and social history of man" could be realized as knowledge advanced. Although characterized as scientific observers and analysts, Cassirer points out that the philosophes rarely took the step to "subjective idealism" even though relativism was a prevalent theme in science and literature. Cassirer's Enlightenment is one of conviction (although varied) and enthusiasm.

Lester Crocker in An Age of Crisis: Man and World in Eighteenth Century French Thought considers some of the "problems" of enlightened philosophy--evil, natural
goodness of man, perfectibility, etc. In reviewing these themes Crocker discusses the range of philosophes opinion from one extreme to another. He describes the "eighteenth century crisis" as "a thrashing around in concentric whirls" excusable as "true of any period of revolutionary change." He perceives the philosophes as unsure of their desired direction because of their limited perspective in the midst of the struggle. Nevertheless, under the surface

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

Overall, Crocker observes an era of "optimism and affirmation [regarding man] which rose from the discovery of the uniformity of natural laws"--the discovery, of course, made possible by the scientific-experimental method. The increasing "faith in [man's] malleability, and in the efficacy of social mechanisms and pressures" relied on the conviction that man could and would behave according to his own "enlightened self-interest." For Crocker, the "heart of the ethical problem of the eighteenth century: [was] the search for a basis for values." Crocker acknowledges the diversity in enlightened philosophy and does not hesitate to demonstrate and criticize
philosophe shortcomings in method or conclusion; he does not, however, dismiss the unity of the movement.

Dealing more with the politics and diplomacy of the age in *Kings and Philosophers 1689-1789*, Leonard Krieger is, nevertheless, not neglectful of the intellectual aspect of his study. He faults both philosophes and later historians for "distorting the movement," assigning it a congruity and "an exclusive cultural influence which it did not . . . possess." He observes that the philosophes were not of the speculative sort, not even in the interests of "logical consistency," but rather devoted to applied theory in the social and political arenas. But where others will not, Krieger does credit the "enlightened" thinkers with the title "philosopher" because of the questions they asked. Outlining two phases, Krieger traces the development of a "loose collection of like-minded individuals" united by their acknowledgement of "the common task of turning the philosophies of secular reason and natural science into a real cultural force." This early phase accepted the method of Newton and Locke, constructed an "intellectual framework" of nature on which new theories regarding man, society, and the world could be based, and began the "application of the new combination of practicality and rationality to particular events, works, and activities." By the mature Enlightenment, Krieger observes doctrines susceptible to organization
into "rigorous systems," but he absolves the philosophes from "total systems" on a par with Aquinas. Rather than considering d'Holbach and Condorcet, and Bentham, Rousseau, and Kant as "of the Enlightenment," he associates the radical attitudes of the former and the utilitarian-sentimentalist views of the latter with the Sturm und Drang movement, all intellectual movements that helped end the Enlightenment.

For Krieger, the philosophes' "flexible reasonableness" of the early days was betrayed in the long run by "intransigent rationalism."

Particularly attentive to the political legacy of the Enlightenment is Alfred Cobban's In Search of Humanity: The Role of the Enlightenment in Modern History. Acknowledging the difficulty of selecting what themes can be considered representative of the age, he notes the rise of modern science as "the most original, and . . . the most influential new intellectual development of the early modern period in Europe." The promotion of happiness was the aim of the Enlightenment and it was the social and political institutions which would achieve the goal. Cobban credits the Age of Reason with contributing most of our liberal ideals to intellectual history, absolving it of the responsibility for the modern nation-state with its total authority over individual rights, which he dates from the French Revolution. If the eighteenth century was an age of reason, Cobban sees the nineteenth as
reviving old faiths and initiating new ones. Regardless of interpretation, though, Cobban agrees with most other writers that "the Enlightenment is all of a piece and cannot be accepted or rejected in parts."

Continuing the quest for a unifying theme, other authors offer a variety of possibilities. Louis Bredvold portrays the philosophes as rejecting the traditional concept of the Law of Nature, that of ultimate right and justice pre-existent to any written law—an "ethical imperative," relying rather on a mechanistic, rational, and relative view of the universe for their program. Robert Anchor associates the progress of the era with the rise of the bourgeoisie marking the decline of the age with the triumph of that class. While proclaiming universal principles, the philosophes reflected the interests of "the most progressive social class"—their own, and herein Anchor finds the explanation for the contradictions in Enlightenment culture. It was not within the ideals themselves, "but between . . . [the] ideals and the specific aims of the class that represented them," that is, the rhetoric of the bourgeoisie provoked ideas and hopes beyond the limited goals of the bourgeois class. Ultimately, a fatalism pervading the era obstructed the formulation of a "theory of action" that would make the ideals reality.

Still other historians shy away from the term "Enlightenment" but discuss the "moment when the French
rationalist movement made its juncture with the English empirical-analytic movement."\textsuperscript{37} Different opinion observes the whole second half of the century drifting to the Romantic concept of nature and describes the subsequent era as the revolt of a child against its parent.\textsuperscript{38} Robert Ginsberg proposes that Enlightenment theories should be viewed as correctives to previous theories\textsuperscript{39} and not necessarily as a science or a new, more valid truth. For R. G. Collingwood, the Enlightenment was "essentially a polemical and negative movement, a crusade against religion," and Voltaire was most characteristic of it. It was based on the belief that the previously blind existence of man could be altered "into something rational."\textsuperscript{40} Frank Manuel perceives "a period when reason virtually replaced religion as the guiding principle in art, thought, and the governance of men."\textsuperscript{41} Among Enlightenment values Walter L. Dorn lists "the belief in the oneness of humanity, the rights of man, . . . respect for the human personality, . . . freedom and equality."\textsuperscript{42}

Among the most recognized Enlightenment historians and perhaps its greatest defender is Peter Gay. In his works Gay is most anxious to defend the unity of the movement and its unique character against all opponents. Unfortunately, in trying to cover all bases, he moves so totally to "middle ground" that he comes very close to undermining his own case and saying nothing at all. In his
The Party of Humanity: Essays in the French Enlightenment, Gay comments that the Enlightenment is blamed "for ideas it did not hold and for consequences it did not intend [or] produce." He states that he knows of "no area of historical study in which the gap between the scholar and the general public is as wide, and as fateful, as it is with the Enlightenment." For this he blames the consumers and producers of textbooks and yet in his own case the result is greater confusion rather than clarity. Gay's aim is to offset the general view of the *philosophes* as "naïve optimists, cold rationalists, abstract literary men, with a Utopian vision of the world and . . . no sense of ambiguity or tragedy whatever," with a portrait showing they "were often pessimists, usually empiricists, generally responsible hard-headed political men, with sensible programs, limited expectations, and a firm grasp of history." While this characterization is arguable among historians, Gay himself begins the attack. In his determination to demonstrate unity, Gay gathers all "Enlightenment" themes, ideas, and personalities into his thesis, while others may select what they consider "Enlightenment" material necessarily deleting the "oddball" phenomena from their characterization of the era. For instance, Gay will not "rob the French Enlightenment of Rousseau and Diderot by calling them pre-Romantics--a larcenous and unjust, . . . , proceeding," although it is difficult to fit either into his general description of a
philosophe mentioned above (their empiricism is particularly doubtful). The result in Gay's case, then, is the reduction of his analysis to a common denominator so general as to be meaningless, although it should be noted that neither Gay's nor the "selective" approach has produced satisfactory histories of the Enlightenment "movement."

In his final essay in the book, Gay defends the Enlightenment against several specific criticisms maintaining that our negative view of the era is the result of looking at it "through the eyes of the Romantic period." He claims the philosophes fought fanaticism "treat[ing] all positions as tentative--including their own," and insists the Enlightenment was not "impelled to extremes," that the French Terror was not the "culmination of the Revolution nor the ultimate consequence of the Enlightenment." Turning from defense to description, Gay employs "paradoxes because it is precisely the vision of ambiguity that has been denied the philosophes." The age was one of "aristocratic liberalism," "Epicurean Stoicism," and "passionate rationalism." It is such all-inclusive terminology that makes it difficult to grasp the unity Gay insists on, but insist he does:

The Enlightenment thinkers laid the foundations of present-day psychology, sociology, and other social sciences, of modern legal procedure and theories of punishment, of democratic theory and practice. They taught the values of a humane, pacific, tolerant civilization to which most of us still aspire.
Whereas Gay criticizes others for treating the exceptional as typical, he appears to be accepting every contribution from every "enlightened" individual and generalizing a character of the age.

There is noticeable, however, a change of attitude in Gay by the time he published his best-known work, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*. Perhaps he felt more pressured to defend the era, for although he accepts differences of opinion among *philosophes*, he is less inclined to accept an ambiguity in their philosophy. Although his evidence is no more convincing, Gay himself is more adamant regarding unity. In volume one of the study Gay comments on the temptation for many historians to give up "the search for a single Enlightenment" because of all the disputes and diversity within the age. Yielding to this temptation, however, would mean "fall[ing] into a despairing nominalism, reduc[ing] history to biography, and thus . . . sacrific[ing] unity to variety."54 Instead he writes of "a family of intellectuals united by a single style of thinking,"55 which prepared the way for construction through criticism. Interestingly, in this work Gay labels David Hume the "representative* philosophe* whereas in *The Party of Humanity* that distinction went to Voltaire. It should be remembered, however, that Gay is covering more territory in the later work and there are more phenomena to be assimilated into the unified picture.
In volume one Gay portrays the philosophes as modern pagans and the Enlightenment as an attempt to "assimilate" the two pasts: Christian and pagan. The Enlightenment was a movement of paganism against the Christian inheritance and yet it was "emancipated from classical thought as much as from Christian dogma" --the philosophical revolution that announced a new age. The program was "secularism, humanity, cosmopolitanism, and freedom." Distinguishing three generations of philosophes and observing a development from deism in the first half of the century to atheism and social utility in the second, Gay nevertheless perceives "a single army with a single banner" involving all shades of opinion in the ranks.

Having won their freedom from tradition and the Christian heritage, Gay suggests that the philosophes proceeded to exploit this liberty and thus Gay's theme in volume two which details a general description of the secular movement as discussed above. The same problems are apparent here, however, as Gay observes "the philosophes' political opinions ranging from the democratic radicalism of Rousseau to the relativism of Voltaire and the absolutism of Beccaria," yet he admits only to a legacy of liberal ideals from the era, criticizing histories that trace the roots of totalitarianism to the same age. He accepts terms such as "rational love"--"a sedate and fixed love, and not a sudden flash of passion which dazzles the understanding"--as
indicative of "an increased confidence in reason [leading] to increasing humanity," although such an effect is not necessarily assured and the term does not lend itself to clarification.62 Despite such defects, Peter Gay is recognized as one of the foremost authorities on the enlightened age and his defense of the unity and purpose of the movement has been accepted widely as answering all detractors.

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

[They] assert the existence of an eighteenth century philosophy which can be unified in a coherent picture and then claim that some major thinkers or currents of that period refuted and overcame the eighteenth century. What eighteenth century? one is tempted to ask.63

"Either there is a philosophy . . . and . . . the different currents" must fit in or there is not and "we must limit ourselves to a series of monographs."64 Dieckmann points out that the philosophes could contradict each other but they could not contradict eighteenth century philosophy since they constitute that philosophy.65 He sees Enlightenment study depicting the era more and more as "a prelude to Romanticism."66 Daniel Boorstin in his essay "History
Through Bifocal Glasses," makes an appeal for discerning the variety, diversity, and chaos of the eighteenth century rather than "homogeniz[ing]" an "eighteenth century mind." In response to Gay's suggestion that there was an Enlightenment movement, Boorstin questions the classification of philosophes as believers in progress and points out that each individual "route by which they arrived at these conclusions" could still separate them. Boorstin is sounding a warning about imposing consistency where none may exist, yet the general tendency in Enlightenment history is towards detecting and synthesizing a unity within the era.

Although opinion varies widely regarding the specifics and emphases of Enlightenment history, there are several themes on which historians observing an Enlightenment unity generally agree thus outlining an "accepted" opinion on the era. These themes include (1) reason and method, (2) religion, (3) optimism and progress, (4) reform, and (5) the secularization of human existence.

Reason is assuredly the concept most associated with the Enlightenment. Anchor states that the Enlightenment marked the "conception of reason as the great integrating force in human life, the faculty which enables man not only to understand the world, but also to change it in accordance with general human needs and aspirations." Cassirer refers to "the age which venerated reason and science as
man's highest faculty."\textsuperscript{70} Crocker recognizes reason and nature as "the guideposts of eighteenth century thought."\textsuperscript{71} Reason, applied to all aspects of human life and the natural world, would dispel ignorance and superstition, revealing the basic goodness of nature and the laws by which it was governed.\textsuperscript{72} Applied to human behavior, it could achieve the perfection of man;\textsuperscript{73} applied to government, it could "create a society of law and order, a smooth-running mechanism whose consistency and harmony would mirror the workings of the natural universe."\textsuperscript{74}

There was, however, method in the application. In fact, it was the use of the scientific method that supposedly distinguished eighteenth century reason from earlier rationalism. Franklin Baumer, observing the opinion of Ernst Troeltsch, comments that the Enlightenment was the hinge on which the European nations turned from the Middle Ages to "modern" times, marking the passage from a supernaturalistic-mythical-authoritative to a naturalistic-scientific-individualistic type of thinking.\textsuperscript{75} Cobban recognizes "historical and scientific empiricism" to be the "keynote" of the Enlightenment,\textsuperscript{76} while Hayden White believes that it was the French application of Newton and Locke to European society that "gave the distinctive form to the Enlightenment tradition as we know it."\textsuperscript{77} Method was crucial to enlightened philosophy, its very foundation, and it remains critical to the historical analysis and evaluation of that philosophy.
Disagreement among historians does arise over the depth of faith the philosophes placed in reason and nature. Some portray it as absolute; others present a wide range of qualifications challenging reason as king of the era, affixing certain limitations, and allowing a role for the passions of man. Nevertheless, reason and method occupy major positions in Enlightenment history in that it was recognized "that knowledge is superior to ignorance; that social problems can be solved only through reasonable action based on research and analysis." Lester Crocker perhaps best sums up an overview basing the thinking of most philosophes on two assumptions of the rationalist-empirical philosophy. Hans Morgenthau [observes] persist[ing] in our own age. One was the notion that the physical and social worlds are intelligible through the same processes; the other, that understanding in terms of these processes is all that is needed for control of these two worlds.

Regarding religion the Enlightenment is generally considered deist, that is, adherent to a religion of nature rather than of revealed truth, of a universal God who ruled through his own laws of nature, who "promulgated the moral law," and gave men the capacity to follow it without his intervention. Morals were of greater concern to deists than theology, "but they still believed that right conduct depended on right belief," therefore, a basic theology was maintained. The basic tenets of such were that man was not naturally depraved, that the object
of life was the good life on earth, that man could, "guided solely by the light of reason and experience" attain this objective, and that the first step involved freeing men from ignorance, superstition, and oppression. Some historians modify this characterization somewhat by pointing out those philosophes who turned to atheism and materialism. Cassirer declares the "fundamental feature" of the Enlightenment to be "obviously a critical and skeptical attitude toward religion." But since he constantly writes of doctrine and systems, it would seem that the philosophes were not skeptical regarding faith. As Crocker points out, "faith in an immutable moral order supported by the Divinity" persisted. Baumer maintains that "despite what is sometimes said," deism was the trend and it held on through the French Revolution. Generally, then, historical opinion accepts deism as characteristic of the eighteenth century.

Condorcet is generally held up as the best representative of Enlightenment optimism. He wrote in Progrès de l'esprit humain:

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

Historians, however, disagree as to whether optimism and the faith in progress are representative of the age.
Robert Heilbroner contends that "progress was . . . no longer a matter of hopefulness. It was a matter of predictable evolution." He offers a further example of Adam Smith's "invisible hand" as it "directed the mass of individuals to their posts--and, beyond this, directed the entirety of society toward its economic destiny" with everything progressing on an "upward gradient." Gay, however, defending the Enlightenment against charges of naïve optimism, declares Condorcet's optimism to really be "therapy" and the belief in the inevitability of progress as not a general feeling of the age. Nevertheless, he sees in the eighteenth century the first time in history when "confidence was the companion of realism." At the very least, historians portray the philosophes as believing in the possibility of progress, that men would slowly become more civilized because reason would spread. Most, however, would agree with Frank Manuel that, although it was sometimes shaken by misgivings, optimism "remained overwhelmingly the spirit of the age." All historians agree on the reforming inclination of the philosophes to construct a better, perhaps ideal, society. Regardless of disagreement among the philosophes concerning the basic goodness or evil of human nature, most all believed that changing society changed man. Therefore, the philosophes were most interested in
"education and legislation . . . the keys to the reform of society," and their "confidence in the power of conditioning processes increased" as the century progressed. Hence the intense interest in politics as a practical science directed "to provide intelligent, humane administration, and to discover forms of government that would establish, strengthen, and maintain rational institutions in a rational political atmosphere." It is this drive for reform that is most attractive to modern historians who discover here the seeds of modern liberal politics and "the political attitudes we Americans inherit first hand."

Finally, the secularization of human existence is also a theme which provokes virtually no disagreement among historians. Collingwood describes the Enlightenment as "that endeavour, so characteristic of the early eighteenth century, to secularize every department of human life and thought." Others recognize it as having "offered the first program in the history of mankind for the construction of a human community out of natural materials alone"--including morals. On this issue Carl Becker practically stands alone in denying the philosophes a secular philosophy and the criticism he has drawn because of his view is an indication of an "accepted" Enlightenment interpretation among historians. Robert Anchor briefly sums up this view in describing the aim of Diderot's Encyclopédie: "Its leading themes were the autonomy of
man, the secularization of knowledge and thought, the natural
goodness and perfectibility of human nature, and belief in
reason and experience, science, and progress." In this
era historians see the beginning of modern times and a
liberal heritage—the philosohes' "absolutes . . . free-
dom, tolerance, reason, and humanity."100

The most profound theme in Enlightenment history is
that of its legacy. All historians deal with it, although
disagreement among them on the topic is as apparent as
that concerning the "unity" question. If a primary objec-
tive of historical writing is to explain the circumstances
of the contemporary world, then the question of legacy
assumes a magnified importance. Historians generally treat
the question in terms of the success or failure of the
Enlightenment, but the answer rests on the interpretation
of the era as liberal or authoritarian, secular or spiri-
tual. It has been demonstrated that the preponderance of
opinion sides with the liberal characterization. Writers
of this persuasion, then, explain the "crisis" of modern
society in terms of our forgetting the essential inheri-
tance of the Enlightenment,101 that we have failed the
Enlightenment, not it us.102 Their prescription for
modern malaise, then, is a return to "the humane aims and
the critical methods of the Enlightenment";103 social
morality can be stimulated only "from developments of
the ethical judgment, such as took place in the
Enlightenment." Both Krieger and Cobban are aware of the negative aspects of the modern nation-state, but they do not assign responsibility for the situation to the Age of Reason. Whereas authors such as J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, locate the roots of authoritarian government in this era, Krieger sees a "successor movement"—a "new rationalism" as "re-convert[ing] the Enlightenment's] delicate 'systematic spirit' into the rigid 'spirit of systems.'" Cobban actually refutes Talmon, observing that his research is based on too narrow a selection of *philosophe* works; for Cobban modern totalitarianism cannot be attributed to the Enlightenment whose liberal ideals have survived so well in twentieth century Western Europe.

The historian that has caused the greatest furor in Enlightenment debate is Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*, and it is especially this question of the liberal or authoritarian legacy that his thesis dramatically affects. Becker profoundly shook the traditional Enlightenment interpretation and seems to have initiated a "movement" of sorts away from it. At least this is what recent works imply in their efforts to restore or vindicate the traditional viewpoint.

In his little history Becker undermines the Enlightenment's claim to modernity by maintaining the great similarity between the Ages of Faith and Reason. For
Becker, "the underlying preconceptions of eighteenth-century thought were still, . . . essentially the same as those of the thirteenth century." He proposes that "there is more of Christian philosophy in the writings of the Philosophes than has yet been dreamt of in our histories."¹⁰⁷ Both ages held that beliefs could be reasonably demonstrated and in contrast to the traditional characterization of the philosophes as skeptics or atheists "addicted to science and the scientific method, . . . defenders of liberty, equality, freedom of speech,"¹⁰⁸ Becker portrays men who maintained a Deity and ridiculed the creation story, while adhering to the idea of a perfect machine universe set in motion by the Supreme Being, rejected traditional authority while clinging to new ones—reason and nature, denied miracles but accepted the concept of the perfectibility of man, and denied immortality but longed for it in posterity's esteem.¹⁰⁹ Describing the dogmas and rites of the French Revolution, the saints and martyrs to liberty, and the mystical faith in humanity, Becker makes an excellent case for an eighteenth century religious fervor minus only the old religion.

One of Becker's most telling points concerning the philosophes is their missionary attitude. Even his critics, especially Peter Gay, often use terms like "faith," "zeal," and "mission" in referring to the philosophes' character.
Crane Brinton follows Becker in pointing out

that the doctrine of progress in no more than a modern eschatology . . . [Progress was considered] in terms close to those of Christian, Greek, and later Hebraic ethics, of peace on earth to men of good will, of the absence of all the traditional vices, of the presence of the traditional virtues. 110

Brinton comments that "the temper of the eighteenth century is not skeptical. It is anticlerical, positivist, at its extremes materialist. But the philosophes, if they disbelieved in traditional Christianity, believed in their own brave new world."111 Where the Christian saw original sin, the enlightened thinker of the eighteenth century saw "ignorance, faulty education, poverty, privilege, [and] bad social environment," yet "a serious moral and intellectual effort" could bring man to the good available in the universal design. Brinton perceives both as reforming faiths with essentially the same ends.112

Such support for Becker is not widespread, however; his critics are assuredly numerous, a few even considering Becker's book dangerous.113 Many object to his description of the accepted view of the philosophes as not cognizant of greater variety in philosophic opinion and theory. More, however, object to his association of Christianity with the philosophic creed, for "ultimately the Enlightenment was nothing if not secular in its orientation."114 Herein lies the major question raised by Becker's book. Was the
Enlightenment secular? or rather, how secular can a missionary be?

Becker clearly demonstrates that the philosophes were believers. With self-righteous conviction they adhered to tenets impossible to demonstrate. A secular philosophy would be demonstrable and accessible to all men's understanding through experience, but concepts such as the Law of Nature, inevitable progress, a "clockmaker" God, and an "invisible hand" are intangibles requiring belief before observation.

It is upon this question of secularization that the legacy debate turns. The philosophes were not skeptics, nor for the most part were they empiricists. They were, however, (certainly in their own minds) right in their conviction. Therefore, an authoritarian legacy should be at least as probable, if not moreso, as a liberal one. The fact that most historians reject this conclusion suggests a misinterpretation of the Enlightenment. They have missed Becker's basic point that just because the philosophes rejected the Church this did not mean they rejected spiritual, i.e., beyond experience, concepts or truths. Historians have not held the philosophes accountable to the philosophes' own philosophical standards, primarily the empirical method. Because of this, Enlightenment historians have overlooked or ignored important historical implications for the modern world.
It is interesting to note, then, that the philosophe who actually was a skeptic and an ardently consistent empiricist has been something of a problem for historians in that he cannot be satisfactorily fitted into the prevailing Enlightenment characterization. David Hume was the philosopher most faithful to the philosophes' standards for proper philosophy, therefore, the problem of placing Hume in Enlightenment interpretations suggests conclusions much more profound than his being the exception that proves the rule.

The Problem of David Hume

Placing David Hume in the accepted historical context of the Enlightenment has been an extremely difficult task for historians. In fact, most of the studies done on Hume have been conducted by philosophers rather than historians, but their writing, too, demonstrates a perplexity of sorts. V. C. Chappell believes that even today Hume's philosophy is "more studied than accepted by contemporary thinkers" and that a revival of interest in Hume's work has only arisen since 1930 with the growth of the "Analytic Philosophy in Britain and America," a philosophy conceived not as "a set of doctrines" but rather as "an attitude of mind, a philosophical spirit or temper," exhibiting "the same modesty regarding the power of philosophy itself" as Hume maintained.115 Roland Hall suggests the most striking
aspect of Hume studies to be "the extent of disagreement," pointing out that Hume has had practically no influence on the great British thinkers of this century. Hume's best and most admiring biographer, Ernest C. Mossner, refers to "the essential paradox and perpetual enigma of [Hume's] character." It may well be that this perplexity concerning Hume among philosophers is a result of the historical misinterpretation of the Enlightenment and Hume's role in it. Most historians admit difficulty in interpreting this role of the man Baumer refers to as "alternately friend and foe of the Enlightenment," but most, nevertheless, include him as an integral part of the "enlightened" phenomena. Generally, Hume is characterized as "the philosopher, par excellence, of the Enlightenment," and the qualifications accompanying the title are extensive to say the least. Some include him in the Enlightenment on the basis of his lifestyle (if not his philosophy), while others consider him far too much in advance of his age to be the "best spokesman" for it. A few writers are more candid in admitting Hume's digression from the mainstream, depicting him as the "worm in the bud" of the Enlightenment and the man that "restore[d] custom and instinctive belief to the dominant position which they had occupied in the Age of Faith." However, even when stating that Hume "undermined the foundations on which the eighteenth century had built its view of the world,"
the same historian can refer to Hume as "a by-path . . . to the main highway of the Enlightenment." "By-path" hardly seems consonant with the picture evoked by "under-mining the foundation." If the "philosopher, par excellence" of an age overturns the basis for that age's philosophy or truth, it would seem that a re-evaluation of Enlightenment philosophy is crucial to an understanding of the age. It is precisely this re-evaluation that historians have failed to undertake.

