

THE ENLIGHTENMENT PROJECT

GS/HUMA 6116.06

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COURSE TIME AND PLACE: Wednesdays 11:30 -- 2:30 in South Ross 202
First Class is Wednesday, September 5th

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the challenge and critique of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. In addition to familiarizing you with classic enlightenment texts and writers such as Smith, Diderot, Millar, Schiller, Hume, Kant and Rousseau, this course explores the ways that contemporary thinkers like Derrida, Foucault, Habermas, Adorno, Lyotard and Luhman have absorbed, engaged and either rejected the Enlightenment completely or attempted to resurrect its more positive and hopeful aspects.

The eighteenth-century *enlightenment project* was an attempt to create a rational, progressive and cultivated society based upon the empirically discovered and/or logically deduced laws of nature and human nature. Its dynamic spirit was a critique of accepted values and a search for truth. A number of contemporary thinkers argue that the *Enlightenment project* failed because it either naively ignored or deliberately obscured the symbolic or discursive nexus of rationality and social actuality, thereby contributing to economic, cultural and technological domination by particular groups – i.e. males, capitalists and scientific *experts*. To use the language of continental critical theory, the Enlightenment *regressed* into ideology and its cultural vision became so detached from *lifeworld* as to offer no serious resistance to commodification.

The course readings disentangle several of the deconstructionist and postmodern elements within this contemporary critique – a critique that has been enormously influential in delineating new and more inclusive directions for the humanities and social sciences. At the same time, by exploring the complexities and subtleties within the *Enlightenment project*, and showing how contemporary authors have gained and continue to gain insights in response to this canonical literature, students hopefully will develop a more sophisticated understanding of the uses, abuses and future potential of the Enlightenment search for truth.

The intrinsic difficulty of the readings, the comparative and non-linear approach, and the interdisciplinarity (bridging literary, philosophical, political, social and communicative theories) means that this course will be demanding for the instructor as well as the students. It should also be extremely exciting. You will need to come to class prepared to engage and discuss the readings. A large percentage of the course grade goes to participation. In papers for this course, you will be expected develop your own perspective and concomitant analysis of the continuing dialectic between the *Enlightenment project* and our postmodern condition.

Evaluation

Since this is a course that requires discussion, active reading and in-depth writing, the grading will be confined to class discussion and to two 15 - page (3,750 word) papers. The marking of the papers be slightly staggered (30% and 40%) so that students have a better opportunity to determine and meet the instructor's expectations. Participation carries an additional 30% for a total of 100%. The papers are due by the last class of each term. We will be discussing the exact nature of the papers in class.

FIRST TERM

The readings (or most of them) should be available in the bookstore under the course code in the Humanities section. But cheaper editions of some of these books can be discovered in Toronto's bookstores. Feel free to use any edition as long as it is not abridged.

*** Refers to books that can be found online. Shiller and Kant are in electronic form at the York University Library. Kant, Ferguson, Hume and Shiller are all available online at the Guttenberg Project website. Rousseau's *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* is available at <http://oll.libertyfund.org/Intros/Rousseau.php> or <http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/rousseau/firstdiscourse.htm> .**

John Millar's *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* is at

<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3113/millar/rank>

Other eighteenth-century texts probably are also available online if you look for them. Don't bother looking for Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*; however, I don't think you'll find it.

**** Refers to short excerpts that I will be providing as handouts**

September 6

Meet with students.

September 12

D’Alambert *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*

September 19

Immanuel Kant: ***What is Enlightenment?*

Michel Foucault “What is Enlightenment?” from *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York: Pantheon, 1984)

“Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” from *The Foucault Reader*

September 26

Cesare Beccaria *On Crimes and Punishments*

October 3

Michel Foucault “DISCIPLINES AND SCIENCES OF THE INDIVIDUAL”, *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 169 – 256

October 10

Denis Diderot *Rameau’s Nephew*

Antoine-Nicholas de Condorcet ***“Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind”*

October 17

Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Arno *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, (New York: Continuum, 1969), “The Concept of Enlightenment” and “Excursus I: Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment”. If you have time, also take a look at “Notes and Drafts”

October 24 Reading Week**October 31****Jean-Jacques Rousseau**
reserve*Essay on the Origin of Languages on***November 7****Jacques Derrida***Of Grammatology*, trans. GayatriChakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976), PART II, NATURE, CULTURE, WRITING, Section 3. Feel free to read Sections 1, 2 and 4. If you really have bundles of time, try to read the earlier sections from Derrida that will give you a better idea of his concepts of *difference*, *trace* and *arche-writing*.**November 14****Jean-Jacques Rousseau***Julie or the New Heloise*

Sections to be determined.