Among his contemporaries, historians view Hume as widely and sincerely admired as a great thinker, but little, if at all, understood. Gay calls him "a favorite uncle in the philosophic family," an honored and certainly unthreatening position. Among the philosophes themselves, Rousseau remained somewhat hesitant regarding Hume for he was suspicious of philosophers, but Voltaire and Diderot held him in high regard though they had read little (Rousseau--none) of his works. From his point of view, Hume "held no high opinion of [Voltaire] as a philosopher, and had some occasional qualms about his satiric wit," and although he could not appreciate the writings of Rousseau and Helvétius, he could and did appreciate them as men. But with regard to his philosophy, Hume's most precious offering to the supposedly "enlightened" community, Hume was sorely disappointed.
Clamoring over his History of England and Essays, "the Age of Enlightenment . . . remained unreceptive to his philosophy." His epistemology was largely ignored and occasionally condemned by the more orthodox journals, which "ridiculed [him] as just another advocate of incredulity whose only purpose in writing was to dazzle and mislead the right-thinking reader with his miserable jargon and complicated absurdities." The Encyclopédie made several references to Hume's political and historical work but did not suggest "that Hume had even written on epistemology." Historians seem to believe that there were no philosophers of the day capable of dealing with Hume's thought as presented in his Treatise on Human Understanding and, therefore, Hume "failed to make his place in his times." There is no valid reason, however, for historians to overlook Hume's intellectual contribution to an age revered for its reason and its application of this critical faculty to man and nature. Cassirer, in discussing the eighteenth century concept of thought, pauses to comment "except for Hume's skepticism which offers an entirely different approach," and then proceeds having thus recognized and disposed of Hume. Hume cannot be dismissed so easily. If he is a great philosopher of the age, his thinking cannot be irrelevant, incidental, or destructive of the "recognized" Enlightenment philosophy.
Nevertheless, the disagreement or confusion regarding Hume mirrors that concerning the question of Enlightenment unity with each historian trying to find a way to fit Hume into their specific model with generally unconvincing results. Gay sees Hume as "concerned with the logic of belief and with its causes rather than with its consequences."¹³³ Others view him as primarily a moralist and agree with Norman Kemp Smith that Book I of the Treatise was written after Books II and III, and therefore Hume's epistemology was devised as a support for his thinking on morality.¹³⁴ There is much debate as to his greatest work or contribution. Although Hume himself repudiated his Treatise, modern historians often analyze its relation to the Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, observing the difference as merely one of emphasis and persuasion regarding the same ideas,¹³⁵ and the Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals distinguishing the former as representing Hume the philosopher and the latter, Hume the man.¹³⁶ L. S. Betty sees in Book I of the Treatise a presentation of what Hume thought, not what he believed, perceiving Hume to be more pietist than empiricist.¹³⁷ Philosophers and historians alike look to Hume as the model of empiricism during the age and yet Bronowski and Mazlish credit Adam Smith with establishing the empirical tradition in its modern form without even mentioning Hume.¹³⁸ Becker sees Hume's empiricism as an enthusiastic
aversion to enthusiasm and therefore fits Hume into his picture of the "enlightened" crusade. Hume's philosophy has been compared with that of St. John of the Cross as well as Buddha, revealing some interesting although limited similarities. The problem for all these approaches is that Hume's philosophy does not fit the "accepted" characterization of the Enlightenment, but his intellect and stature urge historians to incorporate him somehow into their interpretations of the era so as to enhance the Enlightenment's character.

One historian who has tried to deal with Hume in terms of his opposition to the Enlightenment is Robert Ginsberg. In his article "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," he analyzes several ways in which Hume fundamentally disagreed with his age. Regarding reason, Hume had little faith in this highly touted faculty of man, especially as it affected man's behavior. For him, man acted on the basis of custom and belief; reason always remained subject to the passions. As to religion, Hume certainly undermined miracles as reasonable evidence of truth but unfortunately for deists, his philosophy devastated the "design" argument for God's existence and the basis of ordered nature. In politics, he overturned the contract theory and prescribed no reform program for states or societies. Unable to "discover" a foundation for morality which revealed the "right" behavior to endorse or compel, Hume could not join the ranks of
convinced reformers. He was, however, the best "secular" philosopher of the age. Having reviewed these differences, Ginsberg proposes three possibilities regarding Hume's role: (1) that he "toppled the Enlightenment philosophy; [2] that he salvaged it; [and 3] that he failed to understand it." Then, presumably taking a safer middle road, Ginsberg comments that viewing the Enlightenment from a different angle can exhibit Hume "to be more of a fellow-worker in it than one working against its grain," and that Hume may have missed a "greater vitality in the Enlightenment view of reason" which might place Kant's pure reason "at the centre of the genuine Enlightenment." Finally, Ginsberg states that the objective of his study is not to ascertain a winner in the conflict between Hume and his age but rather to demonstrate that all three of the stated possibilities are true—a rather disappointing finish for a stimulating article. One other point of interest is raised by Ginsberg. He observes that "much of our evaluation of Hume's contribution seems to turn on the limitations of his temperament. The relationship between his thinking and his life requires special attention." Whatever Hume's lifestyle (and it consistently supported his philosophy), it is Hume's method that is most revealing concerning the validity of his thinking and the place of his philosophy in the eighteenth and later centuries--Hume's method and conclusions compared to the method and conclusions of the
other great philosophes. Hume's conclusions differed from those of the other philosophes and this is because his method differed. He was a consistent and competent empiricist while the others were not. Hume actually did what the philosophes claimed to be doing; he constructed a world view based solely on experience.

It is Hume's skepticism, however, that constitutes the greatest difficulty for Enlightenment historians. Most recognize him as such but few accept him on these terms. T. E. Jessop comments that as an undergraduate, he was "required to read Hume in order to refute him," and that the controversy regarding Hume concerns not "what he meant" as much as "whether his meaning should be accepted or rejected." As late as 1933 Hume's arguments were not taken seriously at Oxford where "they were dismissed as . . . mere extravagances of scepticism, with implications which no one could seriously accept." Hume's contemporaries were also shocked by his skepticism--including the philosophic community, but as Constance Maund observes, even today Hume's admirers often apologize for his skeptical inclinations. They emphasize his "mitigated skepticism" and the effect is something like trying to save Hume from himself, which is certainly not demonstrative of good history. Becker depicts Hume as "soft-peddling" his skepticism so as to avoid censure, cultivate popular admiration, and promote his desire "to set things
Although recognizing a distinction between Hume and the other philosophes, Becker sees him as a "closet" skeptic unwilling to jeopardize the esteem of the populace for his virtue by being "a destroyer of illusions." Even philosophers are troubled by Hume the skeptic; progressive empiricists have "little left . . . on which to base their world-theory syntheses" after Hume exposes the unreliability of our senses and the lack of necessary relation of cause and effect (see Chapter III).

As one might expect, Peter Gay has great difficulty in dealing with Hume. Gay necessarily admires Hume's intellectual gifts and his personable character and making Hume part of the Enlightenment spirit and legacy reinforces Gay's positive approach to the age. He admits that Hume has an "elusive place" among the philosophes, being isolated by his "good humor," but insists that he belongs among them on the basis of "his intellectual pedigree, . . . his intentions, and . . . his . . . world view." Gay designates Hume as the most representative philosophe because he was "the purest, most modern specimen of the little flock." Such comment suggests that the other philosophes fell short of the mark in some way and that perhaps their philosophy is not whole or at least not as well-founded as Hume's. One would at the very least expect some specific analysis of the philosophy of the "purest specimen." But Gay primarily discusses Hume's opinion on
religion, not his epistemology or conclusions on morality, as it is this work of Hume's that best complements Gay's characterization of the philosophes as modern pagans. It is therefore not surprising that Gay describes Hume's as "an ambiguous legacy."154 Having commented that Hume was indifferent to the reforming drive of the other philosophes, he nevertheless insists that Hume's political thought was "explicitly designed . . . as a possible basis for future large-scale reform. If he was not a radical, he was not a conservative either; Hume was as skeptical of immobility as he was of revolution."155 Admitting having achieved "nothing better than a plausible caricature" of Hume, Gay persists that he "was deeply engaged with the world around him; . . . [but that] he had, . . . , fewer illusions and needed fewer fictions than the rest of the philosophic flock."156 Again, there is the implication that the philosophy of the philosophes was lacking—not consistent with their claim to dispel illusion and superstition (fiction) by the application of reason through the scientific method. Gay's comment that Hume shared the aims of liberalism but not their method157 raises the major point of this inquiry, that because the philosophes were not consistent in their claims of empiricism relevant to their conclusions, their philosophy is suspect as a reasonable and secular view of human existence.

Most historians do consider Hume the best philosopher of the age and although they and philosophers alike have
analyzed, argued, or abandoned Hume (often taking refuge in Kant), his philosophy has survived and maintained some validity as evidenced by the persistence of debate. Bertrand Russell, perceiving Hume to be a "dead end" beyond which it is impossible to go, comments that refuting Hume has been "a favourite pastime among metaphysicians. For my part, I find none of their refutations convincing." Frederick Copleston explains Hume's doubts regarding the existence of "spiritual substance" by the fact that he has remained at the "'surface' of the self," that is, the more Hume adopted the attitude of a spectator the more forceful his doubt became. Here one can see the basis of Hume's philosophy--observation, and why he is different from the rest of the philosophes. The reason Alfred Cobban includes Hume and his Treatise "in the main stream of the Enlightenment" is the book's subtitle, "Being an attempt to introduce the experimental method into Moral Subjects." It is apparent, then, that the experimental method is fundamental to the character of Enlightenment thought and Hume is the best, if not the only, example of the consistent and objective (spectator) application of this tool. The enlightened age proclaimed its emancipation from superstition and "revealed" truth, declaring empirical observation and reasoned analysis of it to be the only true foundation of truth or harmony. Hume took the declaration to heart and
found himself ignored or misunderstood. He found that
the dogmatism of the "empirical" philosophes
extended into metaphysics, economics, and related
social subjects. Although Newton and Locke were
the great names among them, that of Descartes was
by no means dead. Consequently, their variety of
empiricism was tinged with a metaphysical necessi-
tarianism which was repugnant to Hume's way of
thinking.162

The question of the unity (if unity there be) and
legacy of the Enlightenment might be clarified by assessing
the validity of Enlightenment philosophy in terms of its
claims to be reasonable and demonstrable. David Hume
makes an excellent standard of judgment. Considering
the Enlightenment claims of a new mode of thinking based
on reason and empirical observation, Hume is irrefutably
the best example of an enlightened thinker and his philos-
ophy must be considered the most "legitimate" of the age.
If Enlightenment philosophy is conclusions reached through
observation and experience, then Hume's is "Enlightenment"
philosophy and, therefore, the prevailing historical char-
acterization of the era is wrong. The themes discussed
above are not representative of the enlightened philosophy
and a certain degree of illiberal narrow-mindedness, if
not hypocrisy, must be acknowledged in our Enlightenment
heroes—the philosophes. If on the other hand, historians
are content not to question the conclusions of the philos-
ophes in terms of their method and claims, then Hume is an
aberration in the historical phenomena and Becker is, for
the most part, correct—the Enlightenment was not an era of reasonable, critical evaluation, but rather, yet another age of faith, fanaticism, and authoritarian doctrines, for the philosophes had no better foundation for their truth than did the Church they brought down.

The importance of the scientific or experimental method in providing the basis or departure point for Enlightenment thought singles out Hume, with his contrary opinions (and his isolated position), because he made consistent use of the method whereas the others did not. Consequently, he has been described as the greatest moralist among British philosophers, the most subtle and the most profound: . . . he defined one consistent, and within its own terms, irrefutable, attitude to politics, to the problem of society, to religion; an attitude which is supremely confident and clear, that of the perfect secular mind, which can accept, and submit itself to, the natural order, the facts of human nature, without anxiety, and therefore, without a demand for ultimate solutions, for a guarantee that justice is somehow built into the nature of things.163

If Hume's conclusions are representative of "enlightened" thinking, then there is no "unity" in the Enlightenment "movement," and the "accepted" Enlightenment characterization must be discarded. If Hume is ignored then a redefinition of Enlightenment unity is still in order as the philosophes cannot be credited as secular philosophers; they are Becker's believers.
One other conclusion will follow from those above-mentioned. Modern society, thanks to historians and their interpretations of history, considers itself the progeny of the Enlightenment. We see in ourselves the spirit of that age in terms of what historians have told us about it. "We have not renounced its ideals or its methods which demand a rational empirical study of experience. . . . "\textsuperscript{164} If Hume's philosophy including his skepticism were presented as representative of an "enlightened" mind, the contradictions of the modern world would be more apparent to us. Hume himself realized that if his principles were accepted they would alter philosophy,\textsuperscript{165} that is, the way we think about ourselves and the world around us. We might realize that although we believe ourselves to be clear-headed, objective thinkers who rationally evaluate a situation and make a decision, we more often act on the basis of habit or unreasoning passion; that although we believe in the essential goodness of man and the efficacy of reform, our prison system is not organized on the basis of rehabilitation, while our schools are organized more along lines of indoctrination rather than education; that although we claim to honor individualism, we ostracize the "oddball" and ultimately subject all individual "rights" to the needs of the state; that although we claim to be objective and fair observers of different viewpoints, we cling to our "democratic" faith with an authoritarian righteousness
equal to that of any of the "oppressive" ideologies of the Eastern hemisphere. Like the philosophes modern man is a believer, not a skeptic, not even an objective observer. But if any philosophes had something to teach man about himself or his society, it was David Hume.
NOTES

1 As expressed by Crane Brinton, the great minds of the eighteenth century "put the last touches on our intellectual inheritance, . . . [and] gave our Western culture its characteristic modern form or, . . . formlessness." Brinton, however, disassociates Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Kant from the "extreme form" of the "new world-view of the Enlightenment." Crane Brinton, The Shaping of Modern Thought (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 108-109.


9 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 147.


11 Ibid., p. vii.

12 Ibid., p. 234.

13 Ibid., p. viii.

14 Ibid., p. 166.

15 Ibid., pp. 19-20, 214.

16 Ibid., p. 117.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. 457.

20 Ibid., p. 253.

21 Ibid., p. 100.


23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., pp. 153-155.

25 Ibid., p. 158.

26 Ibid., pp. 184, 179.


29 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 29.


31 Ibid., pp. 189-190, 221.

32 Ibid., p. 228.

Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 8.

Ibid., p. x.

Ibid., p. 12.


Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 130, 112.


Ibid.

Ibid., pp. 262-263.

Ibid., p. 116.

Gay does, however, distance the Marquis de Sade from the mainstream of the era calling him "not an heir but a caricature of the philosophes." Ibid., p. 285. His purpose here is mainly to refute Crocker's representation of Sade as a logical extreme of enlightened thinking, but it is not at all clear just what Gay means by his distinction.

Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:x.


Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:32.


70 Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. xi.

71 Crocker, *Age of Crisis*, p. xvi.

72 "The philosophes made the claim that the world of men and their ways could be subjected to Cartesian reason and be made to produce 'laws' as clear as those of geometry. These would be 'natural laws,' evident to all men of common sense." Bronowski and Mazlish, *Western Intellectual Tradition*, p. 255.


77 Hayden V. White, Introduction to *Enlightenment Tradition*, by Robert Anchor, pp. xiv-xv.

78 Gay, *Party of Humanity*, pp. 269-270. Gay in his role of champion defender of a unified Enlightenment movement is quite sensitive to criticism of the philosophes regarding their naïve belief in the power of reason and hence their narrow-minded perception of the human psyche. Gay, therefore, offers examples of the philosophes ascertaining reason's limitations or affirming the influence of the passions. His Age of Reason is really "a Revolt against Rationalism." Nevertheless, he still has difficulty including Hume, who placed devastating limitations on reason, in his Enlightenment picture.

79 Ibid.


82 Becker, *Heavenly City*, pp. 102-103.


84 Crocker, *Age of Crisis*, p. 449.


87 Ibid., pp. 33, 32.


91 Manuel, *Age of Reason*, p. 35. Crane Brinton observes the belief that man could achieve on earth "a state of perfection hitherto in the West thought to be possible only for Christians in a state of grace, and for them only after death." *Shaping of Modern Thought*, p. 109.

92 Brinton maintains that "the 'average' enlightened person" believed that man was innately good and social institutions were corruptive of this innocence. However, he excludes Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau from this "average" characterization again raising the question of who is representative of the age or is there an "age" to represent. *Shaping of Modern Thought*, p. 121.

93 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 126.


101 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 245.


108 Ibid., p. 29.

109 Ibid., pp. 29-31, 154-158.


111 Ibid., p. 133. Brinton offers an interesting comparison of Adam Smith with Thomas Aquinas. Both believed in a just price, a natural order that stood behind the apparent chaos of existence, and "a healing force in nature." Both considered monopoly unnatural. Ibid., pp. 135-136.

112 Ibid., p. 137.


119 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 133.

120 Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 601.

121 Mossner, quoted in *Present-Day Relevance*, ed. McCutcheon, p. 45.


124 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, pp. 216, 139.


127 Ibid., pp. 511, 480.

128 Ibid., p. 4.


130 Ibid., p. 216.

131 Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 600.


137 Ibid.


Ibid., p. 648.
Ibid.
Ibid., p. 602.
Hampshire, "Hume's Place in Philosophy," in David Hume, ed. Pears, pp. 3-4.
Ibid., pp. 77-78.
Philip A. Moritz, "Is Hume the End?," The Philosophical Journal 8 (July 1971):123.
Ibid., p. 418.
Ibid., p. 412.
Ibid., 2:455.
Ibid., p. 453.
Ibid., p. 455.
Bronowski and Mazlish point out that Hume's argument regarding cause and effect is "relevant to the pattern of events in quantum physics." Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 475.
Quoted in Moritz, "Is Hume the End?," p. 122.
Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 133.
Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 486.
Walter L. Dorn, "Does the US Still Need the Eighteenth Century?," in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 32.

Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 112.
CHAPTER II

METHOD: THE ESSENCE OF ENLIGHTENED PHILOSOPHY

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

The classical ideal of immutability was dethroned and an age in which change was no longer equated with degeneration was inaugurated. The result was not anarchy but a new kind of order and a more comprehensive one, because it formalized empirical data in terms of abstract laws of nature, which could in turn be tested by specific observation or experiment.¹
Here is the departure point of the enlightened age from the Age of Faith—"the combination of conceptualization and experiment, . . . , of mathematical theory and empirical observation"; Bacon's insistence that observable facts should never be ignored or altered to fit the theory.²

Historically, the most generally acclaimed exponents or "patron saints"³ of this new attitude have been Newton and Locke. G. R. Cragg, in Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century, credits them with "shaping the legacy" that the seventeenth century gave the eighteenth⁴ and few, if any, scholars would raise historical objections to this opinion. The work and writings of these giants dispelled the mystery from both the external universe and an internal one, and the reason their conclusions or theories precipitated such favorable response was the appeal of their reasoning process—the scientific method. Newton's distinctive contribution "was the decisive role he attributed to specific phenomena as the basis of knowledge; to observation, analysis, and experiment as the means of processing them; and to the descriptive nature of all general laws."⁵ Similarly, Locke located the origin of ideas "in specific perceptions of external objects";⁶ thinking itself was based on observation and experience. Newton's universe was mathematically understandable, testable, even predictable; his cosmology announced a new age.⁷
Historians have based this image of Newton as the guru of the Enlightenment on the enthusiasm of the philosophes themselves. Peter Gay notes Voltaire's reference to Newton as one of the greatest men that ever lived and quotes David Hume: "In Newton this island may boast of having produced the greatest and rarest genius that ever rose for the ornament and instruction of the species." Describing Newton as "divine" and "'immortal' became practically compulsory." Kant displayed his great esteem for Rousseau by dubbing him the "Newton of the moral world." Newton's empiricism and methodical investigation delighted and "converted" the eighteenth century philosopher. As Ernst Cassirer comments: "Thanks to Newton, [the Enlightenment] believed it stood finally on firm ground which could never again be shaken by any future revolution of natural sciences,"--or, he might have added, any challenge from religion, revelation, or unproven custom. These errors could now be avoided because of "the Newtonian art of measurement, the infallible bridle of the imagination." Newton seemed to have explained all the natural world through empirical observation and the reasoned analysis thereof; men now turned from "the transcendental . . . to the visible and concrete." If the truth set men free, science, as the only reliable road to it, became the means of liberation.

The development of the new era, however, faced major obstacles in the way of tradition, superstition, and
ignorance. Convinced "that mankind had been corrupted and betrayed by false doctrines,"14 the philosophes envisioned their mission to be one of refuting superstition and illuminating ignorance. This meant discrediting the customs and institutions that perpetuated these evils. Foremost among these was religion, especially that institutionalized in the Catholic church, and historians, particularly Peter Gay, widely recognize the campaign against l'infame and unreasoned belief as "an essential element in the Enlightenment."15 Religion was attacked not only as obstructive to progress, but also as having failed to justify "a genuine morality and a just social and political order."16 All the essential attributes of Christianity—dogma, enthusiasm, blind, naïve faith, and revelation—were declared anathema and the prophets of enlightenment delighted in the task of dismantling this bastion of oppression.17 Their attack was often devastating and if the philosophes perceived (or accomplished) greater advances against the enemy than previous assailants had, it was due to their new weapon—the scientific method. "Science,. . . , was steadfastly undermining the Christian view of the world," and the biblical and theological authority from which Christian apologists argued was, as a result, unacceptable.18 Christian "truth" and "tradition" were effectively discredited (certainly in Voltaire's case), ridiculed, and called to justification through the reasoned
logic of the empirical method. Voltaire, wishing to refute the Christian view of history, compared Chinese to Jewish history declaring the former superior, since it did not depend on absurd fables or make outrageous claims. In order to undermine biblical assertions, he attacked their validity through historical criticism. Hume attacked scholasticism as "false philosophy" and "spurious erudition," its chief failing being the contemplation of questions beyond man's understanding and its refusal to apply intellectual faculties to useful endeavors. In other words, Christian philosophy (and history) was not creditable because it dealt with concepts beyond human experience, ideas or events that could not be observed and reasonably analyzed through man's natural faculties. Scholasticism transcended man's nature and was, therefore, useless to him. Consistent and proper use of the method—empiricism and analysis—could expose the falsehood of Christian belief and prevent such misdirection of philosophy in the future.

Overall, the accepted historical view of this question is that the philosophes worked "to unmask Christianity, . . . contrast the virtues of common sense with the vices of enthusiasm and superstition, and construct a naturalistic philosophy based on recognition of the eternal laws of nature." The method, then, was not merely the means to dispel the illusions of Christian superstition and
oppression, but also, and more importantly, the means to reveal the truth which Christianity had perverted. Newton's science suggested exhilarating possibilities to the philosophes, for such informed minds were "not long in seeing the resemblance between a physical universe of interacting particles and a social universe of interacting human beings." 23 Although Newton and Locke were more reserved in their prognostications than their followers, their work, nevertheless, implied, if not suggested, the method's potential in fields other than science. G. R. Cragg comments that they did indeed consider the implications of their ideas regarding religious and moral themes and "this set the pattern for the coming century." 24 He points out that in Optiks, for instance, Newton speculated "that the methods used in natural philosophy, if wisely applied, might greatly extend the bounds of moral philosophy." 25 Such a nod from the revered leader set the philosophes off and running. Science was to be applied to man himself; all aspects of human nature and society were to be scrutinized and ordered into "law" as had Newton's universe.

The belief that an irrefutable geometry of morals and politics was about to be written was the first article in the new creed. As it was commonly expressed at the time, what the world awaited was the Newton of the science of ethics and human society. 26
It is important to emphasize the point that, even in their attacks against religion, the philosophes were not challenging or denying the existence of truth; they were denying, rather, religion's claim to it, the church's rationale for its truth. Voltaire asserted that Newton's system never denied God and that a "stable, lawful universe" was "the only basis for true natural religion." Diderot's purpose in his Encyclopédie was to change "by education and propaganda the common way of thinking about religion and the Church" and to promote the moral philosophy he "considered superior to that of Christianity." Undermining the authority of revelation and religion required a new basis for truth, a new foundation that would point up the greater validity of the philosophes' philosophy. Religious belief could not be "proven" in terms of man's reason and must, therefore, be suspect as the repository of truth, whereas enlightened philosophy, based on empirical observation, could be validated by every individual's common human faculties, and for this reason was more legitimate. If one was not talking empirical facts, one was talking faith and the philosophes rejected faith as a proper foundation for belief. Method, then,--the collection and analysis of empirical data--was the basis of the eighteenth century's destructive and constructive objectives; it constituted the foundation of the enlightened truth.
The question of method, then, is crucial to any study of the Enlightenment's character and historians generally have recognized its importance regarding enlightened thought. Ernst Cassirer, again, seems to have established the accepted historical attitude on the method with his contention that enlightened philosophy broke through the barriers of "systems" by advocating and utilizing a new procedure for revealing the natural law, that would "not project our own ideas and subjective imaginings into nature; [but] rather follow nature's own course and determine it by observation and experiment, by measurement and calculation."\(^{29}\) He further signifies the importance of the method by relating its function in realizing the goals of the Enlightenment.

In the progress of natural science and the various phases it has gone through, the philosophy of the Enlightenment believes it can, as it were, tangibly grasp its ideal. For here it can follow step by step the triumphal march of the modern analytical spirit. It had been this spirit that in the course of barely a century and a half had conquered all reality, and that now seemed finally to have accomplished its great task of reducing the multiplicity of natural phenomena to a single universal rule. And this cosmological formula, as contained in Newton's general law of attraction was not found by accident, nor as the result of sporadic experimentation; its discovery shows the rigorous application of the scientific method.\(^{30}\)

Frank Manuel discusses not only the effectiveness of the method as a weapon against the church because of its consistency in the face of biblical contradictions,\(^{31}\) but
also emphasizes its positive appeal for the philosophes. "The new science gave men a sense of security and finitude because it seemed to produce incontrovertible propositions which would stand impregnable for all time." So secure were the philosophes in the validity of the method, they discounted anything "which could not be examined for truth or falsehood by experience. For them the only kind of reality was objective and scientific, the only phenomena allowable those which could be apprehended by the senses." Emphasizing the philosophes' reaction against religion, G. R. Cragg points out the change in attitude at the end of the seventeenth century from deducing arguments to observing facts, designating experimentation to be the "key which unlocks the mysteries of nature." Commenting on the assault on belief, he describes the philosophes' basis for truth, and therefore faith, to be vindication "at the bar of reason" pointing out, consequently, that "if it cannot be demonstrated, it cannot be true." Other authors discuss the importance of the method in terms of the philosophes' social objectives. Lester Crocker describes the drive of the philosophes "to apply the empirical method to ethics, and to find a way in which they could live without illusion, and yet live as moral beings." He notes their conviction that "rational law" had to be ascertained through observation and experiment and that any resultant discoveries, such as the law
of cause and effect, could be significant in the realm of human affairs. Similarly, Louis Bredvold analyzes the social and ethical impact of the method on enlightened philosophy. He emphasizes a more extreme influence than other historians, i.e., man as mechanism, "that the phenomena of man's consciousness must be explained in terms of cause and effect as rigidly as the phenomena of the physical world." Nevertheless, most historians would concur with his depiction of the philosophes as pursuing human progress through the application of "the same mode of scientific reasoning both to the physical nature of man and to his moral and intellectual nature," and as defending their procedure as "the most demonstrable and certain, and therefore also the most desirable and useful." In general, then, Enlightenment historians recognize the vital role of the empirical method in performing two functions: (1) that of undermining the authority of the church and religion asserting that God's existence and his goodness could only "be inferred from the observable behavior of the world," and (2) that of providing the means for understanding the true nature of the world and man, and consequently, a means of influencing either or both. Leonard Krieger comments that the ability of the philosophes to deal with all realms of knowledge rested on their consistent and objective application of the method, while Franklin Baumer in emphasizing the
improvements of experimental over rational philosophy, points out that "science held out the prospect of greater prediction and control in society, as well as in nature, of an improved political machinery for the protection of man's freedom and happiness."  

Peter Gay's analysis of the importance of the method in enlightened philosophy is especially revealing. As mentioned above, Gay has attempted to assert a unity in the Enlightenment movement by minimizing the influence of the "typical" characteristics of the era in order to generalize a whole spectrum of opinion and activity into a single picture. The role of the method, however, is one theme about which Gay cannot, or chooses not to be ambiguous. He writes that "the philosophes were confident that their scientific empiricism alone could lead to a realistic appraisal of man's place and possibilities."  

He notes the reliability of the method in acquiring knowledge in diverse "contexts" and the subsequent realization of the philosophes that it could be applied to society and "become the instrument for the creation of future values."  

Referring to Voltaire's empiricism as more characteristic of the eighteenth century than Aquinas's rationalism was of the thirteenth, Gay offers examples of the philosophes' scientific approach to philosophy, such as "general psychology" being "the empirical base of the Enlightenment's . . . theory of man."  

The method is particularly important to Gay's characterization
of the philosophe as crusading reformer, for he comments that with everything that needed changing during this era "the method of the sciences--patient inquiry and experimentation--was the only method that made sense." Gay, then, maintains ranks with the general historical opinion that "empirical science was the Enlightenment path, and it could be trod in every direction to all terrains of knowledge."

This perception of the method's importance has not been drawn from the distant standpoint of twentieth century historical analysis. Rather students of the Enlightenment have derived and based their conclusions concerning the question on the attitude of the philosophes themselves. These philosophers consistently proclaimed the novelty of their age and the correctness of their opinion on the basis of the scientific method, and Enlightenment historians have taken them at their word.

Although some scholars look back as far as Hobbes to find the first suggestion that the method of mathematics and physics be applied to social and moral problems, it is Voltaire who is generally credited with popularizing, defending, even crusading for the method of the revered Newton. Peter Gay acknowledges Voltaire as the first to perceive the potential of Newton's theory and as its foremost proponent in France. He notes Voltaire's attraction to "Newton's disciplined empiricism--that famous 'philosophical modesty'" that provided such an
effective weapon against Christian metaphysics\textsuperscript{52} and quotes his comment to a young man that Newton "had taught men to 'examine, weigh, calculate, and measure, and never to conjecture,'" and that "he [Newton] did not put his fantasies in place of truth."\textsuperscript{53} Characterizing Candide as "propaganda in behalf of empiricism, a dramatization of Newton's methods,"\textsuperscript{54} Gay sums up Voltaire's reverence for the method in commenting that according to Voltaire, "Newton was right, and hence the Enlightenment, basing itself on Newton's method as much as on Newton's discoveries, must be right as well--it was as simple as that."\textsuperscript{55} Margaret Libby in The Attitude of Voltaire to Magic and the Sciences, similarly depicts Voltaire as "an ardent follower of Newton . . . . He preached Newtonism, he practised it," and describes his jubilation over the new truths revealed by Newton's work as well as his admonition to his readers "to discredit everything that was not proved by his [Newton's] methods."\textsuperscript{56} She quotes his recommendations to "look, touch, measure, weigh," and points out his further advice "to trust to observation and experiments, and to reason only by analysis," emphasizing the lesson he learned regarding scientific study to be "doubt of everything not proved by experiment."\textsuperscript{57} Other writers credit Voltaire's work with proving that Descartes's method was far more important than his conclusions and with linking Descartes's method with Newton's and Locke's ideas. "For Voltaire, . . .
the fact came before the principle," and his hopes for the method attracted him to ideas such as "empirical psychology" through which even the anatomy of man's own soul could be revealed. Cassirer recognizes Voltaire's *Treatise on Metaphysics* as demonstrative of the "fundamental agreement" between "the true method of metaphysics" and Newton's method in natural science. He insists, however, that Voltaire denied man's ability to know the ultimate mystery of things and that he refused to formulate hypotheses or invent principles; his emphasis was analysis not systems-making. Cobban depicts Voltaire as "a whole-hearted convert to Lockian psychology, Baconian empiricism and Newtonian mathematics and physics," and concurs with Cassirer in recognizing Voltaire to be "a sceptic and empiricist who did not believe it was possible to know the nature of things," a hater of systems.

Diderot's "primary purpose" as described by Baumer was to assert "the superiority of what he [Diderot] called experimental over rational philosophy," maintaining that "the true richness of philosophy" was grounded in observation and experience. Manuel quotes his pronouncement: "We think, . . . , that the greatest service to be done to men is to teach them to use their reason, only to hold for truth what they have verified and proved." Gay notes Diderot's interest in the importance of observation and the method relative to metaphysics and ethics, and
recounts Diderot's dream where the child Experiment grows into a colossus destroying the building of Hypothesis that housed "feeble, aged, and deformed men"--the makers of systems. 64 Cassirer relates Diderot's belief that mathematics could only decline as a science since it is limited and "has no immediate access to empirical concrete reality. This reality becomes accessible to us only through experiment, through faithful exact observations." 65

Baumer depicts Condorcet as awaiting the day when "the scientific spirit and scientific truth" would come to the masses making them "more civilized, tolerant, politically more responsible, and peace-loving." 66 Condillac's Traité des systèmes (1749) has been called "a classic document of the Enlightenment" on the grounds of its criticism of the systems of other philosophers and its praise of Newton and Locke for their reliance "on accumulating and testing the data of experiment" as the basis of their conclusions. 67

"Rousseau defended his procedure in Discours sur l'inégalité by likening [it] to the acceptable type of hypothesis current in modern physics"; 68 and his dictum in Emile for Emile's education was that "there must be no instruction, Emile must learn everything by observation and experience." 69 Lichtenberg announced his conviction that the method was more important than the discovery. 70 Bredvold describes Leibniz's conviction that he could discover "a general science" that would include a "logique civile or logique
de la vie" through which an assessment of probabilities could provide direction in all practical affairs, especially legal ones. Bredvold further notes Frances Hutchinson's intent "to introduce a mathematical calculation in subjects of morality" and Locke's conviction that morality could be demonstrated as exactly as mathematics. Even the founding fathers of the United States have been observed to have "appealed to experience on almost every page" of their "great apologetic documents."

That the philosophes themselves acknowledged the vital role of method in their philosophy is further demonstrated by their conviction that true philosophy had to be founded on the proper use of the method. The Renaissance philosopher Montaigne, therefore, represented a philosophes' idol of sorts, for his writings "embodied the manner of a man whose doctrine it was to have no doctrine, but to take the best from all the thought of the past and present and to test ideas in and by life." Having laid low the church, the philosophes continued to wield their weapon of method against other philosophical endeavors less grossly and glaringly erroneous than that of the church, including the work of fellow philosophes. For the most part, Enlightenment historians do not fail to make this point. Gay reviews Condillac's criticism of Descartes's deductive method by contrasting him unfavorably with Newton who was "content with observing the world" and Voltaire's similar
comparison in which Newton again won out because he "respected the facts, heroically faced obscure phenomena, and refused to make systems."75 Although he contends that criticism of Montesquieu was primarily a result of his conservatism, Gay points out Voltaire's dissatisfaction with Montesquieu's research--his method.76 Baumer notes Condorcet's disparagement of the Greek philosophers because of their determination to make systems and submit to their imaginations rather than observe the facts.77 G. R. Cragg comments that the classical scholar Porson accepted Gibbon's attack on Christianity, "but deplored his method."78

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

Having drawn this characterization, however, Enlightenment historians almost immediately qualify their statements suggesting that the philosophes might not have been such dedicated empiricists, that they proclaimed the method's validity and then inaddeptly or inconsistently applied it.
Leo Gershoy suggests that the *philosophes* used "only cooperative facts" in handling "awkward questions" and Gay points out that in the battle against Christianity, the *philosophes* "sought out what would discredit, and slighted what would exalt" the religion even to the point of being "credulous on principle" regarding "Oriental philosophers or Tahitian savages." Gay further observes that the *philosophes* were too much absorbed in letters and art "to follow out their methodological prescriptions to their rather dreary conclusions," and that while revering Locke and quoting his works, these philosophers generally passed over his *Reasonableness of Christianity*. Elsewhere Gay admits that he cannot say "that the *philosophes* were always consistent or thorough-going empiricists." Commenting on Condorcet's hopes for perfecting man, Karl Löwith observes that they were not the result of scientific inference and evidence but a conjecture, the root of which was hope and faith. Even such a sympathetic study of Condorcet as that of John Morley cannot but admit that there is nothing scientific, precise, and quantified in Condorcet's speculations about man's future progress.

Other historians note Voltaire's inclination towards the same *a priori* philosophy that he so vehemently criticized in Descartes; refer to Rousseau as "indifferent about the scientific method," the *Encyclopédie* as "deliberately conceived as a work of propaganda," and Diderot as "a supposed empiricist, . . ., suffused with
preromantic sentiment" and one who "did not wholly follow his own advice about an exclusively 'experimental philosophy.'"

One of the most telling indictments of the philosophes' infidelity to their empirical claims is Margaret Libby's analysis of Voltaire's attitude towards science. Her point is especially well made as she demonstrates how Voltaire could not be true to the method even applied to natural science, let alone the less exact science of human behavior. Libby points out that Voltaire's determination to discredit Descartes, Malebranche, and all Cartesianism was so obsessive that he betrayed the "master" by "accept[ing] what Newton specifically rejected" adding that "Voltaire conspicuously failed to maintain the tentative attitude of his master who put so much of his important work in the form of questions." She further comments that in his own attempts at experiment, Voltaire "show[ed] definite attempts to control conditions, although the findings were vitiated by avoidance of the implications of the experiments and by metaphysical additions to the conclusions." Attacking all systems, "Voltaire had a system of his own, a metaphysical one as far removed from the scientific method as those he combatted." The empiricist Voltaire was unable to accept the evidence of marine fossils found in the Alps as suggestive that the ocean had once covered the earth completely. Libby
explains this inability in her description of Voltaire's geology as "a combination of Newtonism and deism . . . . Voltaire never imagined that change might be woven into the fundamental constitution of things." His "deist theory is far less conducive to scientific inquiry than those of the Christians, for with him the whole subject is closed." Voltaire's prejudice against the flood was as blind as the theologians' acceptance of it. Libby's critique of Voltaire's scientific approach to knowledge is devastating as she examines his decidedly unscientific basis for rejecting certain ideas or evidence.

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

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

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

All this is clothed in scientific phrases indicating that Voltaire and Voltaire alone is avoiding the esprit de systême, the chimeras peculiar to the Learned. He alone is following the modern scientific method of consulting nature, admitting only what is proved, avoiding the marvelous and the metaphysical.
Overall, she characterizes Voltaire's scientific writings as "remarkable neither for depth of analysis, accuracy, nor originality but rather for cleverness of expression and ability to say quotable things at the right moment." He "push[ed] the mathematical method like the experimental into the vague hinterland of generalities," certainly promoting the occasion for obscurity rather than the cause of enlightenment. Libby's analysis of Voltaire's adherence to the method is particularly significant when one recalls Peter Gay's designation of Voltaire's empiricism as characteristic of the age. If all the philosophes applied the method in this fashion, the "secular" nature of their philosophy becomes questionable and a new attitude must be formulated concerning the era, if not altogether a new name.

It is Carl Becker who sees this contradiction most clearly and it forms the basis of his thesis. He offers numerous examples of this philosophe failing such as Montesquieu's comment that the "'facts' meant nothing to him until he discovered the principles which they were to illustrate," and that of Diderot's that a knowledge of morality should precede that of history. Nevertheless, most Enlightenment historians reject this thesis and accept the characterization of the philosophes as empiricist even though this generally means qualifying their comments to the point of obscuring them or ignoring
altogether blatant indications to the contrary. Indicative of this attitude is Peter Gay's evaluation of such inconsistency in the philosophes' method as "disturbing" but not "crippling to the philosophes' enterprise of founding the science of society." In truth, it can be nothing but crippling to a philosophy that claims its validity and superiority to other systems of thought on the basis of this scientific method, and historians have failed in their responsibility to analyze the age in terms of its own claims. This failure is especially glaring in light of the fact that there was an example of consistent and objective use of the method in David Hume, but historians have failed to deal with him on these terms, except to acknowledge his divergence from the norm. It is interesting to note, for instance, that the philosophes failed to understand or appreciate the man among them who most resembled the respected Montaigne in his aversion to doctrine and his complete adherence to empirical method. Enlightenment historians should be concerned with such historical incongruities; they should address the question of why the philosophes could not (or would not) observe the "virtues" of Montaigne in David Hume, especially if the answer suggests that the philosophes have described their philosophy as something it is not--reasonable, tolerant, secular, ultimately true. David Hume was by far the best empirical philosopher of this "empirical" age. If "enlightened"
truth is only that which can be observed and experienced, then Hume's is the Enlightenment philosophy, not the philosophy described in the "accepted" Enlightenment characterization.

Hume's hope for the method, similar to that of his contemporaries, was announced in the subtitle of his Treatise as "an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects." As discussed in Chapter I, however, Enlightenment historians observe a distinction between Hume and the philosophes not only on the basis of his conclusions, but also, and most importantly, on the basis of his use of the method. For Cassirer, "Hume's skepticism . . . offers an entirely different approach . . . [to] the rationalistic postulate of unity [which] dominate[d] the minds of this age." Cragg credits Hume with greater consistency in the use of the method than Locke achieved; Krieger maintains that his "one-sided empiricism . . . [was not] typical of the Enlightenment" and places Hume at an extreme end of an Enlightenment spectrum representing "skeptical empiricism." Recognizing the eighteenth century's aversion to system, Baumer notes that "few went so far as Hume, who limited the power of the human mind to appearances, and raised doubts about the logicality and permanence of the laws of nature." T. E. Jessop writes that Hume's empiricism involved not simply observing the characteristics
of human nature, but accepting them; "it . . . express-
[ed] . . . his deep sense of the precariousness of all theorizing." Hume believed that man could not transcend experience and only observation could provide philosophers with materials to work with, and where others professed a similar conviction and then proceeded to suggest or describe ultimate truths, Hume remained faithful to his basis of speculation and formulated observations or conclusions that often escaped or even offended the philosophes. For example, in his sincere admiration of Newton, Hume observed an aspect of Newton's work that most of the enlightened thinkers ignored or failed to fully appreciate in terms of its important implications for their philosophy. Hume cautioned

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

Hume, however, did not consider such limitation an insurmountable obstacle for the science of man in that the inaccessibility of ultimate truth was a "defect" of all sciences, for "none of them can go beyond experience, or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority." But in Hume's mind experience was sufficient and ignorance of ultimate truth did not prevent the analysis or direction of daily living. It did, however,
preclude rigid hypothesizing and fanciful expectations; for Hume, the "new Philosophy calls all in doubt."\textsuperscript{110} 

Robert Anchor credits Hume with "asserting the sovereignty of the empirical world" but notes that the result "reduced knowledge to a strictly subjective status. Kant denied the sovereignty of the empirical world in order to save the possibility of objective knowledge of it."\textsuperscript{111} If empiricism precipitated "subjective knowledge," Enlightenment historians should be even more aware of the philosophes' infidelity to the method, for scholars do note that while the philosophes rejected faith as a basis for belief, they just as ardently rejected relativism. Laurence Bongie points out Voltaire's appreciation of Helvétius's comment on Locke:

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

and his request to use them in his new edition of the \textit{Eléments de Newton}.\textsuperscript{112} Crocker claims the philosophes actually gave up the "empirical code of obedience to law and custom" because people would not recognize the predominance of one set of rules over another and consequently would refuse to submit to authority.\textsuperscript{113} Gay admits that when these philosophers did observe and rationalize they could not feel comfortable with the conclusions and in volume two of \textit{The Enlightenment} he frankly states, "Relativism was swamped by polemical passion."\textsuperscript{114} It has been suggested also that the method actually posed a problem for enlightened thinkers that of reconciling science (of Newton's universe and
Locke's psychology) "with their enthusiasm over the natural goodness of man"; what they really wanted was the "Newton of social science, the man who would sum up our enlightened knowledge into a system of social science men had only to follow to ensure the real Golden Age, the real Eden."  

It is apparent, then, that most Enlightenment historians, while acknowledging the philosophes' particular use of the method, nevertheless accept their resultant conclusions without questioning the basis of their validity. Ernst Cassirer in his comments quoted above (page 59), demonstrates two important points regarding the application and significance of the method for Enlightenment history: (1) that the "discovery" of unadulterated truth absolutely depended on the method for proof of its validity, and (2) that the method was generally applied to prove, rather than reveal, an already assumed truth, i.e., the unity of the natural order. Cassirer's inconsistency between his acceptance of the proclaimed purpose of the method--scientific discovery, and the actual use of the method--"proving" one's assumptions, exactly reflects the philosophes' misuse of their tool. Enlightenment historians continue to perpetuate Cassirer's misapprehension, basing their characterization of the Enlightenment's legacy on what the philosophes claimed to be doing rather than what they actually did--all this in spite of David Hume's demonstration of the proper use of the method and his more legitimate conclusions.
suggesting a markedly different Enlightenment legacy than that generally accepted.

In their pursuit of information concerning the science of man, the philosophes turned to history. Observing the "facts" of man's past behavior could provide knowledge regarding man's nature as well as possible indications for his future. History could be made into a science because it was subject to the method (philosophy) and "it sought for the truth alone." "The scientific ideal [was]--the historian who studies his material without praise or reproach."\textsuperscript{117} As might be expected, however, the philosophes were primarily interested in the future, looking to the past more for directives than understanding. Aware of this tendency Enlightenment historians characterize the purpose and meaning of history for the philosophes as the endeavor "to improve by our own reason the condition of man,"\textsuperscript{118} to "illustrate the triumphant march of man's reason; . . . , if . . . properly handled,"\textsuperscript{119} to be a "teacher of morals" and "a guide to truth."\textsuperscript{120} History then was not merely revealing; it was instructive.

It is important to remember, however, that the analyses of the philosophes' use of history by Enlightenment historians are unavoidably influenced by the analyst's own view of what history is or ought to be. Nevertheless, an evaluation of philosophes' history in terms of its basis on the method and the necessary conclusions derived therefrom is possible
whether the analyst applauds, excuses, or deplores the history of the eighteenth century writers. The "special case" of Hume and his history will also be apparent in this consideration.

Most Enlightenment historians demonstrate good and bad aspects of *philosophe* history emphasizing the virtues or vices that best reflect their personal philosophies of history. While Leonard Kreiger observes "attention to the specific identity of any particular fact, . . . skepticism toward traditional truths, . . . and [an] awareness of the social context in [viewing] politics" as positive aspects of enlightened history, he also notices a negative aspect in the tendency to accept "human nature [and] human motivation [as] constant in all the ages; . . . [and an inclination] to exclude the recalcitrant detail as trivial and to deprecate ages, institutions, and men of faith as noxious." Baumer claims the eighteenth century historians "developed a critical method of research, which, to be sure, they did not always follow." He further notes the role Voltaire grants to chance in history, not as an "interruption of the chain of causes and effects, but only unforeseen . . . events, or a combination of events over which individual men had no control," and Gibbon's belief in a "lottery of life" which determined most people's fate. Both concepts suggest an "invisible hand" or providential quality of history. G. R. Cragg contends that the *philosophes* had no historical
perspective, judging other eras by the standards of their own, "naïvely confident in the superiority of their own times."  Although an Enlightenment enthusiast, Frank Manual observes that the philosophes who manipulated historical examples as scientific proof positive of their theories of society were absurdly superficial and casual in assembling their data . . . . Thus in their voluminous writings on man in society philosophers of every tendency came to use historical data in much the same manner that a preacher quotes a text from Scripture before he proceeds with the sermon . . . . [Their] insights on the nature of social relations, . . . were really intuitions, not propositions derived in accordance with the scientific method to which they gave lip service.  

One of the most negative analyses of philosophie history is that of R. G. Collingwood. Contending that the philosophes' "account of causes is superficial to absurdity," Collingwood designates their conception of human nature "as something static and permanent" to be the obstruction to scientific history in the eighteenth century. For the most part he condemns any and all philosophie history:

To think of any phase in history as altogether irrational is to look at it not as an historian but as a publicist, a polemical writer of tracts for the times. Thus the historical outlook of the Enlightenment was not genuinely historical; in its main motive it was polemical and anti-historical. 

No attempt was made to lift history above the level of propaganda; on the contrary, that aspect of it was intensified, for the crusade in favour of reason was still a holy war. 

Of course, it is Peter Gay's analysis of enlightened history that is most intriguing, probably because it is
most confusing, for he essentially agrees with Collingwood's
evaluation and yet at the same time, he insists that the
philosophes wrote good history.128 Gay acknowledges that
"the philosophes wrote history with rage and partisanship, . . . extract[ing] from their history the past they
could use."129 Observing their criticism of Bossuet's
history because of its perception of the unfolding of a
divine plan, Gay outlines the philosophes' historical dia-
lectic of four epochs denoting the conflict of reason and
unreason without remarking upon the metaphysical character
of both.130 Gay admits the philosophes' inability to deal
fairly with Christian writers and historians, quoting
Voltaire's comment on the inability of a Jesuit to write
accurate history.131 He offers a number of examples, often
in the philosophes' own words, demonstrating their imposition
of "correct" ideas on historical facts or their manipulation
of historical "truths"132 such as Diderot's praise of
Voltaire:

Other historians . . . tell us facts in order to
teach us facts. You do it in order to excite in
the depth of our souls a strong indignation against
mendacity, ignorance, hypocrisy, superstition,
fanaticism, tyranny; and that indignation remains
when the memory of facts has gone;133

and Voltaire's admission that "It's a real pity . . . that
we cannot tell the truth whenever we touch on metaphysics,
or even on history."134 Nevertheless, Gay excuses this
unhistorical approach to history explaining the philosophes'
ideological inclination to be a consequence of the dire ideological battle in which they were engaged. Justifying their overeagerness or slanted viewpoint because of the righteousness of their cause and the error of the enemy (religious history), Gay acknowledges their use of history as propaganda with their qualification that it had to "be propaganda in behalf of the truth, [for] it would be effective propaganda only if it were the truth." Knowing Gay's favorable opinion regarding Enlightenment philosophy and its legacy, one assumes that his analysis of enlightened history speaks volumes regarding his own historical writing.

In his article "Voltaire and Hume as Historians: A Comparative Study of the Essai Sur Les Moeurs and the History of England," Paul H. Meyer pointedly demonstrates basic differences in methodology and historical attitude between these authors, two of the most popular and prolific writers of history during the enlightened era, with which Enlightenment historians would, for the most part, concur. Meyer notes that Voltaire "never hesitated to dismiss even important events for one reason or another with a few generalities or a remark like: 'Je ne vous fatiguerez point de détails si connus;'" while Hume "agreeing in principle with this position" was "far more scrupulous" about his selection process, explaining it to his reader.
a clear-cut impression of his characters often induce him to simplify their motives with some disregard for historical accuracy." By contrast, Hume "with a characteristic awareness of the complexity of human nature" was more respectful of his evidence and less inclined to sacrifice its integrity "for the sake of presenting an aesthetically satisfying picture." According to Meyer, Voltaire's greatest weakness was his inclination "to judge men by the standards of the Enlightenment," which distorted his perspective such that he could not understand men "completely removed from . . . his own experience." Hume on the other hand, tried to understand people in terms of their own historical circumstances. Always watchful for "a moral law governing the events of history, in spite of all evidence to the contrary," Voltaire clung to the natural law comprehensible to all men and ignored the study of the development of institutions or the relationship between natural law and "the rules . . . established by society." Hume denied "any natural law with transcendental validity" as well as "immanent justice," basing his studies more on political considerations of the time. Judging Hume's thought to be "factual rather than personal in tone," Meyer absolves him of Voltaire's "emotional attitude towards Christianity" and credits him with a personal understanding of historical situations, arrived at through a careful evaluation of all the facts before writing his account. Voltaire and
others, however, often drew pictures "so distorted as to become a caricature."\textsuperscript{145} Perhaps, Meyer's most appropriate compliment on Hume's work is that one could learn English history from Hume but not world history from Voltaire.\textsuperscript{146}

Generally, Enlightenment historians agree with this depiction of Voltaire's deficiencies and Hume's virtues as historian. Ernst Cassirer remarks that Voltaire was incapable of living up to his own standard for historiography, that of "free[ing] history from the domination of final causes and lead[ing] it back to the real empirical causes."\textsuperscript{147} He blames Voltaire's personality and temperament for this weakness, however, rather than his "underlying systematic conception" of history.\textsuperscript{148} In his constant ranting regarding the superiority of the classical age of reason over the Middle Ages, Cassirer observes Voltaire succumbing "to that naïve teleology... he so strongly rejects and attacks."\textsuperscript{149} Cobban notes that Voltaire rarely took the "precaution" of using facts and citing authorities that he commended in other authors, and characterizes his \textit{Essai} as "mere deistic propaganda."\textsuperscript{150} Herbert Dieckmann considers Voltaire's merit as a historian to be "not in the domain of logic, but in that of art and literature,"\textsuperscript{151} while Louis Kampf calls Voltaire's \textit{La Henriade} "a conscious lie."\textsuperscript{152} These comments raise important questions regarding the historian who cannot adhere to his own prescribed standards--method. Is a "good system" of study adequate for the writing of
good history? Are the conclusions of one who has not followed the system valid? Why have historians excused eighteenth century writers from the dictates of their own declared standard?

Even those historians who approve of Voltaire's history generally do so on questionable grounds. Peter Gay comments that Voltaire wrote *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751) and *Essai Sur Les Moeurs* (1756) in order "to outdo his rivals and gain fame," and while acknowledging that Voltaire did not cite the authorities that he used "profusely and proficiently," Gay insists that "the polemical passages in his great histories show him to be the serious historian always mindful of his self-imposed duties as propagandist for the Enlightenment." One must question the ability of a propagandist to write good history or is Gay proposing that propaganda--for the right cause--is good history? One is impelled to an affirmative answer to this question after observing that Gay is aware of the philosophe who wrote history "without forgetting his philosophy" (Hume) and Montesquieu's evaluation of Voltaire's history: "Voltaire will never write a good history. He is like the monks who write not for the subject they are dealing with, but for the glory of their order. Voltaire is writing for his monastery." Bronowski and Mazlish credit Voltaire with an empirical attitude towards history on the grounds that he explained things in terms other than those of Providence and divine
causes. They recognize "a secular, critical, and empirical approach to a subject matter" in his work (although impelled to comment that he "often faltered badly" in his use of it), remarking that "his empiricism was not pedantic and it was always witty. Indeed, Voltaire's 'science' of history was always as much satire as it was science." One must question their assumption that denying the role of Providence precludes the substitution of a different metaphysic that does not qualify for a description of "empirical" or "secular," and the possibility of science being satire raises even more questions regarding Voltaire's method and conclusions. In a similar fashion G. P. Gooch applauds Voltaire's *Life of Charles XII* because "there is no overloading with detail and there is not a dull page." He sees in the book an anti-war tract "under cover of a biography" as he observes the *Essai* to be a plea for the reign of law. Whereas this might constitute good literature, its merit as good history remains doubtful. If historians, nevertheless, recognize it as such, one must question the quality, or meaning, of their work.

Hume, on the other hand, receives a much better historical evaluation, especially in terms of his method. Robert Ginsberg contrasts Voltaire's "celebrat[ion] of great events and great figures" with Hume's "even hand slowly tracing the gradual development of patterns of behaviour that pervaded social organization." Louis
Kampf acknowledges Hume to be a modern historian because of his "attitude which is constantly aware that historical knowledge is dependent on the epistemology of the knower and that epistemologies change with the passage of time." Hume realized that "our perception of history . . . may often depend on our personal feelings." Even Collingwood, who sees little, if any, merit in philosophe history, acknowledges that Hume put "history on a footing at least as sound as that of any other science" and considers Hume's work to be more legitimate than others "not promising more than it could perform and not depending on any questionable metaphysical hypotheses." He continues to fault Hume, however, for his acceptance of the concept of the constancy of human nature. Other historians, though, defend Hume even against this charge. Meyer contends that by the time Hume wrote his history and as a result of his historical study "he had considerably modified his earlier belief in the uniformity of human nature, and we find indications of a historical relativism." Claiming that recent historical opinion characterizes Hume's position "as a belief in constant fluctuations rather than inevitable improvements in the fortunes of the human race," Meyer pointedly contrasts Hume's refusal to philosophize and formulate "sweeping generalizations" with Voltaire's proclivity for both. Cassirer consistently notes the "unique"
position of Hume in the Enlightenment character and history is but one more example.

Hume agrees as little with the general type of philosophy of history of the Enlightenment as he does with its theory of knowledge or its philosophy of religion. In him the static approach to history, which is oriented to the knowledge of the permanent properties of human nature, begins to relax; he looks more to the historical process as such than to the solid substratum presupposed by the process. Cassirer contends that Hume observed no steady historical development, but "delight[ed]" in perpetual change; he neither looked for "reason" in the process nor a final goal of history. His "resistance to any kind of hasty generalization, his concern with the pure facts of history, implies not merely a methodological warning but also a new methodological orientation. Hume's doctrine advocated the uniqueness and specific status of the particular." David Fate Norton makes the important observation that much of Hume's philosophy was argued on historical (empirical) grounds. Furthermore, he is able to actually draw up a précis of Hume's method specifically categorizing what Hume considered acceptable evidence for historical research and guidelines for establishing the authenticity of documents and testimony.

Even negative evaluation of Hume's history demonstrates his reluctance to formulate systems and actually ends up complimenting Hume's work rather than challenging it. In
the Cambridge History of English Literature, Hume is criticized for showing no appreciation of the forces which underlay great political or religious movements. As a sceptic, he did not recognise the motives which led men to work for a common end, or the influences which guided them. Such movements were, to him mere occurrences, or the results of personal temperament, of the ambition, obstinacy, or fanaticism of individuals.¹⁶⁶

David Norton comments that Hume's "philosophy collapsed into mere opinion."¹⁶⁷ Such criticism perhaps reveals more about contemporary history than Hume's. It would appear that historical relativism is as deplorable and historical systems as appealing to twentieth century historians as to those of the eighteenth century, and it may be for this reason that Hume's history, although acknowledged to be superior to its contemporaries in its empirical approach, is not generally recommended to students of the Enlightenment because it does not represent what modern historians perceive as characteristic of that age. This tendency to characterize Hume as an Enlightenment anomaly may reflect a legacy of the Enlightenment that insidiously affects today's writers of history, for in denying Hume as representative of the era, these writers must deny the method. They, therefore, accept the philosophes' claims and pronouncements without establishing a basis for their validity, and without this basis the philosophes are no less the believing systems-makers than the religious or the "a priori" faithful they despised. Contemporary historians then seem to be believers,
too, aware of Hume's faithfulness to the method and his resultant conclusions, but drawn to the system (and assurance) of the other enlightened historians.

Hume used the method, the basis of real Enlightenment truth, and derived conclusions drastically different from his fellow "philosophers" regarding the facts and purpose of history. He observed no laws, no systems, no truths in the historical process; in fact, his work suggested historical relativism rather than assurances of progress or enlightenment for mankind. The history of philosophes that were not consistent in the use of the method cannot, then, claim the same validity for their conclusions as Hume. In terms of Enlightenment truth, Hume's history and ultimately his philosophy should be considered representative of the age that proclaimed itself empirical and opposed to systems. If the importance of the method is denied, Hume can simply be considered a divergence from the typical, but "typical," then, cannot lay claim to scientific and empirical justification, and Becker's thesis is substantiated in its Enlightenment characterization. Historians, however, consider the method to be a fundamental element in Enlightenment thought and its legacy. The history of the era, then, must be re-written either to deny this acknowledgement of the method or to recognize Hume and his work as the authentic Enlightenment legacy.
NOTES

1 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 34.
2 Ibid., pp. 39, 35.
6 Ibid.
9 Ibid., pp. 131, 130.
10 Gay quotes Voltaire in reference to Newton, "We are all disciples now." *The Enlightenment*, 2:129.
11 Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 44.
17 Frank Manuel describes Voltaire reporting on the advances of philosophy over the church "with the exultation of a commander winning battles." *Age of Reason*, p. 34.
18 Ibid., pp. 25, 28.
It is interesting to note here that the philosophes' most unreserved admiration for Hume concerned his criticism of religion. If they could not understand (or accept) his epistemology, they did appreciate him as a comrade-at-arms in the fight against religion. It is indicative of the philosophes' inconsistent or selective use of the method that Grimm glosses over the first eight essays of Essais philosophiques sur l'entendement humain, involving a discussion of causality, as "elementary, superfluous," but recommends the other four anti-religious essays, especially the one on miracles. Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 216.

Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:399-400.

Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 31.

Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 5.

Ibid., p. 217.

Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 40.


Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 45. Walter Dorn interprets Cassirer's view: "It is first with the full acceptance of this approach [the empirical method] that the Enlightenment, . . . , hits its stride." Dorn, "Historical Writing on the Enlightenment," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 65.

Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 9.

Manuel, Age of Reason, pp. 28-29.

Ibid., p. 24.

Ibid., p. 29.

Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 1.

Ibid., pp. 78, 70.
36 Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 450.
37 Ibid., pp. xvii, 457.
38 Bredvold, Brave New World, pp. 105-106.
39 Ibid., pp. 106, 47.
40 Becker, Heavenly City, p. 67.
41 Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 179.
42 Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 219.
44 Ibid., 2:164.
49 Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 33.
50 Margaret Libby states that his notion of Newtonism was a source of great pride for him and that he " flaunted it all his life." The Attitude of Voltaire to Magic and the Sciences (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), p. 10; Bronowski and Mazlish refer to him as "a magnificent propagandist . . . for the Newton system of science and thought." Western Intellectual History, p. 248; Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 120, notes Voltaire's efforts to introduce Newton and his method to France.
52 Ibid., pp. 138-139.
53 Ibid., 1:135.
54 Ibid., p. 199.
55 Ibid., 2:137.
Hume believed, however, that geometry, algebra, and arithmetic were the only exact sciences since they used symbols, terms, and methods which everyone agreed on and therefore produced conclusions that were "demonstratively certain," that is, a negation of a conclusion was inconceivable.


Ibid., 1:136.

Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 74.

Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:139.

Ibid., 2:165.

Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 88.


Bredvold, Brave New World, pp. 36-37.

Ibid., pp. 38, 41.


Ibid., p. 288.

Ibid., 2:149, 139.


Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 249-250.
78 Cragg, *Reason and Authority*, p. 150.


81 Ibid., 1:181, 321.

82 Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in *Heavenly City Revisited*, ed. Rockwood, p. 34.


84 Crocker, *Age of Crisis*, p. 184. Cobban, however, believes that "Voltaire was perhaps the only great French thinker in the eighteenth century to emancipate himself completely from Cartesian ways of thought." *In Search of Humanity*, p. 120.

85 Bredvold, *Brave New World*, p. 81.

86 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 146.

87 Crocker, *Age of Crisis*, p. 449.


90 Ibid., p. 166.

91 Ibid., p. 168.

92 Ibid., pp. 180, 184.

93 Ibid., p. 185.

94 Ibid., pp. 183-184.

95 Ibid., p. 204.

96 Ibid., p. 179.

97 Ibid., p. 273.

98 Ibid., p. 77.

99 Becker, *Heavenly City*, p. 104. Montesquieu in the Preface of his *Esprit des Lois* says: "'I followed my object without forming any design: I was unable to grasp either
the rules or the exceptions; I found the truth only to lose it: but when I discovered my principles, everything I sought came to me'; and Diderot: 'Some may think that a knowledge of history should precede that of morality: I am not of that opinion: it seems to me more useful and expedient to possess the idea of the just and the unjust before possessing a knowledge of the actions and the men to whom one ought to apply it.'" Ibid. Becker, however, errs in including Hume in his interpretation of the philosophe attitude.

100 For instance, F. L. Baumer notes Condorcet's criticism of the Greek philosophers as system forgers who gave themselves over to their imaginations, as representative of the "progressivists'" criticism of the past. He does not, however, consider the implications of such criticism in light of Condorcet's own imaginative convictions regarding progress and the perfectibility of man. It seems not to be significant to his history. Modern European Thought, pp. 249-250.


103 Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 22.

104 Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 126.

105 Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, pp. 178, 183.

106 Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 208.


109 Hume, Treatise, p. 45.

110 Quoted in Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 75.

113 Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 3.
114 Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:64, for comments on Diderot's and Sophie's rejection of the thought that love was merely atoms; 2:383.
115 Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 73.
116 Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 118.
118 Löwith, Meaning in History, p. 107.
119 Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 258.
120 Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 238.
121 Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, pp. 205-206. It is interesting to note here that Krieger acknowledges the success of the age "in reconciling the most fundamental of human desires: to give the individual a stable identity and to discover the unity which associates individuals in common enterprises and gives to the life of each its direction and meaning." Ibid., p. 207. Certainly, Christianity and the church addressed this need as adequately if not more reassuringly than the philosophes. Where then did the Age of Faith fail and the Age of Reason succeed?
122 Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 239, 240.
123 Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 90.
124 Manuel, Age of Reason, p. 40.
125 Collingwood, Idea of History, pp. 80, 82.
126 Ibid., p. 77.
127 Ibid., p. 81.
130 Ibid., p. 34.
131 Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:377. Gay comments that the philosophes were convinced that the Christian writers "had lied and continued to lie, from habit or from vocation, almost from second nature." Ibid.

132 Gay notes that because Voltaire could not believe that "reasonable men" could have been "caught in superstitions," he "insisted on interpreting the Orphic mystery religion as an advanced monotheistic cult which had surrounded itself with secrecy from fear of violence at the hands of a gross populace." The Enlightenment, 1:83.

133 Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 1:188.

134 Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:70.

135 Ibid., 1:211.

136 Ibid., pp. 37-38.

137 Ibid., 2:384.


139 Ibid., p. 54.

140 Ibid., pp. 54, 55. Meyer offers the example where Hume excuses Thomas More for his persecution of heretics because he was a victim of his times. Voltaire, however, condemns him completely for this "lapse" acknowledging no other possibly virtuous traits in More's character. G. P. Gooch concurs that for Voltaire, "the first duty of the historian was to apply the criteria of his own time to the jumbled testimony of bygone days." "Voltaire as Historian," in Catherine the Great and Other Studies (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954), p. 203.


142 Ibid., pp. 59, 57.

143 Ibid., p. 59.

144 Ibid., pp. 63, 66.

145 Ibid.
Ibid., p. 68.
147 Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 220.
148 Ibid., p. 221.
149 Ibid., p. 222.
154 Ibid., p. 371.
156 Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, pp. 259-260.
159 Kampf, On Modernism, pp. 87, 88. Kampf feels this is also true of Gibbon.
160 Collingwood, Idea of History, p. 75.
161 Meyer, "Voltaire and Hume as Historians," p. 55. Becker failed to detect any relativist orientation in Hume's work, and therefore included him in his characterization of the philosophes as systems-making believers. His failure to differentiate Hume from this picture of the Enlightenment is the major flaw in his thesis.
162 Ibid., p. 56. Hume suffered some criticism for his refusal to judge the past by the standards of the present. His sympathetic treatment of the Stuarts aroused much ire and accusations of sympathizing with absolutism, but he maintained the view that while an era could be characterized "ignorant," an individual should not suffer indictment for "errors" committed in such historical circumstances. Ibid.

164 Ibid., pp. 226, 227.


As discussed in the previous chapters, both the philosophers and the historians of their age have acknowledged the crucial importance of the empirical method in Enlightenment philosophy. This point cannot be overstated. The empirical method gave the philosophy of the philosophes its validity and thereby its superiority to previous philosophical speculations, especially those emanating from ecclesiastical thinkers. It has also been established and acknowledged by Enlightenment historians that David Hume applied the method more accurately and more consistently than his contemporaries. Consequently, his ideas and conclusions are more valid in terms of the era's proclaimed standards, and therefore, more representative of the "empirical" age. His views, however, drastically contradict the cherished characterization of the Enlightenment by its historians and questions must now be raised concerning the empiricism of the age, the accuracy of Enlightenment histories, and most important, the actual legacy of the era for modern times.

Although Hume's philosophy presents numerous implications for a revised Enlightenment history and the
Enlightenment's legacy for modern society, this inquiry will be limited to a consideration of Hume's epistemology and his conclusions regarding the role of man's reason. Hume's observations concerning religion and morality, and society and government will be assessed in a later study.

Hume on Reason

In the words of Crane Brinton, "Reason, to the ordinary man of the Enlightenment . . . , was the great key word to his new universe. It was reason that would lead men to understand nature . . . and by understanding nature to mold his conduct in accordance with nature."1 This human faculty was accessible to all men but the eighteenth century had finally released it from the suppression of Church and Christianity, permitting it to "show men how to control their environment and themselves."2 The optimism and hopes of the Enlightenment were grounded on the potential of man's reason. Such is the traditional historical view regarding the role of reason in the Enlightenment. Hume, however, the best empiricist of the day, offered a decidedly different concept regarding the nature of reason and its function relevant to human behavior.

It was Hume's intent through his philosophical speculations to propose a "science of man" and to base that science on "the only solid foundation" possible, that of "experience and observation."3 In the introduction of his Treatise,
Hume cautioned his readers that man "cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis, that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical." In conducting our study, then, Hume proposed that we "glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observance of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures." Hume's "science of man" rested on the observation of human behavior uncolored by presuppositions and divested of ultimate explanations.

Hume began with the "science of man" because in his mind all sciences were related to human nature, that is, all science is defined, limited, or formulated within the boundaries of man's reasoning capabilities. In order to truly understand what we learn, we must understand how we learn it. This acute perception seems to have escaped most of the other philosophes since it was Hume who conceived the most comprehensive, if not the best received, epistemology of his day. Hume realized that science begins with man, not an external reality, since it is the perception of phenomena, not the phenomena itself, that constitutes knowledge, and therefore, science. Sense perception, however, is in many ways unreliable, and in demonstrating this, Hume's epistemology demonstrated the limitations of man's reason, not its capacity to reveal
the secrets of nature. On this point Hume dramatically diverged from the philosophy and objectives of the Enlightenment that historians have perceived and written about; on this point Hume undermined the claims of the **philosophes** themselves and the historical portrayal thereof. For Hume, the secrets—"the laws"—of nature were unknowable.

The only method of freeing learning, at once, from these abstruse questions, is to enquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects.7

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

According to Hume's epistemology there are no innate ideas; ideas must come from experience. The avenue through which man gains information is his perception. Sensations of perception Hume labeled "impressions," and "ideas" are images, copies of impressions in thinking and reason. There can be no impressions without a corresponding idea and no ideas that are not derived from simple impressions. Impressions cause ideas and not vice versa, for as Hume pointed out, one cannot imagine the taste of a pineapple without actually having tasted one at some time.8 Simple ideas become complex ones through any of three "associating
qualities"--"Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause and Effect"—this last quality establishing the strongest connection between ideas.

Having established the foundation of understanding, Hume characterized "all the objects of human reason or enquiry" as two kinds: "Relations of Ideas and Matters of Fact." The sciences of geometry, algebra, and arithmetic comprise the first category because they are "demonstratively certain" whereas "matters of fact" are not. If "matters of fact" were provable, then a negation could not be clearly conceived, but since negations can be conceived, such as the sun not rising, "matters of fact" are unprovable. Hume maintains that all "matter of fact" reasoning is "founded on the relation of Cause and Effect" and the knowledge of this relation is based entirely on experience. Noting that "the effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it," Hume stated that man's understanding of the necessity of a cause and effect relation comes solely from experience. Without this experience "anything may produce anything." It is only because we are accustomed to observing a cause produce an effect that we acknowledge a necessity in this relationship. Therefore, the principle pushing men to inferences of cause and effect is not reason but custom, habit. "Custom, . . . , is the great guide of human life." We assume the future will resemble the past
because of our experience, not through our reason. "There appears not, throughout all nature, any one instance of connexion which is conceivable by us . . . . we have no idea of connexion or power at all, and . . . these words are absolutely without any meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasoning or common life." 16 Hume further pointed out that the repeated experience of events that we observe to be "conjoined" increases the probability in our minds that the expected effect will occur. It is at this point that we believe in effects whose necessary connection with a cause is not discoverable through reason.

Hume observed that although there is no intellectual justification for a "necessary connection" between cause and effect, men did indeed believe in it in their daily assumptions regarding human nature and daily life. In keeping with his strict empiricism, Hume did not attempt to develop a method for arriving at belief; he endeavored merely to account for how beliefs do arise. His objective was not justifying beliefs but describing and analyzing them. Hume defined belief as "a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression." 17 It "consists not in the peculiar nature or order of ideas, but in the manner of their conception, and in their feeling to the mind." 18 It is the feeling, the intensity, attached to beliefs that differentiate them from ideas of the imagination. Although not philosophically demonstrable, Hume
pointed out two fundamental customary beliefs he could not renounce in day to day living: (1) the belief in the continuous and independent existence of external objects, and (2) the belief that everything that begins to be has a cause. Acknowledging that such natural belief did and should prevail, Hume never suggested abandoning it, but rather urged discovering the theoretical reasons supporting it. Reason, however, could not justify our beliefs and, therefore, plays no role in motivating human actions.

For Hume "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them." Reason performs two functions in this capacity: (1) it discovers connections between events so as to give rise to a passion, and (2) it "excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something which is a proper object of it." Reason discovers truth or falsehood which "consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact. Whatever, therefore, is not susceptible of this agreement or disagreement, is incapable of being true or false, and can never be an object of our reason." "Passions, volitions, and actions, are not susceptible" since they constitute "original facts and realities," the tools of reason. Therefore, these cannot be determined true or false. Since reason cannot be the source of motivation
for human behavior, it could not hold the promise for human progress that the philosophes expected from it.

Hume, however, did not stop at restricting the powers of reason; he followed his philosophical speculations to their logical conclusions and wound up where few philosophers then or now have cared to follow. Having acknowledged empiricism as the only valid foundation of our knowledge, Hume announced that in the end even this method cannot offer us infallible insights into truth, for he could put "no faith at all in my senses" and as a result perceived a choice between "false reason and none at all." If the method of discovery is not entirely trustworthy then neither are the conclusions it indicates.

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

It is at this point of Hume's philosophy that the applause from his contemporaries and most modern historians abruptly falls off. Hume's scepticism, however, did not suspend all action or speculation. It did, though, preclude the existence of general ideas. Hume observed that the mind always called up a specific image. He embraced Berkeley's contention that "all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon
occasion other individuals, which are similar to them." 27
By adhering to a generality that "makes use of undefined
terms and employs comparisons, instead of instances,"
"false hypotheses" could assume the appearance of truth. 28
Hume was hopeful that philosophy could be made clearer by
relating ideas to "impressions or original sentiments," 29
that is, pinning down philosophical concepts and semantics
to their experiential foundations which all men (all healthy
and whole men) could clearly and perhaps uniformly under-
stand.

While other philosophers proclaimed the capacity of
reason to undermine faith and superstition and reveal the
laws of nature to which man and the universe adhered,
David Hume undermined reason itself. Passions are the
motivating force in man and reason merely serves their
ends. By demonstrating that the cause and effect rela-
tionship so vital to man's existence rested on custom,
Hume established habit as life's guide and proclaimed the
importance of belief in everyday living. Most dramatically,
Hume shook the Enlightenment's resolve to know the world
and apply this knowledge in pursuit of progress, by ques-
tioning the possibility of knowledge, or at least its
validity in view of the inadequate tools we are constrained
to use.

Hume's pre-eminence as an empiricist necessitates
the acknowledgement, if not the analysis, of his views by
historians who consider the scientific method the foundation of Enlightenment philosophy. While these writers differ in their attempts to integrate Hume's philosophy into their particular portraits of a unified and reasonable Enlightenment, they cannot ignore his conclusions. Therefore, these historians have had to recognize the case for the limitations of reason.

G. R. Cragg in *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century* notes Hume's threat to Deist "theology," specifically its claims to have discovered "sure grounds on which belief can rest." Cragg outlines two basic Deist assumptions—

(1) "nature's laws are clear and unalterable, [so] man's deductions from them must be equally so; and . . . [2] the exercise of reason can dispel all the mysteries and uncertainties of life"—that Hume devastates through his demonstration that "man is not rational in the sense that the Deists imagined, and a natural state of enlightenment does not exist." Hume's epistemology was directed toward understanding how man responds to his environment so as to "interpret the nature of our knowledge and define its limits." Cragg characterizes Hume's position on reason as "an uncompromising challenge to the cherished tenets of the eighteenth century" and concludes that Hume more than any other man . . . undermined the foundation on which [the] convictions [of the Age of Reason] rested . . . . Hume showed that the nature of reason had been seriously misconstrued: in spite of its
confidence, it could lead only to the bleakest scepticism.34

Other historians acknowledge Hume's contention that reason is incapable of discovering ultimate truths. Robert Anchor's treatment of Hume depicts the rational order of nature as only a premise making science similar to religion since "neither is capable of strictly rational and objective truths."35 Knowledge then is "mere opinion."36 Anchor further observes that Hume limited reason in order "to show that man is more than his reason; that reason is but one tool in guiding him in his search for values."37 Similarly, Alfred Cobban asserts Hume's argument that the assumptions men make in day to day living cannot be arrived at through philosophical speculation. Indeed, there can be "no rational basis for moral action: ... [therefore] the basis of moral behaviour must lie elsewhere than in reason."38 Ernest Mossner agrees that Hume showed knowledge to be "at best, probable" and that it is achieved by custom and habit not through reason.39

Not only is reason incapable of metaphysical conclusions, but according to Hume, its influence regarding human actions is also severely limited and historians acknowledge this contention. Frederick Copleston quotes Hume's assertion that "reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will"; it "can never oppose passion in the direction of the will."40 Lester Crocker suggests that for Hume
human nature was everywhere the same but the common denominator was man's passions. John B. Stewart clarifies Hume's distinction between reason and passion through his observation that men commonly mistake calm passions for reason, that "strength of mind" is actually "calm passions above the violent." Mossner points out that "it is the key to [Hume's] teaching that man, [is] a feeling rather than primarily a reasoning creature," and that he is dominated "by sentiment, emotion, passion, appetite." Peter Gay essentially concurs with these observations commenting that the implications of Hume's epistemology were "extremely disturbing."

Historians also acknowledge Hume's contention that reason's inadequacy is satisfied by belief," a peculiar sentiment or lively conception produced by habit." Collingwood observes that while Hume showed reason "incapable of dispelling the clouds of doubt," he perceived "that Nature herself (our human nature) suffices for that purpose and lays upon us in our practical life an absolute necessity to live and talk and act like other people." Hume's philosophy doubts the existence of the world, but Hume observed that men do not "doubt the existence of material objects," therefore, as H. R. Klocher points out, Hume did not question whether there are things, but "why we believe that there are things."
As to Hume's objectives in constructing his epistemology, A. P. Cavendish in *David Hume* believes that Hume was trying "to persuade us to abandon the search for a higher kind of knowledge." The limitations of man's imagination and experience limit his understanding. Pointing out Hume's lack of preconceptions and his empirical evaluation, Cavendish comments that Hume does not tell us "how we ought to proceed, but how we do proceed, how in fact as human beings we are bound to proceed." Historians generally concur in the recognition of Hume's attempt to limit the claims of philosophy and to define its proper sphere. S. N. Hampshire asserts that Hume tried to show that "there can be no knowledge that can be called distinctively philosophical knowledge, no hope of rational insight into the structure of reality." Description of habit and custom is possible but the belief "that there must be some ultimate justification of our habits of thought, which is external to [them]" is an illusion. Hampshire further notes that Hume "also looked for the sources of metaphysical enthusiasm, for the type of mistake that we are making when we are inclined to claim some ultimate insight into the nature of things, an insight that is independent of experience." According to Collingwood, Hume showed that no form of knowledge was anything "more than a system of reasonable beliefs." Peter Gay notes that Hume never intended to explain the original qualities of human nature, for it was imperative
that a "true philosopher" refrain from "searching into causes." Agreeing that Hume's conception of philosophy's function never involved justification of ultimate beliefs, Norman Kemp Smith describes Hume's intent "to trace [ultimate beliefs] to their sources in the constitution of our human nature."56

"Enlightened" Reason and Natural Law

Acknowledging Hume's method and conclusions regarding reason and its inadequacy for revealing ultimate truth and directing human behavior, Enlightenment historians also describe a contrary opinion among other prominent philosophers. Despite Hume's conclusions so persuasively and scientifically presented to the Enlightenment flock, most philosophes clung to the concepts of progress through reason and natural law which provided ultimate justification for their program.

According to G. P. Gooch, Voltaire "attributed progress exclusively to reason"; for him reason survived despite all attempts to discredit it. Describing Voltaire as "the greatest publicist and foremost fighter on behalf of reason that the world has ever seen," Robert Anchor designates him "more than any other single philosophé," the ideologue of the Enlightenment.58 Praising Newton for his demonstration of an ordered universe and Locke for refuting the concept of innate ideas and showing that men as rational beings
could employ knowledge in the attainment of "earthly happiness," Voltaire constructed the Enlightenment creed of natural law accessible to all mankind through reason. Baumer observes changes in Voltaire's opinion throughout his long life but states that Voltaire "still lived partly in a static world of eternal laws, of perfect models, . . . , of timeless reason," and that although Voltaire would not like it, his "clear picture of what nature was" could "be called a system." Lester Crocker points up the dilemma of all the philosophes in portraying Voltaire as "a man divided between opposing intellectual commitments." He recognizes the importance of empirical data but cannot accept the diversity and pessimism such data suggests, opting instead for universal principles exalting man--"God has given us a principle of universal reason, as he has given feathers to birds and fur to bears; and this principle is so constant that it subsists despite all the passions that fight it." Crocker does not fail to note that this view is "in logical harmony with the Cartesian psychology, which Voltaire strongly rejected." Voltaire was tormented by the question of man's freedom, wanting to believe in it while confronted with the evidence of experience and reason, that man was merely a machine operating according to God's will. Crocker describes Voltaire's torment over "our non-use of our reason" and his despair in the realization that the canaille--the vulgar--would never become reasonable,
but in doing so he appears to miss an important point. He writes that much of Voltaire's work "reveals his distrust of the human reason."\textsuperscript{64} This is an unfortunate phrase in that it implies a scepticism regarding reason similar to Hume's. It was not reason that Voltaire doubted; it was man's willingness to use his reason, his desire to be reasonable. This is repeatedly apparent in Voltaire's opinions concerning the "vulgar" and it has an important implication. For Voltaire, if someone disagreed with his scheme of nature revealed to him through the reason common to all humanity, the opposing view could be dismissed as "unreasonable," even insidious, since it reflected the person's refusal to employ the mental gift God gave him and his resistance to the truth. This person (or group) could be characterized with the Church as a perpetrator of lies.

In characteristic fashion Peter Gay acknowledges Voltaire's tendency toward ultimate truth--natural law--while at the same time, trying to retain for him recognition as an empiricist. Gay writes that Voltaire maintained that everything beyond reason was "chimerical"; it constituted the realm of the "nonsensical," not the "sacred."\textsuperscript{65} Where reason could not illuminate a question, "man must console himself with that philosophical modesty so characteristic of Voltaire's heroes, Newton and Locke."\textsuperscript{66} Not only was Voltaire philosophically immodest, he was also philosophically dishonest. According to Gay, Voltaire affirmed
natural law but was "uneasy with it." "As an empiricist, . . . , he [Voltaire] is driven to doubt the existence of a law in which he would like to believe. He solves the dilemma (unsatisfactorily) by arguing that there is empirical proof for the existence of a universal, uniform law of nature."\(^67\) Gay further comments that whereas the philosophes who knew science best did not fear it (he includes Hume among these), Voltaire had to have "final causes" and he refused to relinquish them. There was a "confusion in Voltaire's mind, of a yearning for a palpable connection between science and purpose," but Gay insists that this yearning did not shape Voltaire's philosophy and therefore did not ruin it.\(^68\) This conclusion is extremely tenuous as it is obvious that the belief—faith—that there must be a purpose, direction, answer, or plan to the universe was central to Voltaire's philosophy. Gay demonstrates this himself where he contrasts Voltaire's pessimism in *Candide* with his predictions of the "inevitable triumph of philosophy" regardless of setbacks because "men learn to think."\(^69\) Since Voltaire could not be honest with himself, it is inappropriate to designate him a philosopher, let alone an empiricist.

Rousseau is an elusive character in Enlightenment history. As mentioned above, there is much historical disagreement as to whether he belongs to the Age of Reason or the Romantic era. A similar debate revolves around his
attitude toward reason and its function in the drama of human existence. Many historians emphasize Rousseau's inclination to "depreciate reason in favor of sentiment and instinct." Crane Brinton notes that Rousseau was no friend of reason; he observed "the spontaneous, outgoing, loving-kindness of the heart as displayed by simple and uncorrupted persons" to be "natural." This "natural state," however, existed before civilization and was lost when first man claimed personal ownership of property. As Brinton points out, though, Rousseau never explained why his innocent "natural" man would behave so unnaturally.

Baumer claims that Rousseau urged a strict control of man's passions, and reason played a major role in guiding the conscience which reined in the passions. For Rousseau, "conscience, . . . , provided the right instincts. Reason, . . . , provided rules for moral conduct." Regarding his empiricism, historians generally concur in a negative evaluation. Crocker shows Rousseau constructing his philosophical argument after and in support of his beliefs. "In order to prove man fundamentally unsocial, and in order to paint the state of nature as he wished it, Rousseau had to deprive him of almost all the qualities that make him the being we know as 'man.'" Cobban states that Rousseau realized the goodness of man's nature and the evil of social institutions, not empirically but in a mystical experience. Regarding ultimate truths, historians observe a believer in
Rousseau. In his *Profession de foi* Rousseau states that there is "an immutable Natural Law" revealed to man through his conscience.\textsuperscript{75} He believed that man had "a unitary self and a self-subsistent mind, both of which we know intuitively," for they are beyond reason's comprehension.\textsuperscript{76} Baumer writes that Rousseau was deeply influenced by natural law but "modified . . . [it] to suit his own purposes" and quotes *Emile*: "The eternal laws of nature and order exist, . . . . They take precedence over positive law for the wise man; they are written in the depths of his heart by conscience and reason; to be free he must obey them."\textsuperscript{77} Rousseau, then, disdained reason's ability to reveal the truth, but he did not doubt truth's existence or the correctness of his understanding of it. He observed that "one 'must know what ought to be in order to judge what is.'"\textsuperscript{78} Rousseau merely designated tools other than reason for truth's revelation. His empiricism is nonexistent; his belief total and undemonstrable. His philosophy therefore cannot be considered secular.

Although Diderot "praised the passions more freely and more frequently than his fellow philosophes,"\textsuperscript{79} he was not neglectful of the importance of man's reason for his era and humanity's future. According to Baumer, Diderot saw the eighteenth century as "'a philosophical age' in which thinking men, employing the laws of reason, found their rules, even in aesthetics, not in authoritative books of
the past but in 'nature.'

Either historians have misinterpreted him or he suffered the same philosophical confusion as Voltaire, for Peter Gay comments that Diderot could not accept the "verdict of Newtonian science; he refused to believe in a nature largely empty, populated by cold, colorless corpuscles and wholly indifferent to moral questions." Like his colleagues, Diderot perceived a universal truth ranging from physics to biology to morality. "Nature, he insisted, . . ., is one vast interconnected organic whole in which the steps from matter to life, from science to ethics, from observation to admiration are not merely possible but proper and indeed essential." Like Rousseau, Diderot could not accept "the teaching implied by Newton . . . that science discloses what is and says nothing about what should be." Diderot observed that everything changes, only the whole is eternal; nothing had absolute justification except the whole. An empiricist could not maintain this position. Without describing, measuring, or explaining "the whole," Diderot could proclaim its infinity. He was subscribing to a spiritual reality that he could not communicate to other men in a clear, commonly apprehended fashion.

Eighteenth century economic theory also looked to universal principles directing the marketplace. The Physiocrats "postulated natural laws of economics prior to, and not to be suspended by, governments." Not instituted by man or his governments, these laws were recognized
"as conforming to the supreme reason which governs the universe." Gay elaborates on the Physiocrats' scheme of economics indicating their belief that a society's prosperity was directly related to a society's conformity to the laws of nature. "It was the primary task of society to increase its net product, and the primary task of economists to show society how to increase it." Adam Smith, the darling of twentieth century American conservatives, postulated similar tenets of economic theory. Noting that men were motivated by self-interest, Smith maintained that this "worked automatically to produce an identity of interests, or the general good." Nature assured that individuals worked for the public good even if they had no intentions to do so. The "invisible hand" led a person pursuing private gain to promote the general welfare. He further announced that if the "Natural Order" was obeyed "an equilibrium between economic supply and demand" would be the result. An "invisible hand" is not a demonstrable concept. The entire bent of Smith's philosophy exudes a "wish-it-were-so" mentality rather than an objective conclusion based on documented facts. Smith's continued popularity among many modern economists and politicians suggests dramatic implications for current economic policies (see below).

Enlightenment historians note the propensity of other philosophes to cling to universal truth even though empirical
investigation could not substantiate their eschatology.
Baumer faults Condorcet's empiricism in his contention that natural rights are discoverable through reason. Condorcet commented that the only use for the study of comparative law was "to give to reason the support of observation and experience."9 Like Smith, he also observed a "general law" whereby the pursuit of self-interest automatically, even unknowingly, served the general interest.90 Baumer also ranks Montesquieu among the believers "in the natural law tradition."91 Crocker finds D'Alembert unable to doubt that all bodies of the universe "make a unified system" dependent on each other.92 Cobban presents Locke's conviction that "moral truths possess the same certainty as mathematical and are similarly capable of demonstration," and notes that Locke failed to demonstrate any.93 Gay recounts Kant's conviction that the "invisible hand . . . benefits the species while it crushes the individual.
Progress simply must take place; it is too important, too deeply enmeshed in man's very existence to be denied."94 Samuel Johnson was convinced that "it is impossible not to conceive that men in their original state were equal."95 The fact is, this scenario can be conceived and therefore, according to Hume, it is undemonstrable and unknowable.

There is then a consensus of sorts among Enlightenment historians regarding the role of reason and the philosophes'
enthusiasm--faith--in ultimate justification manifested through natural law. Robert Anchor summarizes this view thus:

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

Noting the devastating attacks on reason by scholars like Hume, G. R. Cragg contends that "reason, though shaken, continued to be one of the controlling concepts of eighteenth century thought." Cassirer portrays an eighteenth century "imbued with a belief in the unity and immutability of reason." Crocker quotes Basil Willey who states that regardless of the difference of opinion, "it was not the ambiguity of 'Nature' which people felt most strongly; . . . [but its] authority and . . . universal acceptability." Acknowledging the philosophes' realization of the influence of the passions on man's motivation and actions, Gay points out that the philosophes considered the passions "dangerous gifts" that should be controlled with reason. He also observes that despite disagreements over reason's precise function or the exact extent of its impact, "nearly all [the philosophes] saw the world moving in measured pace toward good sense." Frank Manual detects the conviction among "intellectuals" that "laws governing man's actions in society" did exist and were discoverable "in precisely the
same manner that natural scientists had reached their conclusions." Moral laws formulated through this method would assure "greater social progress for humanity" for once men became aware of these laws, they "would inevitably follow them." Moral truths were unchanging and universally accessible, once society was "governed in accordance with the laws of reason, . . . progress, justice, and the good life were assured." In similar fashion Crane Brinton sees reason as the eighteenth century's vehicle for progress. It "will enable us to find human institutions, human relations that are 'natural'; . . . Reason will clear up the mess that superstition, revelation, faith . . . have piled up here on earth." Baumer concurs in this overall interpretation of reason in the Enlightenment commenting that "natural law showed remarkable durability, more than it is given credit for in recent historiography" throughout the century. Not with David Hume, however.

Both Hume and his fellow philosophes claimed empirical origins for their conclusions, yet Hume posited a philosophy diametrically opposed to that of the philosophe "family" and the "accepted" historical interpretation. Peter Gay writes that the philosophes criticized the seventeenth century systems-makers for making "conjectures drawn from fancy" and consulting "their imaginations instead of interrogating nature." The central concern of the philosophes was "to find and establish the limits of reason."
It is apparent, however, that this is precisely where the philosophes went wrong, and historians have not missed this point while for the most part, they have failed to pursue the dramatic implications of this inconsistency. Crocker notes that "empirical historicism... indicated that, . . . , human behavior testified to few if any absolute uniformities." Nevertheless, Enlightenment philosophy generally maintained a single, universal nature of man. Crocker concludes, then, that the philosophes' "procedures often took them too far away from experience, into sheer speculation." Becker suggests the philosophes were "reconciling the facts of human experience with truths already, in some fashion, revealed to them." Rather than basing their conclusions on an observation of nature, the philosophes actually manipulated reason to support concepts in which they already believed. Krieger notes Kant's acknowledgement of a lesson he learned from Rousseau--"how to use thought for the purpose of 'establishing the rights of humanity',' for as Peter Gay points out, "if one had thoughts about the social order, they may as well be reasonable thoughts." The degeneration of objective and cool analysis into unreasonable conviction is reflected in Krieger's description of the "logic of [the philosophes'] anti-Christianity...: things that are opposed to joined things must be joined themselves," i.e., the enemies of our enemies are our friends. Even Peter Gay
concedes that "the philosophes were not themselves wholly free from the belief in final causes" and that Kant "surrendered his philosophical detachment to his will to believe." The philosophes were not empiricists and this failure is reflected not only in their methodology but in their adherence to the concepts of reason and natural law for which they could offer no demonstrable proof. They had no better grounds for their philosophy than did the Church, yet they clung to their ideals as righteously as Protestant reformers. Becker noticed the resemblance but failed to observe in Hume the measuring stick of the philosophes' superficiality or outright hypocrisy, for Hume showed that reason was no better an indicator of ultimate truth than revelation and natural law no more demonstrable than God's will.

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

[His] Treaties went too far for his colleagues . . . , since his extension of skepticism from metaphysical to all rational coherence among things struck at the assumptions they tacitly held. But they chose rather to ignore than to refute it, and he remained a philosophe in good standing . . . because his rigorous empiricism and his hypercritical use of reason simply carried to an extreme the particular emphasis of the early Enlightenment.119

Alfred Cobban has commented that David Hume "put a time bomb under Western philosophy, and it has never been the same again."120 It would seem, however, that the bomb is still ticking as the implications of Hume's philosophy continue to be largely overlooked by historians, if not actually refuted. If historians insist that "reason was the Enlightenment's sun and it could shine within the minds of every man," then David Hume cannot be considered an "Enlightenment" philosopher, even though "he brought into light with great clarity what any theory of knowledge ought to, namely the very nature of human understanding."121 If historians insist that "the Enlightenment built its theory of knowledge on the blueprints of empiricism,"122 then David Hume may well be the only authentic enlightened philosopher and historians must accept his case imposing severe limitations on man's reason. Most historians follow a middle course characterizing the philosophes as aware of reason's limitations, but content and enthusiastic about its potential within these limits. Baumer observes that
reason was restricted to "the world of appearances. On the other hand, reason could read that world, the world of empirical nature, very well, deduce general laws therefrom, and thus hope to control better the course of human action."123

Even a modified view of reason such as this misses the essential point in Hume's philosophy. Hume taught us that experience, our only basis for knowledge, cannot assure us that "workable habits are the truth."124 Our belief in necessary causality "is a habit of thinking, . . . , founded on patterns of experience. That it is a useful habit is no proof that it holds true of reality."125 This idea undercuts all possibility of ultimate justification for any action undertaken. Historians, however, have generally been unwilling to accept this conclusion and while continuing to characterize the philosophes as scientific and empirical, end up acknowledging philosophe "systems" that have no demonstrable, and therefore believable, foundation. The result has been history that confounds rather than clarifies and an inability to accurately assess the legacy we have inherited. Gay, as usual, is an excellent example. In attempting to maintain the mantle of science for his heroes, he observes that while the philosophes "were destroying the logic of natural law with their epistemology, their sociology, and their history, they continued to use its language as a support for their social criticism and guide for their reform program."126 Their talk of "natural law"
was chiefly "rhetoric" in the implementation of social reform. Such a characterization evokes no small consternation on the part of the reader. If the philosophes were scientists invoking a justification for their program that they knew did not exist, they were frauds at worst and authoritarians at best, knowing what was in the best interests of society (and one must wonder how they knew) and using "smokescreen" means to their end. If the philosophes were sincere believers in a "natural law" that maintained the universe and man's dignity, then, as Hume clearly demonstrated, they were not scientists, and having abandoned a scientific basis for their philosophy, the philosophes instituted a new Age of Faith as Carl Becker has suggested.

Hume had great hopes that his philosophy would revolutionize thinking and in the process give man a more accurate and, therefore, more useful understanding about himself. Having observed in himself the nature of conviction, he attempted to demonstrate the benefits of restricting our inquiries to those in our experience.

Let men be once fully persuaded of these two principles, That there is nothing in any object, consider'd in itself, which can afford us a reason for drawing a conclusion beyond it; and That even after the observation of the frequent or constant conjunction of objects, we have no reason to draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have had experience; ... this will throw them [men] ... loose from all common systems.

The critical effect of accepting the above principles would
be the formulation of a truly "secular" philosophy. Hume maintained that a "false hypothesis . . . [can] maintain some appearance of truth, while it keeps wholly in generals, makes use of undefined terms, and employs comparisons, instead of instances." 129 His remedy against such confusion was to clarify ideas by assigning an impression to each (see above). In this way "we may reasonably hope to remove all dispute, which may arise, concerning their [ideas'] nature and reality." 130 By basing philosophy on experience it would be comprehensible to all. At least there would be less confusion and misinterpretation if "spiritual" concepts--those incapable of demonstration--were relinquished. Becker realized that the philosophes may have relinquished the Church but they clung to ideas as spiritual and undemonstrable as was the Trinity. They substituted one truth for another and as Becker points out, their ideal (paradise) was largely reminiscent of Christian morals--peace, compassion, dignity. By failing to produce a secular philosophy--one communicable and comprehensible to all men--the philosophes demonstrated that "believers," regardless of their particular truths, behave in similar fashion. As guardians of the truth, they feel impelled, if not obligated, to crusade for it even if it means imposing it on the unenlightened masses. Hume, aware of the inconclusive nature of man's understanding, warned against this pitfall.
Nothing is more requisite for a true philosopher, than to restrain the intemperate desire of searching into causes, and having establish'd any doctrine upon a sufficient number of experiments, rest contented with that, when he sees a farther examination would lead him into obscure and uncertain speculations.\textsuperscript{131}

For Hume, the empiricist, if truth existed, it was unknowable; therefore, arguing the superiority of one spiritual concept over another was futile. What he offered mankind was a freedom and dignity as yet unattained in the twentieth century. Hume hoped his \textit{Treatise} would help "shake off the yoke of authority, [and] accustom men to think for themselves."\textsuperscript{132}
NOTES

1Brinton, *Shaping of Modern Thought*, p. 117.

2Ibid.

3Hume, *Treatise*, p. 43.

4Ibid., p. 44.

5Ibid., p. 46.

6In his discussion of Hume, Peter Gay describes the Enlightenment as a "psychological age, . . . when philosophy had turned from metaphysics to epistemology." *The Enlightenment*, 1:408. If Hume is atypical of Enlightenment philosophers then he cannot be used to demonstrate the era's overall preference for epistemology (based on empiricism) over metaphysics. Few philosophes labored to reveal the operations of our understanding and this may explain their failure as genuine, or at least consistent, empiricists. We are presented, however, with another example of Gay's using "atypical" evidence to create his apparently preconceived "typical" characterization of the Enlightenment.


9Ibid., p. 58.


11Ibid.

12Ibid., pp. 26-27.

13Ibid., p. 29.


15Hume, *Enquiries*, p. 44.

16Ibid., p. 74.
17 Hume, Treatise, p. 144.
18 Hume, Enquiries, p. 49.
19 Hume, Treatise, p. 462.
20 Ibid., p. 511.
21 Ibid., p. 510.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., p. 267.
24 Ibid., p. 315.
26 Hume, Enquiries, p. 158.
27 Hume, Treatise, p. 64.
28 Hume, Enquiries, p. 287.
29 Ibid., p. 62.
30 Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 89.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p. 127.
33 Ibid., p. 128.
34 Ibid., p. 125.
35 Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 63.
36 Ibid., p. 64.
37 Ibid., p. 65.
38 Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 216.
39 Mossner, Life of David Hume, pp. 126, 125.


Mossner, *Introduction to Treatise*, by David Hume, p. 17.

Ibid., p. 22.

Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 1:401. "Hume's epistemology and psychology reinforced the lessons of his immediate experience. In Hume's view, knowledge, though adequate to the conduct of human affairs, always remained ultimately uncertain; behavior was governed by belief and habit...; the passions and the imagination generally prevailed over the constructions of reason and even the calculations of self-interest." Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 2:454.

Quoted in Mossner, *Life of David Hume*, p. 127.

Collingwood, *Idea of History*, p. 73. Robert Anchor accuses Hume of undercutting empiricism through his theory of causality but this misses Hume's point. As Collingwood points out, Hume demonstrated the limits of empiricism in ascertaining ultimate causes or truths, but he also noted that man's nature impels him to accept the evidence of his senses and rely on his experience of cause and effect even though it cannot be philosophically justified. Empiricism then helps men know enough to function but cannot enlighten him with regard to ultimate truth.


Ibid., p. 78. Cavendish maintains that Hume implies that belief is not an object of choice.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 5.


Ibid., p. 59.

Baumer, Modern European Thought, pp. 153, 201-202. Baumer maintains that Voltaire, the English deists, the Physiocrats, even Montesquieu were aware of the relativity of human customs through their observations yet adhered to a belief in "changeless verities." This, he admits, suggests a rationalistic rather than empiricist sort of thinking. He contends, however, that this conclusion would be misleading "since Voltaire . . . preferred Locke to Descartes, whereas others, more radical philosophically than he, . . ., David Hume, discovered principles of regularity in the phenomena they observed." These principles says Baumer, were often the same as the "changeless verities." It should be noted, however, that semantically, the term "principles of regularity" connotes a more flexible, less authoritative characterization than "verities." Hume was most conscious of the problem of semantics and it seems likely that his avoidance of the term "verities" suggests his acknowledgement that "principles" could, with time, be proved wrong.

Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 211.

Ibid., p. 184.

Ibid., p. 140.

Ibid., p. 222.

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

Ibid., p. 33.

Ibid., p. 41.

69 Ibid., 2:104, 105. Robert Anchor confirms this "confusion" in Voltaire's philosophy noting that Voltaire confirmed Pascal's view "that reason alone, . . . , must end in scepticism," but could not abandon deism "for fear that the world would seem altogether arbitrary and meaningless" (as Hume suggested). Anchor depicts Voltaire as unable to accept his own conclusions in Candide: (1) avoid the world to avoid suffering, and (2) work so as not to think. The Enlightenment Tradition, pp. 65, 67.

70 Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 94.

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

72 Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 173.

73 Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 94.

74 Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 149. Cobban also states that Rousseau used the "state of nature" concept as a "hypothetical starting-point" to facilitate his inquiry rather than a description of the true origin of things. Ibid., p. 150.

75 Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 192.

76 Ibid., p. 129.

77 Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 222. Baumer notes writings of Rousseau that seem to "banish natural laws and natural rights from his state of nature" but claims that Rousseau's intention was not "to rule out inalienable rights" but simply to demonstrate that man was unaware of "moral notions" until he formed society. This does not mean such rights did not exist before this realization.

78 Ibid.


80 Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 141.


82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.
88 Ibid., p. 231.
89 Ibid., p. 220.
90 Ibid., p. 231.
91 Ibid., pp. 221-222.
93 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 76.
95 Ibid., p. 422.
97 Cragg, *Reason and Authority*, p. viii.
101 Ibid., p. 99.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid., pp. 40, 44.

109 Ibid., p. 198.


115 Ibid., 2:105.


117 Crocker, *Age of Crisis*, p. 239.

118 Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 1:13. Gay considers Hume's lack of influence on the philosophes a "missed opportunity." Actually, it is more likely that the opportunity to assess and incorporate Hume's views into the Enlightenment creed was never understood by the philosophes or was consciously resisted.

119 Krieger, *Kings and Philosophers*, p. 159. It might be noted here that skepticism is an "extreme" only to believers.

120 Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 135.

121 Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 643.

122 Ibid., p. 633.


124 Ginsberg, "David Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 637.

125 Ibid., p. 642.


128 Hume, Treatise, p. 189.

129 Hume, Enquiries, p. 287.

130 Ibid., p. 22.

131 Hume, Treatise, p. 60.

132 Quoted in Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 125.
CHAPTER IV
THE ENLIGHTENMENT LEGACY

The Failure of Enlightenment History

Amidst all the qualification of their conclusions, Enlightenment historians predominantly depict an enlightened era based on empiricism and reason, characterized by deism, optimism, activism, and a secular philosophy. Peter Gay sums up the consensus describing the spirit of the Enlightenment as an "openness to experiment undeterred by its respect for the past, its disdain for authority, and its reliance on autonomous reason, good sense, and experience, all for the sake of freedom and happiness." More important, there exists a consensus regarding the Enlightenment's legacy and it credits the Enlightenment with all the liberal ideals of modern society and all manifestations thereof. This includes democratic government, freedom of speech, tolerance, in essence, values summed up by Walter Dorn as "the belief in the oneness of humanity, the rights of man, . . . respect for the human personality, . . . freedom and equality" (p. 10). The philosophes maintained that this "overall beneficent design or goal, [was] achievable in spite of, but essentially by working through, individual men or groups of men, who did not seek it in the least."
It has been demonstrated, however, that one of the most historically pre-eminent philosophers was at odds with his era in a very disturbing way. David Hume refuted the Enlightenment's acclamation of reason, the deist "design" theory, the grounds for optimism, and the rationale for activism, while representing the purest empiricism and constructing the only secular philosophy of the age. Misunderstood and unappreciated as a philosopher among his "peers" (mainly because they disapproved of his conclusions), Hume's nineteenth century notoriety rested on his skepticism and his primary achievement "of awakening Kant from his 'dogmatic slumber.'" Only in the twentieth century has he finally received his due as a philosopher, but historians have yet to accurately assess his Enlightenment role especially in terms of the era's legacy. This assessment is extremely important as it can illuminate many of the questions and incongruities of modern society.

Hume "believed that his predecessors and even his contemporaries had been content with answers which had no meaning." In order to pursue his inquiry in a meaningful way, Hume strictly adhered to the empirical method. The resulting conclusions observed "that no possible experience would constitute knowledge of ultimate reasons" and as a consequence "no sciences concerning matters of fact [could] . . . be absolute; . . . only highly probable." D. G. C. Macnabb observes that Hume was mainly concerned with
Rationalists claiming deductive reasoning as a tool for speculative and practical philosophy. Dismissing the claim as false, Hume maintained "that pure deductive logic [could] never establish any proposition asserting a matter of fact and existence, or decide a moral question."

Questions of fact could be decided only through experience, moral questions through feeling. Hume's objective was "establishing a skeptical theory of knowledge," not ascertaining the nature of things. Nevertheless, Hume did not reject natural beliefs. Beliefs must prevail over critical reason; they should not be abandoned. His interest lay in trying to discover the theoretical reasons supporting these beliefs which could be accounted for psychologically but never philosophically proven. Hume was not suggesting that man knows nothing, rather he was challenging "the foundation of that knowledge as truth about reality." He maintained that there is no necessary relationship between our experience of the world and the world's true nature. He therefore rejected all the Enlightenment absolutes from natural law and rights to the question of taste. It is apparent, then, that Hume cannot be generalized into the accepted Enlightenment character on the basis of his method or his conclusions. It is equally apparent, however, that he cannot be ignored. "No one has refuted his [Hume's] contention that... the connection between cause and effect is empirical and not necessary." His theories regarding
the physical world and our minds must be acknowledged. Sir Isaiah Berlin observed that "no man has influenced the history of philosophy to a deeper and more disturbing degree;" and Einstein's biographer stated "that 'the philosopher whose views Einstein felt helped him most was David Hume.'" Hume's philosophy is not insignificant or irrelevant and historians must revise the accepted Enlightenment interpretation to incorporate Hume and the implications of his philosophy more satisfactorily into their renditions.

Such a re-evaluation of Hume might precipitate a clearer understanding of the Enlightenment as a whole. As discussed above historians of the era propound a similar attitude in their studies--the unity theme, but have failed to substantiate satisfactorily their concept with their facts. While the general public recognizes a historical age called the Enlightenment, it is improbable that they could specifically describe their understanding of it, mainly because historians have had a similar problem. The question of who or what is clearly representative of the era is undecided. The existence of the eighteenth century "attitude" is not clear. The examples of contradiction, inconsistency, obscurity, and narrowly subjective evaluation are too widespread to allow the historical acknowledgement of an Age of Reason. While Cassirer proclaims the liberation of philosophy from systems-making during the
Enlightenment, he often uses the terms "doctrine" and "system" in describing the new philosophy. Margaret Libby's indictment of Voltaire's method and consequently his conclusions persuasively refutes Cassirer's specific claim that Voltaire did not indulge in systems-making (pp. 70-72, 65). Herbert Dieckmann accuses Cassirer of contradicting his own principle, that "one cannot think of the eighteenth century in terms of philosophic systems" because of his own dialectical approach to studying the era. "There is no plurality of intellectual worlds [in Cassirer's interpretation], but either a contrast in view of a synthesis or a passage from a lower stage to the next higher." Cragg notes Locke's "fundamental contribution [of] gather[ing] into one system all the beliefs about God and man and nature which the majority of his contemporaries were ready to accept." Krieger writes of Rousseau's "total system of freedom" and his inspiring Kant "to devote his whole philosophical system to 'establishing the rights of humanity.'" Peter Gay contends that Hume was unconcerned with the consequences of belief, attending rather to its logic and causes (p. 31), while Cavendish and Smith maintain that Moral Philosophy was the very center of Hume's thinking and writings, not to mention Hume's own statement that "moral reasoning, which forms the greater part of human knowledge, ... is the source of all human action and behaviour" and his extensive writings on the subject such as the renowned
Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals. Furthermore, as demonstrated in this study, it is difficult through any stretch of the imagination to accept Gay's contention that Hume belongs with the other philosophes on the basis of his world view (p. 35). Although Voltaire claimed to have learned to doubt (p. 64), Baumer points out that he "did not doubt the immutable laws and forms of nature, or nature's God." 19 While others maintain the traditional Enlightenment interpretation, a few take note that the philosophes' hopes for man "rested partly on an assumption of rationality and good will which much of their own theory denied," and that their "views contained their own inner contradictions, and serious, even fatal shortcomings." 20

This confusion in Enlightenment history is best demonstrated in the work of Peter Gay. For instance, Gay writes of the philosophes' "devotion to the critical spirit that treats all positions as tentative--including their own." 21 He observes the "drying up of religious fervor" and "the campaign against 'enthusiasm.'" 22 Yet at the same time he refers to the philosophes' "missionary zeal for making converts." 23 He repeatedly outlines their mission and their indefatigable dedication to it: Voltaire was "a pagan bent on propagating his cause at all costs." 24 Gay proposes that the philosophes' "relativism was not disinterested but in the service of absolutes." 25 This use of contradictory terms and contradictory characterizations is meaningless.
How can a missionary who is prepared to convert followers consider his position tentative? How can Gay claim that "religious fervor" was on the wane while his depiction of the philosophes' attitude and activities precisely reflects such a fervor? Gay's analysis clearly offers no meaningful interpretation to the reader.

Enlightenment histories are not only characterized by contradictions and inconsistencies within and among their interpretations, but also a much more insidious aspect, that is, the questions that are not asked, the analyses and explanations historians have not demanded from their subject. By accepting the superficial picture without critical evaluation of it, historians have essentially accepted and provided answers without meaning. Historians have accepted the philosophes' proclamations of their standards, goals, and achievements, while for the most part neglecting to observe how the philosophes failed their own program. Cassirer fails to perceive the fact that the philosophes were doing exactly what he says they were not doing, that is, creating new systems and doctrines to replace the old discredited ones (p. 4). Bredvold errs in taking the philosophes at their word regarding the application of the scientific method to all fields of inquiry and subjecting such to mathematical formula. Although wielding the "systematic spirit" righteously and definitively as the key to understanding and happiness, they seldom actually indulged
their fancy and firmly adhered to the Law of Nature Bredvold believes they abandoned. Peter Gay contends that "the point of the Enlightenment's anthropology was that man is an adult, dependent on himself."26 He does not, however, contrast this statement with the philosophes' attitude towards the canaille. Gay should question the contradiction here, for if the former statement requires qualification such that only some men were adults, capable of enlightenment, the implications are dramatic and disturbing. Gay further observes the enlightened opinion that tradition was no good reason for doing anything; "nostalgia drives reasonable criticism and reasonable praise to unreasonable lengths:... [it] is the most sophistic, most deceptive form regression can take."27 How else, however, can one explain the Social Contract, the noble savage, the state of nature so admired in the philosophe concept of primitive societies? Gay describes how Rouseau "idealized simplicity, affection, family life, bucolic feasts"28—all aspects of primitivism he wished to introduce into civilization. This is nothing but nostalgia but Gay apparently misses the point.

More important is the tendency of historians to accept the philosophes' prescriptions without acknowledging or explaining the philosophes' inability to live up to them. If the philosophes "lied in order to tell the truth," "preached peace" without believing it could happen, or "advocated... relativism, [while] generally neglect[ing]
it,29 the validity of their creed must be suspect, and the historian should evaluate such inconsistency and judge the effectiveness of ideals that cannot be realized or the reputations of those espousing yet contradicting them. Voltaire is a good example. Historians note Voltaire's criticism of Holbach for "set[ting] up his own thesis as dogma and defend[ing] it with fanatical zeal."30 Yet the fact that Voltaire did precisely the same thing, often defending his system by ridiculing rather than refuting the opposition seems to evoke little historical interest and essentially no criticism. Voltaire's history and his belief in natural law preclude a description of empiricist and his conviction that because Newton was right the Enlightenment (based on his method) was also right denies him the title of skeptic. Most historians, however, persist in granting him both. Readers are further consternated by Voltaire as "a humanitarian who knew how to hate," as a collaborator in the Encyclopédie "in which he never really believed,"31 and as an anti-Semitic preacher of tolerance who was never interested in overcoming his prejudice.32 Other philosophes resemble this portrait. Gay comments that while battling for humanitarian ideals publicly, the philosophes "were often intolerant and inhumane" in their private lives. He observes D'Alembert opposing censorship yet petitioning censors to stifle his critics.33 Historians have failed to get beneath the surface of these contradictions. What does
it say of a man that cannot (or will not) submit himself to his own ideals? What does it say of a system that demands more than its own formulatators can give? What if the formulatators do not really believe what they espouse? Why should modern society bemoan its failure to live up to Enlightenment ideals when the philosophes failed themselves? These are the questions historians should propose to answer for modern society. Such answers might very well explain why these ideals remain elusive and why a return to Enlightenment "openness and experimentation" is unlikely to achieve them. Rather than pose such questions historians generally prefer to excuse philosophes failings (probably out of sympathy for their rhetoric) thus remaining at the surface and failing to perceive deeper more pertinent ramifications.34

As discussed in Chapter II, the greatest misconception of Enlightenment historians is their characterization of the age as empirical. F. C. S. Schiller in his article "Must Empiricism Be Limited?" points out that the true empiricist would be content to wait and see, whereas the apriorist and the weak-kneed empiricist crave for some further assurance of some sort. The former...claims the right to formulate any hypothesis that his past experience suggests to him, and is willing to let the course of events determine his estimate of its value... He will also realize that he need not conceive his hypotheses as ultimate facts, but is entitled to assume any principle provisionally, experimentally, or methodologically;... The true empiricist, then, is one who is willing to test his beliefs by their consequences, and to abide by their results.35
It is apparent that the philosophes did not follow the method essential to the justification of their philosophy. Some even dared to criticize others for what they themselves failed to do. If the philosophes had been true empiricists, they should have been extremely interested in epistemology, but Hume's was the study of greatest import and they failed to understand (in some cases, even read) it. Historians should question this failure and probe the implications of a philosophy claiming validity through its "demonstrability" when in actuality demonstration is impossible. Nevertheless, the era is generally acknowledged as empirical and few writers point out as Herbert Dieckmann does that "the essence of this method...was not [generally] understood," and that it was misleading of Cassirer to "speak of the method of the exact natural sciences as the very mode and structure of thinking in the eighteenth century." With the exception of Hume, method was rhetoric among the philosophes, merely attractive packaging for a creed so as to make it more marketable.

These failures of Enlightenment historians are more disturbing and less excusable in light of the obvious and opposite example of David Hume. "The main difference between those earlier philosophers [who employed the experimental method] and Hume himself is that Hume is utterly fearless as a thinker and applies the method systematically and relentlessly, let the consequences be what they may."
True to the Enlightenment standards of method, Hume produced conclusions diametrically opposed to its creed. This contradiction should spark valuable analyses among historians interested in exploring the nature of Enlightenment philosophy and its effects on the modern world. Because such inquiry has not been pursued, Enlightenment history remains superficial and meaningless for modern man.

As a result of their misinterpretation of the empiricism of the age, historians have not adequately questioned the philosophe claim to a freer, more demonstrable, and truer philosophy. Therefore, historians have missed a critical point regarding the nature of Enlightenment philosophy and its legacy, that is, the question of secularity. Almost alone, Carl Becker proposes that eighteenth century thought was not secularized, that men had not been "emancipat[ed] from absolute edicts which are not open to inquiry." Becker observes that the laws of nature were as immutable and eternal as any laws of God, and that the philosophs expected mankind to submit themselves to the natural order as completely as the Israelites submitted to Jehovah. By using a very superficial definition of "secular," most Enlightenment historians have missed Becker's point. They use the term to mean "non-church," "non-Christian," or "state-oriented." Ralph Bowen in "The Heavenly City: A Too-Ingenious Paradox" agrees with Becker that the philosophs were "religious in some senses of the word" but
points out that it is possible to be religious without being Christian. This is true, but it is irrelevant with regard to the essence of the secular theme. It does not matter whether the philosophes were Christians or not. Being anti-Christian did not mean that the philosophes were not spiritual in their outlook. A truly secular philosophy should be grounded on and concerned with the world as evidenced empirically. A truly secular philosophy cannot be constituted of spiritual concepts, church related or not, requiring faith rather than demonstration for acceptance. If the term "secular" is interpreted as "non-spiritual," or "of this world,"--"empirical," a wholly different philosophe character is revealed and consequently, a different modern man. It should also be remembered that the philosophes not only decried Christianity but all forms of enthusiasm and fanaticism. A truly secular philosophy would preclude such zealfulness by restricting men to empirical "truths" thus necessitating a skeptical attitude towards "ultimate" ones. As most historians employ terms such as "faith," "zeal," and "mission" in describing philosophe attitudes, it is apparent that these philosophers cannot be characterized as secular.

Historians observe that "philosophical idealism was itself a kind of faith in metaphysical clothes," or acknowledge "the secular faith of nationalism" missing the point that faith evokes a certain attitude among believers, be it
Crane Brinton clearly delineates just such similarities between enlightened philosophy and Christianity: "both are efforts...to give some sort of systematized set of answers to the Big Questions; both are systems of moral values, of ends and means, or, if you prefer, both are religions."42 This religious/spiritual bent among philosophes is widely recognized by historians. Collingwood refers to the crusade for reason as a "holy war" (p. 80). Gay calls the philosophes a "respectable clan of revolutionaries, with their mission continually before them" and quotes Walpole: "The philosophes are insupportable, superficial, overbearing, and fanatic; they preach incessantly."43 Gay even acknowledges some agreement with Becker by describing the philosophes as "enthusiastic projectors, reformers, moralists."44 Nevertheless, he characterizes Diderot's "posterity myth" as secular because "it demanded no supernatural mysteries, claimed no religious sanctions" even though Diderot encouraged men to pursue the esteem of posterity "for it would lift up their souls and strengthen them against the sense of loss and impermanence."45 The obvious question here is how is Diderot's prescription for mankind different from the promise of life-everlasting in heaven? The "secular" distinction for the posterity myth has little meaning in view of the fact that Diderot is pursuing ends similar to those of religion through similar means. Gay depicts Voltaire as the standard-bearer in the
battle against the Church, urging his army "to conceal their hand, to write simply, to repeat the truth often, to lie if necessary"; his distaste for Christianity practically an obsession. Margaret Libby observes in Voltaire, the advocate of doubt, "this choirleader of those proclaiming the complete independence of science and religion, this apostle of rationalism, . . . [a man who] indulged in his own metaphysical essays, less complete than those he scored." G. P. Gooch describes Voltaire as "a born fighter and a good hater. . . . No eighteenth-century thinker was less of a sceptic, for there was no place in his brain for the penumbra of doubt which is the essence of scepticism. 'I believe in God,. . . the God of Nature, the architect of the universe.'" Voltaire's conviction and commitment demonstrate his belief that God was on his side. Abbé Bergier made in 1855 an important observation regarding the philosophes that most contemporary historians still fail to see or continue to resist.

Ces messieurs avouent donc que Dieu peut nous découvrir, par la lumière naturelle, des vérités qui choquent le sens commun, qui sont démontrées par les géomètres, et qu'il serait ridicule de révoquer en doute; et ils nous disent, ils nous répètent avec emphase, ils supposent partout que Dieu ne peut pas nous révéler, par une lumière surnaturelle, le mystère de la sainte Trinité, parce que selon eux, il choquent le sens commun, et qu'il nous est impossible de le croire.

Apparently, the philosophes could accept the mysteries of philosophy but not those of religion.
Because historians have failed to recognize that calling a philosophy "secular" does not necessarily differentiate it from a religious/spiritual orientation, they have made devastating mistakes in their interpretation and have grossly misrepresented the Enlightenment legacy. Cobban misses Becker's point that the supreme authority of the nation-state is a direct outgrowth of Enlightenment enthusiasm for "truth," social reform, and commitment (p. 8). The philosophe program could not have been implemented through any other institution. Baumer errs in his description of the movement from medieval to enlightened times as from a "supernaturalistic-mythical-authoritative to a naturalistic-scientific-individualistic type of thinking" (p. 17). The Enlightenment fits the medieval characterization not the latter. Gay labels Smith's Wealth of Nations as secular failing to explain the effects and implications of the "invisible hand" concept that is spiritual, undemonstrable, actually providential in nature.50 In similar fashion, describing "modern natural law" as secular, he fails to perceive that natural law is not a "worldly" concept; it is spiritual, undemonstrable, not subject to empirical validation. Generally, Enlightenment historians have failed to realize that what they call "secular" faith is essentially indistinguishable from religious faith. Unable to accept the implications of empirical analysis, the philosophes fell back upon spiritual
truths and justifications as unreasonable as those of the Church. Guilty of "metaphysical enthusiasm," they succumbed to vices they allegedly abhorred and in dedication to their cause behaved like the religious "morons" they despised, the only difference being that the philosophes were not simply promoting an alternative truth but the right truth.

Hume's philosophy, however, would not allow this. He had refuted "once and for all. . .certain Lockian 'acts of faith'--acts of faith repeated ad nauseam by a group of thinkers who prided themselves on never having recourse to anything but reason." Hume's thinking based on skepticism repudiated enthusiasm and fanaticism. Because historians have failed to perceive the importance of the spiritual, i.e., "non-secular," essence of the philosophes creed, they have missed an essential element of its legacy. For this reason they cannot explain the modern malaise, which desperately needs explanation. Many historians do not fully comprehend the contradictions of modern society. What is apparent is that the great liberal ideal of the Enlightenment has gone wrong. The "perfectibility of man and the progress of the human race [is] the Great Illusion of modern times." The liberal dream of a better lifestyle and standard of living, more freedom, and the promise of science has delivered a "new rootless poverty and new excessive wealth equally rootless; new forms of inner and outer want; new envy, new doubt, and an entirely new furious
Satiricists, social commentators, and religious historians observe these contradictions more clearly than most Enlightenment historians who are neglecting their responsibility to explain the present. The reason for this is that most Enlightenment historians are more concerned with defending a beloved philosophy than with acknowledging that the Enlightenment is actually the root of modern society's dilemma.

The Enlightenment Legacy

Because we (especially Americans) believe what historians tell us about the Enlightenment, we believe we represent the traditional picture. The fact is we are the product of the Enlightenment, but the era was actually quite different from what historians tell us. Consequently, we think we are something we are not. During the Enlightenment "a new positivistic outlook denounces hypotheses and mathematical a prioris; yet, unable to find explanations and solutions according to its own methodology, this positivism supposes and imagines what it cannot observe, and uses the very rationalistic approach it condemns." The philosophes believed they were something they were not. They were not open-minded, reasonable, tolerant, nor were they relativists, skeptics, or empiricists. Historians have failed to point out and explain this contradiction, therefore, we perpetuate the same misconception about ourselves. Because we do not
really understand ourselves as men and therefore the institutions men build, we are bewildered and frustrated that the revered Enlightenment ideals have yet to come to pass. As Russell Davenport remarked:

The ideals America insists on preaching to the rest of the world simply do not carry. They do not carry even in the countries of Western Europe from which these ideas were imported in the eighteenth century. Our statesmen still go on proclaiming their devotion to the inevitability of progress, the inalienable nature of human rights, the sacredness of the human person, and so forth. It is the same language in which the Declaration of Independence was written. But to most civilized and still friendly men in foreign countries, these formulae sound archaic and quaint.

It is critical that we confront the actual legacy of the Enlightenment in order to cope with the crises of the modern world and learn the valuable lessons that Hume, the only authentic enlightened philosopher, presented to us—the lessons the Enlightenment should have, but did not, teach.

It is apparent that Enlightenment themes and myths remain beloved of the Western world. Walter Dorn points out that "the procedure of empirical enquiry, which the eighteenth century applied to the entire area of human experience, 'still constitutes a source of confidence that mankind is master of its destiny.'" Bredvold notes that we "expect from science the final and complete explanation of our human nature and destiny." Bronowski and Mazlish list "the empirical way to truth, the insistence on reasoned explanations, the conviction that men have a claim to liberty and justice" as persistent Enlightenment ideas.
In *The Mind in the Making* (1921) James Harvey Robinson "urged that we should bring to the moral and social sciences the same scientific method and objectivity and openness of mind that had achieved such obvious success in the physical sciences. . . . the knowledge of human nature has remained stationary for over two thousand years, and only science can ameliorate this situation." \(^6^1\) Bredvold remarks that "this faith in a scientific regulation of human affairs, in a science of human nature which can be genuinely predictive, has become one of the commonplaces of our time. . . . In spite of repeated failures and futilities, this hope seems to be inextinguishable." \(^6^2\) According to Emile Durkheim, the "laws of society are no different from those governing the rest of nature and the method by which they are discovered is identical with that of the other sciences." \(^6^3\) Likewise, our faith in reason remains undiminished. Cobban explains the "ethical recession from the standards of the Enlightenment" of the twentieth century by the rejection of reason as the "means of arriving at valid conclusions about man and society." \(^6^4\) Walter Dorn observes that "despite all the anti-rationalists and irrationalists from Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky to the nihilism of Nietzsche, we are still committed to reason. But when we assert our faith in reason, we no longer believe that the appeal to reason will always be the decisive force in religious, political, or social action." \(^6^5\) Natural law continues to
dominate our conception of the universe both in science and society.

The fundamental movement of the Western mind since the Renaissance toward a vision of nature governed by consistent laws has also been felt in the human sciences. Human nature has been believed to follow intelligible laws, just as physical nature has. Somehow, the laws of society cannot be arbitrary.66

G. R. Cragg contends that

even after it prompted a reaction, Deism lurked in many of the unconscious assumptions which survived to colour the modern mind. ... it still shapes the unexamined presuppositions which govern men's outlook, and those who make no allowance for its contribution are at a loss to understand the modern mind.67

That modern man adheres to these themes despite insurmountable objections and contradictions reflects the philosophes' own dilemma. It is apparent that the philosophes did not employ the scientific method in reaching their conclusions, yet we continue to laud their deductions on the basis of their method. If short-comings are observed regarding the development of human science, the possibility of revealing the laws of this science is not disputed, rather revisions in the method are suggested.68 Maintaining our faith in reason, we despair that man will choose to follow it—even the philosophes failed to live up to their ideals. The fact that man has failed in this way throughout his history might suggest that the accepted belief regarding reason and its role in man's psyche requires revision, but we persist in our assumption that reason is man's most elevated talent. Modern man insists that he is an objective
observer deducing rather than imposing what is true. It is curious, then, that no amount of scientific data "proving" that sex and drug education in schools reduces their abuse, that capital punishment is not a deterrent to criminal behavior, or that legalized pornography or certain drugs can reduce certain criminal offenses, has changed society's attitudes or laws in these cases. In intellectual circles, "it is curious how often men are still found to argue, in the manner of Bentham, that if certain things are admitted to be true, sociology could not be an exact science, and therefore the admissions must not be made."69 Although we seem not to realize it modern man is a believer, not an observer, not an empiricist. We hold certain things to be true despite the evidence or "provide" the facts that support our beliefs. We are not skeptics or relativists; we maintain our views righteously and completely all the while convinced of our scientific procedure, our open-mindedness, and our reasonable conclusions.

Hume's philosophy, however, could not allow us this complacency for he pointedly demonstrated and explained these contradictions. He showed us that the empirical method can never provide the ultimate answers we seek or believe we have found. He demonstrated that reason is not the motivating factor in man's behavior; therefore an appeal to reason will not change the behavior. Reason is the tool of the motivating influence of human actions—the passions.
Hume, then, offered some insight as to why the reasonable men of the Enlightenment were unable to live up to their own ideals. Their sentiments and passions spurred their activity and these are not the proper object of reasoned direction. Hume "insisted that we are in no position to assume anything concerning eternal truth," consequently, the truly enlightened man must doubt. Neither the philosophes nor modern man, their progeny, do this and only Hume satisfactorily explained why.

Progress is also an important element in the Enlightenment legacy. Crane Brinton observes that "belief in progress,. . .is still so much a part of the way young Americans are brought up that very few Americans realize how unprecedented that belief is. . . . This positive belief in a knowable universe ultimately composed of particles of matter has remained. . .an element in Western culture." Robert Heilbroner in The Future as History warns of threatening, possibly fatal, consequences of our faith in the march of progress and the optimism it evokes.

The essential nature of the American encounter with history is changing, and. . .our optimism is a handicap in appreciating that change and in assessing its implications. For our optimism blinds us to a central reality of our historic situation: that, after a long voyage in which the favoring currents of history bore us in the direction in which we sought to navigate, we have emerged into an open sea where powerful contrary winds come directly into conflict with our passage.

This belief in the "natural," "inevitable" march of progress has resulted in man abandoning himself to a progress run
amok. Heilbroner notes the betrayal of science in the atomic bomb, the militarization of American society, and the production machine whose "psychological demands" on the assembly line and at the office "are as great as the physiological demands of the natural environment. . . they have displaced." Now humanity is "at the mercy of its own artifacts" and the organization technology requires in order to function "creates an ever-higher order of social control" resulting in a self-perception not as an individual but "as part of a huge and impersonal social machine." The most dire consequences of American optimism according to Heilbroner are those pertaining to the US self-image especially in terms of what we can accomplish.

Optimism misleads us with respect to the possibilities of "progress" because it tends to underestimate the difficulty and to overestimate the consequences of historic change. . . . It is its failure to confront truthfully and unflinchingly the condition of the human being as it now exists . . . [that is] the level at which life is lived, rather than the level at which it is abstractly conceived.

He recommends that we question ourselves in terms of what is possible at this time and assess our limitations. Apparently Americans are still unable to adjust their expectations in such a manner. Lyndon Johnson was convinced that the United States could fight an expensive overseas war and implement the Great Society at home despite warnings of inflation, seemingly unaware of financial or psychological limitations. In 1980 the American electorate
rejected the candidate who acknowledged limitations that would require making do with less, thus setting back American lifestyles, and rallied to the candidate invoking the "can-do" spirit of American ingenuity proclaiming no shortages of energy or resources and no limits to defense capabilities without offering any specific evidence or programs in support of his pronouncements.

Hume denied any immutable law of progress and saw no guarantees that a peak of civilization promised higher development. Heilbroner's suggestion that life here and now be the object of scrutiny and evaluation, rather than an ideal be supposed, exactly reflects the empirical, secular philosophy that was Hume's.

Enlightenment beliefs have also dramatically affected modern economic theory. Heilbroner describes the enlightened concept of the science of economics.

As mysteriously, and yet as ineluctably as the forces of magnetism aligned iron filings, so the forces of competition, of ever-opening opportunities for money-making, of the pressure of population upon the labor market all operated to guide the human particles to predictable patterns of behavior. . . . economics could deduce the adjustments which the human particles were continually forced to make, and could foresee in advance the relationships that would inevitably take place.

Helvétius maintained that if each man pursued his individual interest, it would serve the general interest of society "because natural law implies a natural harmony of interests." In this way the basis of laissez-faire
economics was laid and judging by the continued renown for and reference to Adam Smith's name, it seems the twentieth century, especially the United States, still believes in the "invisible hand." Milton Friedman is perhaps the foremost representative of the modern influence of these ideas. Helvétius's logic in the assumption that natural harmony would result from the pursuit of self-interest is echoed in Friedman's conclusion that Hong Kong ivory carvers prefer to sacrifice certain refinements in their place of work in order to save the owner money which will then be available for increasing their wages. The cause and effect relationship here is tenuous to say the least. Nowhere in Friedman's scenario is the owner obligated to raise wages. The possibility of unrestrained capitalism resulting in crushing wealth inequalities or business monopoly is not recognized. Faith that it will all work out for the good, however, does motivate selfish pursuit of economic goals since "natural harmony" will result regardless. Friedman talks of "impersonal forces of the marketplace" and contends that it is the system that requires reform for a proper system would work regardless of who was in charge. He advocates a money formula mechanism, that does not require a human reading of the situation that would be subject to error. A few economists (and politicians) reject such systems-making, suggesting a re-evaluation of economic theory that Hume himself would have proposed. Lester C.
Thurow quips that "Adam Smith's invisible hand is all thumbs when it comes to working economics" and observes that "supply and demand" is an anachronistic concept we have held on to for too long.\(^8\) Specifically pointing up Friedman's admission "that high interest rates cannot be explained from the tenets of monetarism," Thurow suggests that monetarism should be abandoned on the basis of its inadequacy to explain what is.\(^8\) He writes of the Federal Reserve's "conversion to a doctrine" and pointedly states that "economic theories must be rejected when they cannot explain major facts and when they lead to disastrous results."\(^8\) The fact that we do not easily dispose of such theories suggests that we are as unimpressed by the facts as our philosophe forefathers and therefore, as unreasonable in our devotion to what we "know" is true. Hume dismissed the "invisible hand" theory; his philosophy could not sustain or justify such undemonstrable systems, proposing instead a more flexible and practical direction of policy.

The primary tool for enlightened reform was education, therefore the role of the philosopher (according to Diderot) was almost godlike, teaching everyone all their duties and beliefs.\(^8\) Now the philosopher rather than the church became the teacher of truth. Convinced that social evils are the result of a bad environment, modern man believes "that if we can only work out the proper 'arrangements,' laws, institutions, above all education, human beings will
get along together in something pretty close to the good life." Education then is still considered the "key to a good society." The actual goal of education (and assumedly the definition of a "good society"), however, could not have been the refinement or enlightenment of the individual mind and spirit in view of the fact that the philosophes looked to "understand and control through the science of man" the contradictions in man's nature. Why else would Voltaire object to the education of laborers' children except that it was not necessary in improving society?

Today educators are more concerned with instilling proper thoughts and behavior in students than in helping them to develop their own talents of critical analysis and conjecture. Critics of modern education point up the failure of the system not in terms of failing the personal development of the student but of failing the marketplace, particularly with regard to international competition. Instructing the student in his beliefs and duties has resulted in controlling educators through loyalty oaths and the prohibition of certain topics for class discussion, such as alternative political or economic theories (especially socialism or communism) or criticism of national leaders or history. Only in a system oriented towards indoctrination rather than "enlightenment" can textbook reviewers Mel and Norma Gabler have any influence (although Texas-based, the Gablers have had extensive influence with
publishers nationwide). The Gablers are concerned that "teachers on the public payroll" are "cram[ming] down [the throats of our children] the most disgusting, demoralizing, frightening, treasonable, blasphemous and soul-withering facts and fantasies." They advise parents not to urge their children to excel at school as long as "ABNORMAL ATTITUDES AND ALIEN THOUGHT" are being taught since the students will merely be brainwashed. The "abnormal thoughts" that concern the Gablers include evolution and the lesson in higher mathematics that there are no absolutes, for this undermines the values of the student who then "turns to crime and drugs." As essayist Molly Ivins points out "the Gablers' idea of education is that there is only one right answer to every question, that discussion, comparison, skepticism, questioning, independent thinking and holding an open mind are all undesirable." This attitude is reminiscent of Voltaire's as described by Margaret Libby. The philosophes considered education as the means to instruct students in the truth not to pursue or question it. Skepticism was not in their curricula either. One can be sure, however, that the works of David Hume would be on the Gablers' list of subversive publications.

For the philosophes the purpose of discovering the truth was to apply it to society; reform was their ultimate goal. "All the psychological discussions of the philosophes were preambles to their programs for the improvement of
morals, society, and government." Gay notes the philosophes' realization that "perhaps the most important way to improve the world was to improve political institutions." Helvétius proposed that men pursuing their self-interest could live together in a society only through education and education was not just "schooling; it is coextensive with life, and especially a matter of government. . . . legislation and morality are one and the same science." Western man carries on this reform tradition; "we continue, . . . to pin much of our hopes on institutional changes planned from above." Cobban urges that if we would again associate purpose with politics, "we may take up again the tradition of Western political thought, and in doing so resume that 'continuous transformation of morals into politics,' . . . in which, according to Croce, lies 'the real ethical progress of mankind.'" In the 1936 translation of his book on Diderot, Moscow philosopher I. K. Loppol stated that if the morals of a nation are bad, "the cause is bad laws, a deplorable form of government. To improve the manners and morals it is therefore necessary to change the structure of the state." If, however, we examine more closely the philosophes concept of the "good society," we might be more skeptical of submitting politics to a moral dictum.

One of the many philosophes criticisms of Christianity was its "indifference to the welfare of the state." Assumedly the church's concern with the individual spiritual
salvation of all men incognizant of national origin offended the enlightened appreciation of and hopes for the politics of modernity—the new nation-state. As Brinton points out, most philosophes believed that "the old authority, . . . was bad, not the principle of authority; authority in the hands of men trained to use enlightened reason was all right—was, in fact, necessary." Observing that the noble savages did not run wild but rather lived "by rules and restraint," Rousseau and Diderot consequently deduced that "the cure for . . . civilization is more, and authentic, civilization." D'Alembert stated that although he would not equate progress with happiness, he would not abandon civilization for making men unhappy. Bredvold observes that the managers of "human affairs, the scientific moralists and law givers, the educators, the statesmen, are all, as Holbach stated it, 'gardeners who can by varying systems of cultivation alter the character of men as they would alter the form of trees.'" Helvétius proposed "the scientific application of education and legislation to society and . . . a system of rewards and penalties" in order to create his "harmony of interests."

It is apparent that the philosophes were not concerned with the personal enlightenment of human beings and the direction of social programs towards that goal, but rather with behavior modification of citizens. The state was to educate its citizens, uplifting and, if need be, forcing
them to be better than they were. The state would accomplish what ordinary men failed to perceive as their best interest. The state, then, became the instrument and thereby the enforcer of the truth, greater and more important than the individual; the eighteenth century state became the new Catholic church. Robert Anchor perceives their contradiction observing that by proclaiming the progress of civilization and defending virtue as its by-product, the philosophes gave "support to the very social system they opposed in virtue's name."\textsuperscript{107} They urged reform from the top and looked to "enlightened" despots for society's renewal. Regulation and control are fundamental aspects of the "enlightened" society. Since socialization rather than nature made good or bad men, "politics [was] the practical application of morals, and.... the art of politics [was] that of regulating the passions of mankind and directing them to the good of society, which is the general interest."\textsuperscript{108} Voltaire criticized "the profusion of religious holidays, which kept men from productive labor."\textsuperscript{109} He wrote to Frederick the Great that "'extirpating this infamous superstition' (Christianity)" would be "an eternal service" for humanity, but not "among the rabble, who are not worthy of being enlightened and who are apt for every yoke."\textsuperscript{110} This opinion decries Voltaire's claim that natural reason was accessible to all mankind, but the power he was prepared to acknowledge in Frederick for the benefit
of the few and the detriment of the many is obvious. Anchor also acknowledges that "the enlightened reform statesmen of the eighteenth century" such as Montesquieu, Holbach, Voltaire, Grimm, and Diderot accepted the utilitarian justification of despotism of Hobbes. Gay notes Voltaire's observation that religious tolerance was practiced in the Roman empire, neglecting the point that this was in the interest of peace in the state not human rights. The clearest example of the dictatorial character of the "enlightened" state is Rousseau's General Will. This concept was representative of "the welfare of the whole" while at the same time "a valuation of what is just and unjust." Rousseau failed to satisfactorily explain his program and there is extensive debate on the subject. Nevertheless, the totalitarian potential is clear. The government served to implement the General Will, which was "the will of all the individuals composing [society] if they lived, thought, and behaved as they should." Man "plac[ed] himself under the absolute obligation of obeying the law" and gave "his unqualified assent as much for his own sake as for the sake of the well-being and the security of the state." This concept of the state achieved fruition in the French Revolution and is bluntly characterized in the words of the Abbé Sieyes: "The Nation exists before all things and is the origin of all things. It is sufficient that its will is manifested for all positive law to vanish before it. In
whatever manner a Nation wills, it is sufficient that it does will: all forms are good, and its will is always the supreme law." There is some debate regarding the Enlightenment's culpability for the Terror. It is clear though that Robespierre saw himself as a moralist and the state as a legitimate tool for the imposition of morality. The philosophes sanctioned the use of the state to "educate" citizens in the truth without understanding that men's commitments are not to the same truths. J. R. Talmon (as interpreted by Cobban) makes this point in perceiving the thought of the Enlightenment to be a "secular religion"—the assumption that there is a sole and exclusive truth in politics; it postulates a preordained harmonious, perfect plan of society; and recognizes only one, all inclusive sphere of human action, which is the political ... therefore, politics is the art of applying an all-embracing philosophy to the organization of society.

Nazi Germany, at least before the war, represents the extreme example of the enlightened state, politicizing a General Will that aptly achieved the greatest good for the greatest number, employing the state in the achievement of truth (superiority of the Aryan race), and reflecting Voltaire's unconcern for the rabble—those unworthy of enlightenment. Modern Western societies represent a more moderate but characteristic rendition. The state is recognized not just as a legal and geographic entity, but primarily as an embodiment of virtues and spiritual ideals. Citizens are molded in the image of such ideals through
education and socialization, enjoying the benefits thereof but submitting to their service as well. The compulsory military draft is the ultimate infringement on individual liberty, but most nations require it and their citizens, for the most part, comply. Censorship of dictionaries by state school boards for obscene words or reference to venereal disease reflects the use of government for uplifting morals. A recent US Supreme Court decision held that a US president "cannot be sued for his action as chief executive—even for deliberately violating the rights of citizens." A dissenting opinion claimed that "attaching absolute immunity to the office of the president...places the president above the law. It is a reversion to the old notion that the king can do no wrong." Apparently, the president as head of "state" represents the ideal of the state and is not accountable to its laws or citizens the state is supposed to serve.

Historically, Americans have been especially committed to the reform of society through politics. Despite the alleged separation of church and state, Americans consider morality a legislative function. In 1982 the United States vice-president announced to a conservative Christian audience "that the political activity of the religious right wing is 'as American as apple pie,...there is nothing un-American or unprecedented about political activity in support of principles and policies of a particular religious
viewpoint." The political hopes of several religious leaders are revealed in an article by Molly Ivins, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds":

the head of Catholics for Christian Political Action-- "After the Christian majority takes control,... the state will not permit anybody the right to do evil. . . ."

James Robison--"We must. . .demand that both parties and politicians uphold. . .eternal biblical values or be voted out. . . ." 

head of the Moral Majority of Santa Clara, California-- ". . .I believe that homosexuality is one of those sins that could be coupled with murder and other sins. . .it would be the government that sits upon this land who would be executing the homosexuals. . . ."

Jerry Falwell--"I have a divine mandate to go right to the heart of Congress and fight for laws that will save America."122

Although specific objectives differ, Americans rarely question the propriety of religious leaders using politics as a forum. In fact, the current conservative temper of the country reflects the belief that many of the problems the nation faces are a result of a decline in our moral uprightness, hence the widespread support for legislation banning abortion and permitting school prayer. The effects of righteousness and moral direction through government has actually been to increase government involvement in people's lives thus further restricting rather than increasing freedom. A minority, even a large one, could find its lifestyle dangerously altered by the legal accession to power of a moral majority.
Hume, however, was not a social reformer; he observed no universal "plan" and therefore could espouse no program to effect it. He saw no necessary connection in the philosophes' contention that improved political machinery would protect freedom and happiness. "Improved" is a relative term open to varied interpretation. For this reason he took issue with Pope that good government is not simply that which is well-administered; "gentle government is preferable" giving the best security to both the sovereign and the subject.¹²³

The most pervasive legacy of the Enlightenment is that of its belief in the existence of absolute truth and its conviction that it had finally revealed this truth and was therefore the protector and promulgator of this revelation. As Cassirer comments, "The strongest intellectual forces of the Enlightenment do not lie in its rejection of belief but rather in the new form of faith which it proclaims, and in the new form of religion which it embodies."¹²⁴ The "missionary" character of the philosophe personality has been discussed above, and it is this narrow, authoritarian, "them-or-us" attitude that has hindered the twentieth century from breaking free from its Enlightenment heritage and providing new, perhaps more appropriate, responses to age-old problems. Gay points out that the philosophes saw themselves as involved in warfare between the forces of good and evil, philosophers versus the "enemies of
philosophy. "Polemical victories turned out to be not a reason for accommodation but for war to the end. Their authoritarian bent is revealed in their attitude of disdain towards those who would not read "the right" works--those of the philosophes themselves. They were especially irked by the popularity of religious literature. They lied in pursuit of their cause and never doubted they were doing the right thing with their lying. Truth, having been discovered now required application not questioning. Skepticism was not part of the creed and although personal conviction does not necessarily reflect an authoritarian outlook, the philosophes' belief coupled with their impatience (if not intolerance) of those in disagreement and their missionary dedication to imposing their program on mankind can really be characterized no other way. Doubt is not a lesson learned by modern man from the Enlightenment where "doubt [was] permissible in other matters," but "one [did] not doubt the reform programme of a Lockian philosophe." As a militant group the philosophes "needed faith and certainty, not sceptical or critical negations." Crocker notes that the philosophes rejected relativism because people would not accept their rules as opposed to others (p. 76).

This authoritarian systems-making of the Enlightenment is the root of all modernity's non-Christian "-isms"--utilitarianism, idealism, naturalism, liberalism, Marxism,
Social Darwinism, etc. Cobban presents T. D. Weldon's (The Vocabulary of Politics, 1953) observation that political philosophers keep looking for fundamentals because we "fear that if we discard political ideologies and abandon the search for foundations we will be reduced to complete political scepticism, and all possibility of distinguishing between right and wrong will disappear." The state has usurped the position of the church and what men were willing to do to defend or promulgate their theology, they are now prepared to do for their politics. Cobban recognizes democracy as "the dominant political idea in the modern world" and comments:

Instead of a rational theory it has become a sort of incantation. It is the open sesame of political treasure hunters everywhere. . . . The masses, at least in those countries which have no experience of democracy, are waiting in a state of mystic faith on the revelation that the word is to produce. This authoritarian conviction that we as Americans and our politics are right--the truth--has caused us (like the philosophes) to deny our professed ideals and blind ourselves to world realities. While we pride ourselves on our open-minded and tolerant attitude regarding the exchange of ideas and communication, "both the Moral Majority and President Reagan oppose the [Federal Communications Commission's] Fairness Doctrine" which "entitle[s] citizens and groups time to respond on television to Moral Majority preachers who take political positions." We believe in freedom of speech and the right to assemble but few parents
would allow a communist to speak in their school district, and Iranian demonstrations during the American hostage crisis outraged many Americans who would have preferred them outlawed. Many Americans would be willing to subvert democracy itself should a legal, majority vote instruct the president to disarm. They would be convinced that this majority did not really understand what was best for them. While claiming to be the world's model for freedom and human rights, we support a government that actively maintains oppressive, dictatorial regimes that give lip service to democratic rhetoric. We assent to restrictions on freedom in the name of freedom. Apparently, rights are recognized only as they serve the truth as we see it. Those that do not see it are not merely different, they are wrong. Our faith in democracy as truth is so strong we are convinced that other peoples will embrace and understand it if we but offer it to them. One reason the Vietnam war has been so painful and bewildering to Americans is that it has shaken our faith.

What is apparent, however, is that Americans are guilty of precisely that which we criticize in other "dictatorial" regimes--justifying the means in terms of the end. As A. Sorel points out, every crime attributed to the French Revolution was practiced by the ancien régime, "only the Revolution did on principle what the ancien régime had done from lack of principle." Incredibly, while they were supposedly preoccupied with morality, the philosophes do not
appear to have noticed that their actions precisely reflected the deplorable behavior of those persons or institutions they condemned. They merely justified their actions in terms of the truth, a truth, however, as arbitrary and as undemonstrable as that of their enemies. It is this attitude that makes it possible for an American officer to explain the destruction of a Vietnamese village with "It became necessary to destroy the town to save it;" for Ronald Reagan to declare an American air-traffic controllers' strike illegal while criticizing the Polish government's suppression of Solidarity; for Barry Goldwater to declare that extremism in the name of freedom is not extremism; and for pro-Israel groups to consider Menachem Begin a "freedom fighter" rather than a terrorist in his militant days.

Not only does our conviction of our righteousness point up disturbing contradictions in our values, but it has hindered the US in coping with the world scene. Questioned as to the relevance of the eighteenth century to Soviet-American relations, Peter Gay responded that nothing could be "directly...learned from studying Voltaire about what Bulgaria is or is not going to do." Typically, he misses a crucial point. It is instructive to observe in Voltaire the authoritarian conviction in a system which gives no quarter to the enemy that Americans have inherited from his age. This recognition would be a first step in correcting or modifying a largely ineffective stance towards the world.
Robert Heilbroner points out that many of the welfare arrangements and such that bear the socialist label abroad can be duplicated here under the label of capitalism. ... Yet between the ideals of "socialism" abroad and "capitalism" at home there is a deep mutual distrust and antipathy. ... We must be careful that an aversion to the idea of socialism does not blind us to a similar identity of values and institutions between ourselves and the European "socialist" nations.137

He further cautions that our denunciations of the offensive "-isms," "far from arming us against or clarifying our understanding of socialism and communism, only serve to muddy our minds. ... To dismiss that literature [socialist or communist] unread, to vilify it without the faintest conception of what it represents, is not only shocking but dangerously stupid."138 The philosophes never attempted to understand their enemies often attacking them with ridicule rather than reasoned refutation. Heilbroner foresees "the grave threat of an ideological isolation of the American system" because Americans are so persuaded of their self-image as the "beacon of light" entrusted with the truth that we cannot "believe that much of the world sees us as a malign and threatening influence."139

It is not simply that the opposition is different or a competitor. As with the philosophes the superpowers perceive the struggle of good against evil: Ronald Reagan sees communism as "the focus of evil in the modern world" and Yuri Andropov designates "the true root of evil perpetrated in the world: as the United States' desire "to gain world
domination."\textsuperscript{140} This point is discussed by Harold J. Berman in his article "The Devil and Soviet Russia." Berman asks "Is it President Reagan's knowledge of how the Soviet system actually operates that causes him to characterize it as evil, or is it his characterization of the system as evil that leads him to imagine how it operates?"\textsuperscript{141} Presenting information contradicting Reagan's characterization, Berman assumes Reagan's response to be, that although he (Berman) is attempting "to show that communism is not evil... We know that it is evil."\textsuperscript{142} The result of "such self-righteousness" is that it "cuts off virtually all possibility of negotiation and conciliation."\textsuperscript{143} There can be no compromise with evil. This narrow and intolerant conviction permeates American society as with William Safire who, after observing the "lobbying power" of two women eye-witnesses to the Nicaraguan situation, could merely lament the question of "why 'Our Side' cannot come up with 'articulate, dedicated, spokeswomen for the anti-communist point of view',"\textsuperscript{144} --so much for the alleged Enlightenment legacy of objective observation and analysis of the facts. Add to this the possibility that many Americans would rather die in or contribute to a war that would destroy the planet than surrender to the evil specter of communism and the legacy of reason can also be dismissed.

One must be possessed of the truth to adhere to such beliefs. A skeptic is not inclined to hazard life and limb
for "the cause." Hume's skeptical philosophy disallows the conviction necessary to impose a moral system or totally submit oneself to it. It would in fact preclude the positing of any ultimate moral system. It is again apparent that the authentic Enlightenment philosophy is not the heritage of modern man.

This authoritarian conviction in systems has had an unfortunate effect on the writing of history. Many historians have succumbed to it and their work has consequently suffered from these preconceptions and biases. The aversion of historians to skepticism has been especially apparent in their works. Cassirer's enthusiasm for the empirical method leads him to the same mistake the philosophes made; he believed it could actually reveal a universal rule (p. 5). While it may create one, it can never discover one. In his perception of the role of reason as that of unification and defense against doubt (p. 4), Cassirer must totally ignore Hume's devastating case against such properties of reason, a case formulated through the use of the method Cassirer admires so highly. Peter Gay's bias is revealed in his dictum that history should seek unity, not variety (p. 13). Such an attitude requires the imposition of general characters on diverse and possibly unrelated data. Not surprisingly, then, Gay discloses that the purpose of the philosophes was to find order in chaos. In sympathy with
the *philosophe* system, Gay observes that they "were ungenerous and prejudiced and still right in substance."\(^{146}\)

The fact that many historians, like Voltaire, are writing for their monastery rather than attempting objective evaluations of historical data and promoting the free presentation and communication of historical interpretations is evidenced by the outrage with which many "scholars" received Becker's "attack" on the established Enlightenment characterization. Some considered Becker's book "dangerous" (p. 25). J. Hill Stewart comments that the iconoclasm of Becker's critics "may make us aware of the danger of putting thoughts into print for all to read."\(^{147}\) An idea is "dangerous" to those who consider it wrong and academia should be the last place where ideas are unwelcome. Edward Whiting Fox of Cornell University could have been fighting the good fight in the eighteenth century with his comments in "Reflections on the Trial of Carl Lotus Becker." Fox contends that Becker's *Heavenly City* has been "recognized not only as history, but what is worse, history that has set a standard of elegant urbanity for an entire generation while insidiously disseminating heretical and offensive views about a great century of our tradition."\(^{148}\) He accuses Becker of "consistently provid[ing] the wrong answer" and proclaims that because Becker handled the facts irresponsibly (questioning the possibility of certainty), he cannot be trusted with Truth.\(^{149}\) Becker seems unwilling to enter the
fray against evil so Fox lambasts him for his "tolerance."

Tolerance of human weakness has always been accounted a private virtue; but it is not the sort of doctrine that should be elevated to public use, and to balance it with a morbid intolerance of Virtue is perilously close to taking sides, the wrong side, in the struggle between Right and Wrong.\footnote{150}

Confident that "our duty is clear and our cause is just,"\footnote{151} Fox offers his view of history's purpose and the kind of history of western civilization college textbooks should provide--"a coherent analysis of the development of western civilization and its basic values. It must, in short, constitute a systematic introduction to the collective memory of that tradition we are being asked to defend."\footnote{152} This same historian, however, warns others "to maintain a decent outward objectivity."\footnote{153} One cannot help but wonder if such objectivity is to be merely apparent and not sincere. Historians such as Fox put academia to work in perpetuating our authoritarian self-righteousness embodied in the state.

While less dramatic, this Enlightenment legacy has blinded other historians to important observations and limited their appreciation of an opposing viewpoint. Norman Kemp Smith comments that his interpretation that Hume's "philosophy did actually originate in his preoccupation with moral questions" was a revelation. He had read a letter of Hume's stating this fact several times but Smith's "fixed preconceptions...prevent[ed him]...from reading [Hume's] statements in a straightforward manner."\footnote{154} The Cambridge
History criticizes Hume for not recognizing the precise "forces" of history Hume had disproved (p. 89). Ginsberg remarks that "Hume failed to acknowledge the triumph of the Enlightenment in making out a reasonable case for a divine structure to the universe and to man's virtues, free of superstition and organized religion." In fact Hume could not recognize any such thing for he had proved that such a structure could not be constructed through reason. Ginsberg also seems to miss the point that Hume could consider democracy and the state to be "superstition and organized religion," and the Enlightenment firmly tied man's virtue to these. This Enlightenment indoctrination could be overcome by historians through a re-analysis of Hume and his age. They might learn to particularize instead of adhering to generalities that are not at all apparent yet believed in, nevertheless. They might very well find useful answers to the contradictions of the modern times they are supposed to be explaining. Observing the failure of reason and progress in our times, Carl Becker thought it worthwhile to look at the roots of the illusion. It would do well for more historians to cope with their biases and do the same, clarifying rather than obscuring Enlightenment studies.

If historians worked more to point up, explain, and clarify certain contradictions, another legacy of the Enlightenment might be overcome. Because the philosophes did not adhere to their prescriptions of empiricism, they
failed to restrict themselves to language and concepts clearly understandable to all men. The result, as Hume pointed out, was answers without meaning. Modern man is now quite accustomed to such Orwellian concepts as "doublethink" --"the power to hold two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them" and "newspeak"--the use or corruption of words in such a way so as to squeeze[e] the meaning out of language,"¹⁵⁷ because on the Enlightenment's example he has believed in various ideals while acting in direct opposition to them without considering or explaining such a contradiction. Today we can accept a "spending-cutter" president who has run up the highest deficits in the country's history, a "tax-cutter" president who has similarly instituted the highest historical tax bill, and a president who announces to the nation that he believes in tithing (so as to encourage private support of charity) but does not do it himself. Americans accept government references to dictators in the Philippines and South Korea as "defenders of freedom" and are willing to accept constraints on their own freedom in the name of defense of freedom (national security). The contradictory "means and ends" mentality of the philosophes is disturbingly reflected in the Heritage Foundations's publication "Mandate for Leadership" in which it is recommended "that Reagan rule by executive decree 'to halt the centralization of power in the federal government'"¹⁵⁸--the president as enlightened despot.
effecting ends through contradictory means. Judging by the disappointing results of this Enlightenment method of implementing its program, an empirical observer might suggest a change—perhaps bringing the end and means more into line with each other, that is, pursuing an end through means which resemble that end, never contradicting it. Few voices are pointing out such contradiction and Enlightenment historians are seldom among them. In fact Peter Gay's phrases like "Epicurean Stoicism" and "passionate rationalism" (p. 12), constitute newspeak. They do not propose a clear concept and hence communication is obstructed. "Words are powerful tools for manipulating reality. It's hard to get your hands on what is without them." The worst abuse is "bureaucratese—words that make it impossible for anyone to pin anything on anyone." If our enlightened heritage was more empirical than mystical, such generalities and confusion might be easier to sort out. But rather than scrutinize a subject until a clear, comprehensible picture emerges, men are expected to accept the established version without questions. We have seen what Becker's scrutiny of the Enlightenment got him from his colleagues. This again points up historians failing in the questions that are not asked.

The most revered aspect of the Enlightenment among its historians is its humanity—the dignity and liberation accorded to man by the philosophes. These historians bemoan
the failure of this ideal by the twentieth century as the greatest tragedy of forgetting our Enlightenment heritage. Seeing what they want to see, these writers have missed the fact that the inhumanity of the modern world is rooted in the eighteenth century.

Despite their pronouncements to the contrary, the philosophes thought very little of man's natural ability to be reasonable, cling to virtue, and commit himself to the greater good. Commenting on the effect on men's conduct should there be no posterity for which to live and work, Diderot observed: "No more ambition, no more monuments, poets, historians, perhaps no more warriors or wars. Everyone would cultivate his garden and plant his cabbages." If man had no "higher purpose" for which to live, it "would destroy all incentive to good or great action." The implication of William Godwin's comment are momentous: "If there be any man who is incapable of making inferences for himself, or of understanding, when stated in the most explicit terms, the inferences of another, him we consider as an abortive production, and not in strictness belonging to the human species." Bredvold recounts the parable of a fire where one had the choice of saving the chambermaid or the author Fenelon writing his book, which brought good to many. The instruction was to save Fenelon even if the chambermaid were one's wife, mother, or sister. Family feeling or gratitude was irrelevant in determining proper
action. How can this instruction be distinguished from Nazi youth turning in parents that might hinder the system effecting good for the greatest number? We have already observed Voltaire's opinion of the *canaille* so it is apparent that for all the rhetoric regarding man's dignity and rights, the *philosophes* were referring to some men, others--the unworthy--had no active role in their program.

Not that they had no role at all, however. Theirs was the behavior to be modified, since it could not be enlightened. Crocker notes that the Enlightenment's optimism was not about human nature itself but "what could be done with human beings, through the progress of science, through education and government, and in general, through the rational reconstruction of society. Its confidence was less in man's reasonableness, than in the power of reason to devise ways of coping with such a creature."\(^{166}\) Modern man accepts the viability and benefit of applying reason to society and historians have proposed improvements to the method used in doing so. Bronowski and Mazlish suggest that the major short-coming of the human sciences is that the effort "to construct a reasoned analysis of society from the motives of individuals is divorced from the practical study of the large-scale functioning of states and communities." They perceive a remedy in statistics that will "involve nothing more radical than the application of large computing machines to social and economic problems."\(^{167}\)--a modern
adaptation of reform from the top. The economist Milton Friedman is seeking a system whereby the economy can operate efficiently and beneficially for the good of society. It must, however, function independently of human direction, else fallible man will make a mess of it. He criticizes other proposals for being dependent on the right person in charge in order to operate successfully.\textsuperscript{168} Apparently, man cannot be trusted with manipulating the system that will direct his behavior.

Referring to Burke, Louis Bredvold suggests the greatest failure of the Enlightenment's concept of and program for mankind: "No philosophe ever meditated on the needs of our naked and shivering human nature."\textsuperscript{169} That Bredvold overlooked David Hume is a major flaw in his work but, with that exception, the point is well made. Crane Brinton elaborates on this failure of the "secular" faiths. The "impersonal faiths"--"democracy, nationalism, socialism, communism, totalitarianism," etc.--are all grounded in the "cosmology of the Enlightenment" institutionalized in the nation-state.\textsuperscript{170} Brinton considers them inadequate (compared to Christianity) regarding "the problems of the individual in trouble"; once established and routine they "have little to offer the unhappy, the maladjusted, the suffering."\textsuperscript{171} The ideals of these faiths are too far removed from the reality of human existence. "Those who hold these ideals desire so passionately that man be perfect that they cannot forgive
him the slightest imperfection." In treason (heresy) trials there is no confessing and coming back; in America "once a Communist, always a Communist." There is no repentance. Brinton further observes a danger for the modern intellectual to promote his assumption that he knows exactly what is wrong and how to fix it. "Already separated from the mass of his fellows. . .[the modern intellectual] needed rather to be called back to the close and realistic study of the whole range of human behavior than to be allowed to develop in fine moral indignation his notions of 'ought to be.'" Because of this it is highly doubtful that any of the "-isms" can succeed in their professed objectives. The system has received too much attention; the individual too little. In describing the aspects of nineteenth century liberalism, Frederic Morton observes that

the abstractions of technology, the demands of centralizing efficiency, the absolute ambition inherent in the idea of absolute freedom—all sliced away at life liveable on a human scale. They sliced away at the rooted nook, the warm detail, the answering particularity. Whatever was local, familial, personal, had to fall under the steamroller that ground on toward modern greatness.

Hume's philosophy could not support these contentions and it has not been a part of modern man's Enlightenment heritage. Nevertheless, a re-evaluation of Hume's thought could help modern society come to grips with its actual character and perhaps place the ends it aspires to in a more realistic perspective.
Hume's Enlightenment Legacy

Hume was himself aware of the radical nature of his philosophy. "My Principles are. . .so remote from all the vulgar Sentiments on this Subject, that were they to take place, they wou'd produce almost a total Alteration in Philosophy; & . . .Revolutions of this kind are not easily brought about."

This particular revolution is so difficult that two hundred years later Hume's philosophy is still largely misunderstood or ignored despite pointed insights regarding modern man and his society. One of the major failures of Enlightenment historians is their inability to incorporate Hume satisfactorily into their particular interpretations. Some historians criticize Hume for not "pushing on beyond experience," that "his skepticism [suggests] a lack of intellectual vigour."

His work and personality seem too lackluster for Enlightenment enthusiasts:

We miss in Hume that spark of aberration, of excess, of genius, of despair, of suffering, of faith. We miss that unquenchable thirst for answers to first questions, that irresistible drive towards ultimate commitments, that passionate insistence on knowing what lies just beyond knowledge. In a word, we find him too rational.

It is interesting to note that what some historians find unappealing in Hume are the virtues they claim to observe in the Enlightenment. Hume was faithful to empiricism—the method of his age. Criticism of his failure to deny his method is tenuous to say the least.
What Enlightenment historians cannot ignore is "that Hume's contrary positions emerge out of his critical assessment of the prevalent Enlightenment theories. . . . [His] contribution may. . . .be viewed as a logical outcome of the Enlightenment thought. Hume might deserve the title of final thinker of the Enlightenment."180 Therefore, if Hume "was the quintessential philosopher of the eighteenth century" and he dramatically disagreed with the prevailing views, historians must address the question "Was it Hume or the Enlightenment that was out of joint?"181 In view of the observation of twentieth century physics that Newtonian physics is not applicable to cosmic or subatomic physics, that universal laws may not govern nature, and "that what holds for one corner of the universe might not hold for the rest of it,"182 it seems it may well be the Enlightenment that is "out of joint."

Hume's objective was to bring philosophy down to earth and make it relevant to actual living.183 In denying the ability of philosophy to answer ultimate questions and insisting that we "fac[e] the actual facts of experience, and not just what we think they are,"184 Hume constructed a genuinely secular philosophy. An ability to accept the available facts as they are rather than as we wish them to be would markedly influence how we act upon them. In our endeavors to achieve certain ends or understand certain situations, an evaluation of evidence minimally influenced
by metaphysical preconceptions or biases would greatly enhance the possibility of achieving the desired end and preclude illusion. For instance, in his evaluation of the contract theory of government, whereby the people give their consent to being ruled by a particular system, Hume realistically observed:

Can we seriously say, that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives, from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master; though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean and perish, the moment he leaves her. . . .

What if the prince forbid his subjects to quit his dominions.185

This situation is paralleled in the plight of the American poor, disgruntled by government policies (be it lax enforcement of discrimination laws or cuts in aid programs) who have been encouraged by the president to "vote with your feet." Believing the answer is that simple without really assessing the facts, i.e., what is actually involved in this group picking up and leaving their home and work-place, may put an end to debate, but it has not usefully addressed the problem. Furthermore, Hume demonstrated that since there are no means of guaranteeing that the future we desire will be made secure by any scientific reasoning. [and] All our "knowledge" is but conditional and more or less probable,. . . . Is not the proper attitude, alike of the true man and of the true empiricist, to make every preparation he can, undauntedly to meet the dangers and uncertainties of the future, and to keep on readjusting his actions while the items of experience gradually accrue?186
Such an attitude would nurture a more flexible reaction to the changing world around us unencumbered by the fixed views of historical purpose or moral destiny of which Heilbroner warns us.

The most fundamental characteristic of Hume's secular philosophy is its aversion to "the obscurity of...ideas, and ambiguity of...terms." Hume observed this to be the "chief obstacle...to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences." He was well aware of the importance of language for the communication of ideas and he insisted that all terms and concepts be experientially grounded and therefore comprehensible to all men. Hume himself did this very well, explaining all his concepts through examples of human experience. A commitment to such precision and clarity in language on the part of the writer or the reader would prevent the development of Orwell's "doublethink" and "newspeak" and provide us with useful and understandable answers to our questions.

As a result of his epistemology and his strict empiricism, Hume concluded that skepticism was the only reasonable response to the world. It is probably for this reason that historians have neglected him or studied him only in order to refute his propositions (pp. 34-35). As Constance Maund points out this is "an emotional rather than an intellectual response. Scepticism threatens our assurance and so is distasteful to us." Nevertheless, we must
concede to his conclusions regarding knowledge; "our minds cannot achieve rational certitude of God's existence, our understanding cannot be assured that its regular experience necessarily fits the real world."\textsuperscript{189} Perceiving the limitations of the human mind, Hume felt that "an analytic and critical philosophy [could] be a powerful instrument for diminishing fanaticism and intolerance."\textsuperscript{190} In Hume's mind, "superstition and fanaticism [were] the supreme threats to civilized life."\textsuperscript{191} He, therefore, found it surprising that this "harmless and innocent" philosophy "should be the subject of so much groundless reproach and obloquy."\textsuperscript{192} Hume assured his readers that there was no danger that skepticism "should ever undermine the reasonings of common life, and carry its doubts so far as to destroy all action, as well as speculation,"\textsuperscript{193} for his empirical observation had demonstrated that "Nature" inexplicably always overcame doubt so that even the skeptic "continue[d] to reason and believe" and judge even though his position was not defendable through reason.\textsuperscript{194} Hume instructed his readers to "yield to that propensity, which inclines us to be positive and certain in particular points, according to the light, in which we survey them in any particular instant."\textsuperscript{195} But here is the advantage of the skeptical attitude: we may assume knowledge in particular and specific instances but we may never presume knowledge in general or ultimate contexts. Hume observed two useful aspects of what he called "mitigated
skepticism." One was to combat dogmatists who, cognizant of the limitations of the human mind, would be "inspire[d]
. . .with more modesty and reserve, and [would] diminish their fond opinion of themselves, and their prejudice against antagonists:" it would "abate their price." Hume wished men to be mindful of the "universal perplexity and confusion, which is inherent in human nature. [and that] In general, there is a degree of doubt, and caution, and modesty, which, in all kinds of scrutiny and decision, ought for ever to accompany a just reasoner." The other use of a skeptical attitude was that it might limit "our enquiries to such subjects as are best adapted to the narrow capacity of human understanding." Philosophers should never pontificate beyond the realm of common life. Hume's skepticism worked to preserve impartiality in judgment and freedom from prejudice in reviewing conclusions and "examining accurately all their consequences." As Constance Maund points out, Hume did not expect to change man's "habits of expectation." His hope was "to make us see things in a new light and to throw open new ways of banishing illusion and error." It is important to point out that Hume did not deny the existence of truth; he did deny the capacity of man's reason to know or explain it. The effects of his denial, however, are significant for he implied "that knowledge is unavailable and [that] judgment must consequently be suspended"; "if one does not know, the issue is wide
Observing the Religious Whigs, Hume commented, "Dissimulation, Hypocrisy, Violence, Calumny, Selfishness are, generally speaking, the true and legitimate Offspring of this kind of Zeal." It is this authoritative conviction and its inherent drive to impose its views on others that Hume opposed. Laurence Bongie observes Hume's purpose of study--one's own amusement, one's own self-analysis, not the renewal of society--as the difference between a philosopher and a philosophe.

The most significant effect and the best lesson the modern world could learn from Hume's skepticism is its non-support for authoritarian systems and attitudes. L. A. Selby-Bigge in his introduction to Hume's *Enquiries* remarks that in Hume's writings "it is very hard to say positively that he taught, or did not teach, this or that particular doctrine." The reason for this is that he taught none. The twentieth century "Analytic Philosophy" reflects Hume's spirit of inquiry in that it does not view philosophy as a doctrine but as a "state of mind" (p. 27). Hume's conception of science emphasized speculation rather than security, and he recognized no philosophical system as final or true, believing "the most agreeable guide in daily life [to be] a philosophy whose errors are merely ridiculous, and whose excesses do not warp our lives."

Hume maintained that "truth is disputable" and that men are so varied and changeable in their thinking, values,
and behavior, that no acceptable, let alone "true," doctrine could be formulated characterizing his nature or purpose. "Human nature is too inconstant to admit of any such regularity. Changeableness is essential to it." He pointed up a mistake of which all philosophers seemed susceptible, that of extending a "favourite principle, . . . over the whole creation" obliterating the variety so apparent in nature; the "love of simplicity. . . . has been the source of much false reasoning in philosophy." Constantly wary of the authoritarian nature of systems-making, Hume commented "I am sensible, that nothing can be more unphilosophical than to be positive or dogmatical on any subject; . . . . I am convinced that, where men are the most sure and arrogant, they are commonly the most mistaken." He therefore cautioned them not to fall into the error "of imposing their conjectures and hypotheses on the world for the most certain principles." Aware of the limited vision of dogmatic philosophy, Hume was particularly concerned about the insidious effects of its "truth."

There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blameable, than, in philosophical disputes, to endeavour the refutation of any hypothesis, by a pretence of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality. When any opinion leads to absurdities, it is certainly false; but it is not certain that an opinion is false, because it is of dangerous consequence. Such topics, therefore, ought entirely to be forborne; as serving nothing to the discovery of truth, but only to make the person of an antagonist odious.
Although mindful of the harmful nature of dogmatic pontificating, Hume did write for the public and he was hopeful of instructing it in a style of thinking he believed could be beneficial to mankind. It is interesting to compare Hume's method of persuading his public with the philosophes' program of a general societal uplifting imposed from above through the machinery of state. For Hume "the only way,... of converting an antagonist... is to leave him to himself. For, finding that nobody keeps up the controversy with him, it is probable he will, at last, of himself, from mere weariness, come over to the side of common sense and reason."215 Not prone to hand down judgments from on high or insult the intelligence of his reader, Hume left his audience "to draw [their] own final conclusions about the facts," feeling "no need to go on and pronounce upon the truth or falsity of that thing which the facts display."216 Though desirous of influencing the opinions and behavior of men, Hume proceeded in his work more modestly and with greater respect for his readers than the other philosophes. "Can I do better than propose the difficulty to the public, even though, perhaps, I have small hopes of obtaining a solution? We shall at least, by this means, be sensible of our ignorance, if we do not augment our knowledge."217

It is apparent, then, that Hume's philosophy precluded the authoritarianism inherent in most philosophes programs of enlightenment. Rather than the self-righteous intolerance
evidenced by most philosophes, Hume's prescriptions, if they may be so called, were aimed at promoting patience and tolerance among men. In his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Hume had Philo comment that acknowledging the limited nature of our understanding "may teach, all of us, sobriety in condemning each other." Hume's intent in the Dialogues was to end the controversy between Deists and Christians by demonstrating both positions to be misguided and to further demonstrate the difference between Sceptics and Dogmatists as merely one of degree. Both agree that belief is necessary, but the Sceptics emphasize its difficulty while the Dogmatists emphasize its necessity. In his writings on morality, Hume never lost sight of the critical distinction between "is" and "ought." Hume's personal example best demonstrated the tolerance and intellectual modesty propounded in his philosophy. He "had no desire to disguise his errors" and constantly acknowledged the possibility that he could be wrong, inviting others to propose alternatives he might have overlooked. Hume was so far from being a defender of truth, he rarely responded to his critics even when his work and his person were pettily or viciously attacked; he even examined and approved for his publisher a refutation of his essay "Of Miracles." One cannot imagine Voltaire so magnanimously acknowledging a critic of one of his religious diatribes. It is difficult to see how Hume's philosophy could have
contributed to modern man's authoritarian attitude. According to Hume's precepts, no government or self-appointed reform organization can impose its perception of moral fortitude on mankind, primarily because Hume would not acknowledge the identification of any ultimate moral system to be imposed. No one may play God. Since truth cannot be certified, a certain degree of tolerance might result for no one can be sure they are absolutely right or someone else absolutely wrong. It is interesting to note that in our time when Hume's philosophy may finally be receiving the attention and study it deserves, social commentators, alert to indications that Orwell's totalitarian society of 1984 may be in the making, are calling on people to "speak [their] mind, question authorities" and attend to details. This was precisely Hume's hope in publishing his Treatise.

The most disheartening failure of the Enlightenment's promise is that the peaceful, happy society so often written about by the philosophes seems as inaccessible today as it ever was. If progress has eased some people's lives, it has not brought the contentment or psychological satisfaction for which modern man continues to yearn. An understanding of our humanity continues to elude us. Many historians maintain that this is our failure not the Enlightenment's and yet it is apparent that the prescriptions and programs espoused by the philosophes were not in themselves very ennobling of the human spirit nor humanitarian. How then
could they achieve noble results? Recognizing these facts it might do modern man well to cast about for some alternatives rather than fall back upon the tried but not true endorsements of the philosophes--with one exception. As usual Hume stood apart from the prevalent reform attitude of his colleagues and in his philosophy we find a dignified and truly humane characterization and counsel for men.

Whereas other philosophes generally preferred a more elite audience, it was Hume's distinction that "he never lost sight of the understanding of the general public," although he was attempting "to revolutionise the study of human nature." Hume believed that "pretentious" systems of philosophy oppressed mankind demanding from us what we cannot give. Therefore, the thrust of his philosophy was to teach us to examine our own nature so that we will not adopt and submit ourselves to such systems. He demonstrated how "the theist, atheist, mystic, and skeptic" had to "confess his ignorance of the exact principle of the universe" and fall back on faith. He concluded that whatever systems of universal purpose men held, "they remain men. Hume's analysis reconciles men to themselves. Aware of their nature and limitations men may put themselves at ease concerning divinity." They might also stop harming each other in the name of their particular ultimate principle. Hume clearly perceived that disputes among men "pertinaciously obstinate in their principles" produced in
them "blind adherence to their own arguments...[and] contempt of their antagonists." Hume has taught us that systems, even "perfect" ones, ignore human nature and therefore cannot realize goals commensurate with human needs. These systems demand that which our nature cannot give. Hume accepted human nature and was willing to live with its limitations concerning knowledge of ultimate truth. His example demonstrated that life can be lived without the assurances of ultimate knowledge. "He was willing to live with uncertainty, with no supernatural justification, no complete explanations, no promise of permanent stability, with guides of merely probable validity, and what is more, he lived in his world without complaining." As Robert Ginsberg observes, "Without any commitment to a social utopia, to a god, or to a knowledge of reality, Hume yet lived with all that remained, namely his humanity." Hume "challenged reason but knew himself." Believing it more important to live life than extrapolate on its ultimate rationale, Hume contended that "human life is more governed by fortune than by reason; is to be regarded more as a dull pastime than a serious occupation; and is more influenced by particular humour, than by general principles. . . . While we are reasoning concerning life, life is gone." Mindful of man's urge to question and speculate, Hume did not propose ending such inquiry, but his strictures would prevent the formulation of systems that became more important
than the men who devised them. "Indulge your passion for
science,...but let your science be human,...Be a
philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a
man."233

According to Hume, the great stumbling block to peace
and harmony among men was this authoritarian conviction
which men used to set themselves apart from each other. By
denying them such assurance Hume hoped to foster a tolerance
and mutual respect that would sustain a contented society.

His philosophy, his theory of knowledge, his ethics,
and his political theory, are designed to persuade men
to understand their passions, and thereafter calmly and
without enthusiasm to make arrangements that they
should live together peacefully and agreeably, in a
decent compromise with the conflicting demands of their
nature.234

For Hume, Nature operated through men's hearts not their
intellect235 and where other philosophes proclaimed the
social benefits of "enlightened" self-interest, Hume dis-
closed the best indication of personal merit to be benev-
olence.236 The development of such an attitude in modern
society would have marked and distinctively different
effects. In his discussion of democracy Crane Brinton
outlines three types or possibilities. One is "idealistic
...believing democracy" which he contends would be dif-
cult since it would require reconciling "its this-worldly
and scientific heritage [with] an other-worldly faith;"
second, "a cynical democracy,...whose citizens profess
in this world one set of beliefs and live another" which
Brinton believes impossible, yet it is possible to observe just this situation developing in twentieth century democracies, especially the United States. Third, Brinton describes a "realistic, pessimistic democracy...in which ordinary citizens approach morals and politics with the willingness to cope with the imperfection that characterizes...[the common citizen]. Were its demands met, it might well be the most successful of cultures." 237 If Hume's philosophy were accepted by men, this last characterization might be effected.

The most intriguing aspect of Hume's characterization of human nature, that which could best promote this benevolent change in society, is the recognition that man is more than his reason. Recognizing that man was a believer and that reason could provide no foundation for that belief, Hume determined that man's feelings were not superficial qualities that merely enlivened his existence but were actually man's essence. Norman Kemp Smith points out that we must recognize "the important functions which Hume ascribes to feeling and instinct, and the highly complex emotions and propensities which he is willing to regard as ultimate and unanalysable." 238 As an empirical philosopher Hume was not prepared to explain the way Nature rescued us from our "philosophical melancholy" 239 but he was obliged not to deny it and willing to accept it. He determined that our moral judgments arose elsewhere than from reason
observing that much of our moral sense of right and wrong was affected by our common sentiment of sympathy. A general recognition and nurturing of this sentiment might finally initiate the social improvement for which modern man continues to strive.

Although his is not the philosophy considered characteristic of the Age of Reason, David Hume holds out the best possibility of modern man's realistic self-analysis, not only in terms of explaining our malaise and bewilderment, but also in terms of formulating a mode of existence that is comfortable, enjoyable, fair, and accessible. In the words of Robert Ginsberg, "Hume then stands for 'the party of human-kind.' And for his illumination of our humanity he may well endure as the most valuable light of a century said to be enlightened."
NOTES


2 Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 252.

3 Cavendish, Forward to David Hume.

4 Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 129.

5 Cavendish, David Hume, p. 24.


8 Cavendish, David Hume, p. 16.


11 Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, pp. 474-475.

12 Quoted in Mossner, Introduction to Hume, Treatise, p. 7.

13 Ibid., p. 27.

14 Dieckmann, "Interpretation of the Eighteenth Century," p. 299.

15 Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 6.

16 Krieger, Kings and Philosophers, p. 224.

17 Cavendish, David Hume, p. 149; Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. vi.

18 Hume, Enquiries, p. 164.

19 Baumer, Modern European Thought, p. 206.

20 Crocker, Age of Crisis, pp. 456, 459.


Ibid., p. 79.

Ibid., 1:364.

Ibid., 2:392.

Ibid., p. 174.

Ibid., p. 92.

Ibid., p. 95.

Ibid., pp. 79, 404, 383.

Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 72.


Gay, Party of Humanity, p. 115.

Gay, for instance, excuses the flaws in philosophe
history because they could not do anything else—they were
engaged in battle, or their artistic interests inhibited
their methodology and its "dreary conclusions" (p. 69). The
Enlightenment, 2:385. Goethe made an acute observation on
Voltaire that speaks volumes regarding an Enlightenment
legacy, "Rarely has anyone made himself so dependent for
the sake of independence." Quoted in Gay, The Enlightenment,
2:69.

F. C. S. Schiller, "Must Empiricism Be Limited?"
Mind 45 (July 1936): 307-308.

It is interesting that Peter Gay notes that the philoso-
phes "sought clues to the universals in the unique, the
typical in the extraordinary" which is much what he has done
in his own work, and yet criticizes Talmon for "tak[ing] the
unrepresentative man as representative of a movement, and
unrepresentative quotations out of context as representative
of a man's ideas." The Enlightenment, 2:175; Party of
Humanity, p. 281. Like the philosophes Gay criticizes in
others that of which he himself is guilty.

Dieckmann, "Interpretation of the Eighteenth Century,"
p. 298.
38 Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 74.

39 Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 495.


41 Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 221.

42 Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 136.


46 Ibid., 1:391.

47 Libby, Attitude of Voltaire to Magic, p. 86.


50 Gay, The Enlightenment, 2:368.


54 Gay, for instance, insists that arguing that the movement fighting "censorship, nonsense, slavery, torture, intolerance, cruelty, and war" was responsible for the horrors in our times is not logical. Party of Humanity, p. 286.

55 Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 449.

56 Ginsberg observes "We are reluctant still to recognize the inherent weakness of the Enlightenment commitments and their inevitable decline. We proudly call ourselves its offspring and celebrate our nostalgia for it at international congresses." "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 645.
Quoted by Frederick Burkhardt in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 28.

Quoted in McCutcheon, Present-Day Relevance, p. 81.

Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 150.

Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 491.

Bredvold, Brave New World, pp. 102-103.

Ibid., p. 103.

Quoted in Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, pp. 43-44.

Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 229.

Walter L. Dorn, "Does the US Still Need the Eighteenth Century?" in Present-Day Relevance, ed. McCutcheon, p. 34.

Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 493.

Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 92.

Bronowski and Mazlish claim that human sciences have not developed "as coherent a method as the natural sciences, because they have not fused together the two modes of inquiry, the empirical and the rational." Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 494. Obviously, the proper method will achieve the hoped-for conclusions.

Attributed to A. D. Lindsay, master of Balliol College at Oxford in Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 113.

Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 128.

Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, pp. 114, 120.

Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 58.

Ibid., pp. 61, 65, 72. Heilbroner quotes Suzanne K. Langer's fear that "Technical progress is putting man's freedom of mind into jeopardy." Ibid., p. 73.

Ibid., p. 74.

Ibid., pp. 197, 196.

Ibid., p. 181.
79 Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 32.
80 Anchor, Enlightenment Tradition, p. 75.
81 PBS, "Free To Choose" with Milton Friedman, Series #3, 8 July 1982.
82 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
87 Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 122.
88 Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 225.
90 Ibid., 2:36.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 47.
97 Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 4.
98 Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 126.


Ibid., p. 102.

Bredvold, *Brave New World*, p. 112.

Anchor, *Enlightenment Tradition*, p. 77. This observation seems to contradict Helvétius's belief that the pursuit of self-interest would at the same time effect the natural harmony of interests among men. One can only assume that men had to be "educated" as to their self-interest.

Ibid., p. 79.

Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 130.


Bronowski and Mazlish, *Western Intellectual Tradition*, p. 298.


Quoted in Cobban, *In Search of Humanity*, p. 189.

Ibid., p. 183.


Ibid.

122 Ibid.


124 Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, pp. 135-136.


126 Ibid., p. 371.

127 Ibid., 2:61, 78.

128 Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 221. Describing the philosophes Condorcet commented, "Il se forma bientôt en Europe une classe d'hommes moins occupées encore de découvrir ou approfondir la vérité que de la répandre; . . ." Ibid.

129 Ibid., p. 219.

130 Ibid., p. 225.

131 Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 231.

132 Ibid., p. 23.


134 Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p. 188.


136 Quoted in McCutcheon, Present-Day Relevance, p. 47.

137 Heilbroner, Future as History, p. 113.

138 Ibid., pp. 113-114.

139 Ibid., p. 169.

142 Ibid.
143 Ibid.
146 Ibid., 1:324.
148 Fox, "Reflections on the Trial," in Heavenly City Revisited, ed. Rockwood, p. 175.
149 Ibid., pp. 177, 183.
150 Ibid., p. 187.
151 Ibid., p. 188.
152 Fox, Introduction to Manuel, Age of Reason, p. v.
154 Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. vi.
157 Boeth, "1984: Was Orwell Right?," pp. 1, 2.
158 Ibid., p. 2.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
161 Molly Ivins quarrels with the Texas Monthly's ranking of the most effective state legislators. The questions not asked in the ranking are "Effective to what end? For what purpose do they use the power they wield?" "Bypass the Euphemisms and Let Dumb Speak for Itself," Dallas Times Herald, 26 June 1983, sec. A, p. 39.
162 Quoted in Becker, Heavenly City, p. 147.
163 Ibid.
164 Quoted in Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 117.
165 Ibid., p. 120.
166 Crocker, Age of Crisis, p. 455.
167 Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Intellectual Tradition, p. 495.

168 Friedman, "Free to Choose." Panelist Nicholas von Hoffman questioned the existence of an "unseen hand" and a mechanism that would operate regardless of who the captain is. He suggests that this is really a religious question.
169 Bredvold, Brave New World, p. 130.
171 Ibid., p. 241.
172 Ibid., p. 242.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid., pp. 242-243.
175 Morton, A Nervous Splendor, p. 314.
176 Quoted in Mossner, Introduction to Hume, Treatise, p. 9.
177 Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 644.

178 In Hume Ginsberg misses "that high-spirited rhetoric that makes the Enlightenment so delightful to us." Ibid. In comparing Hume to Diderot, Grimm observed that Hume did not have the depth of genius of Diderot and characterizes them thus: "M. Hume est comparable à un ruisseau clair et limpide qui coule toujours également et paisiblement et M. Diderot à un torrent dont l'effort impétueux et rapide renverse tout ce qu'on voudrait opposer à son passage." Quoted in Bongie, "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 215.

179 Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 644. It should be recalled, however, that Hume did not deny man's drive to believe in what was impossible to demonstrate. In fact, he recognized such belief as essential for survival.
He did, however, refuse to speculate on what lay beyond knowledge and denied anyone claiming to know such things ultimate certainty.

180 Ibid., p. 602.
181 Ibid., p. 617.
182 Ibid., p. 640.
183 Hume, Enquiries, pp. 6-7.
184 Moritz, "Is Hume the End?" p. 130.
186 Schiller, "Must Empiricism Be Limited?" p. 309.
187 Hume, Enquiries, p. 61.
189 Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 646.
192 Hume, Enquiries, p. 41.
193 Ibid.
194 Hume, Treatise, p. 238.
195 Ibid., pp. 320-321.
197 Ibid., pp. 161-162.
198 Ibid., p. 162.
199 Ibid., p. 150.
201 Moritz, "Is Hume the End?" pp. 126, 127.
Quoted in Mossner, *Life of David Hume*, p. 186.


Cragg, *Reason and Authority*, p. 133. Bongie observes, however, that for the French philosophes, philosophy was "not a sport, it was a sacred and deadly serious business." "Hume, 'Philosophe' and Philosopher," p. 221.


Ibid., p. 278.


Hume, *Enquiries*, p. 96. One is reminded of the criticism of Becker's book as "dangerous."

Ibid., p. 170.


Ibid., pp. 390-391.

Cragg, *Reason and Authority*, p. 142.


Ibid., p. 232.

224 Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 3.


227 Ibid.

228 Hume, Enquiries, p. 169.


231 Ibid., p. 646.


233 Hume, Enquiries, p. 9. This attitude of Hume's may be the reason why Collingwood, such a critic of Enlightenment history, could give a favorable opinion of Hume's. Collingwood denotes the purpose of history as "human self-knowledge. . . . Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a man; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the man you are and nobody else is." Idea of History, p. 10.


235 Ibid.

236 Mossner, Life of David Hume, p. 608.

237 Brinton, Shaping of Modern Thought, p. 249.

238 Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, p. 154.

239 Hume, Treatise, p. 316.

240 Ginsberg, "Hume versus the Enlightenment," p. 647.
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