November 21**Adam Smith***The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

Parts I-III

November 28**John Dwyer***Virtuous Discourse*

Chapters to be determined

SECOND TERM**January 9****David Hume****A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book One, skim parts I and II, read the other sections more carefully**January 16****Gilles Deleuze***Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), focus especially on chapters 5 and 6

January 23

Immanuel Kant **Critique of Pure Reason*, Introduction and Transcendental Doctrine of Elements (up to *First Division*)

January 30

Immanuel Kant **Critique of Pure Reason*, “Transcendental Doctrine of Method”

February 6

Jürgen Habermas *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1993), “Introduction”, “Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification” and “Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action”

February 13: Reading Week**February 20**

John Millar *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*

February 27

Niklas Luhmann *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), chapters 1-13

March 5

Frederich Schiller **Letters On the Aesthetic Education of Man* + **reserve**

March 12

Jean-François Lyotard *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Be sure to read it all including Forward and Postscript.

March 19

Marquis de Sade *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*
read entire book entitled “Philosophy in the Bedroom”, pp 177-367 (don’t worry it’s a fast read!)

** short selection from *Juliette*

March 26

Horkheimer and Adorno *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, “Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality”

April 2

Georges Bataille *The Story of the Eye*

Bibliographic Details

These biographical details may change if certain editions become unavailable or less available. Generally, volumes of these texts will be available at the York University Bookstore under the course heading in the textbook section whenever possible. Feel free to use other editions if you can find them at used bookstores (the exception being Bataille because different editions can have radically different content). Just try to make sure they are unabridged.

Georges Bataille, *Story of the Eye*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1987)
ISBN 0-87286-209-7

Cesare Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments*, trans. David Young, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1986)
ISBN 0-915145-97-9

Jean Le Rond D’Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, trans. Richard N. Schwab, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)
ISBN 0-226-13476-8

Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001)
ISBN 0-231-06813-1

Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1998)
ISBN 0-8018-5830-5

Denis Diderot, *Rameau’s Nephew/D’Alembert’s Dream*, (Penguin Books: 1976)
ISBN 0-14-044173-5

John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (John Donald, 1985)
ISBN 9781904607274

The Foucault Reader, ed Paul Rabinow, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984)
ISBN 0-394-71340-0

Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans by Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990)
ISBN 0-262-58118-3

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1975)
ISBN 0-8264-0093-0

David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (Penguin Books, 1986)
ISBN 0-14-043244-2

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (Prometheus Books, 1990)
ISBN 0-87975-596-2

Niklas Luhmann, *Love As Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*, ed. Jeremy Gaines and Doris. L. Jones (Sanford University Press, 1998)
ISBN 0-8047-3253-1

Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984)
ISBN 0-8166-1173-4

John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, (Liberty Fund, 2006)
ISBN 100865974760

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* **on reserve**

The Marquis de Sade, *The Marquis de Sade: Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*, trans. Austyn Wainhouse and Richard Seaver (Grove/Atlantic, Incorporated, 1990)
ISBN 0-8021-3218-9

Frederich Von Shiller, *Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man*, (Kissinger Publishing)
ISBN 1-4191-3003-X

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, (Liberty Fund, 1982)
ISBN 0865970122

Suggested additional readings:

Ed. Samantha Ashenden & David Owen, *Foucault Contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory*, (London: Sage, 1999) **on reserve**

Zygmunt Bauman, *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality*, (Blackwell, 1998)

Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis and the Imagination*, (Stanford, 1997)

Ed. Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: A Comprehensive Anthology*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973) **on reserve**

Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1987) **on reserve**

Niklas Luhmann, *Theories of Distinction: Redescribing the Descriptions of Modernity*, (Stanford, 2002).

David McNally, *Political Economy and the Rise of Capitalism: A Reinterpretation*, (Berkeley, 1988)

Thomas Osborne, *Aspects of Enlightenment: Social Theory and the Ethics of Truth*, (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998) **on reserve**

Franco Rella, *The Myth of the Other: Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, Bataille*, trans. Nelson Moe, (Washington: Maisonneuve Press, 1994) **on reserve**

Sometimes when I teach this course, I pair the following two books to illuminate the Enlightenment sources of communitarianism.

Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, (Cambridge, 2003)

Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, (Nortre Dame, 2003)

Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot

PART ONE

1. The *Preliminary Discourse* begins by telling us that 50 members of the Republic of Letters were recruited to write the Encyclopedia. What else does it tell us about them? **The Encyclopedia was written by a ‘committee’ of *philosophes*. They were ‘enthusiastic’ and that they were mostly as then unknown young guns. Voltaire and Montesquieu’s joining them consolidated their position. They wanted to change the world.**
2. Apart from any particular arguments, what was their strategy for effecting change? **Instead of operating from within institutions, the French *philosophes* appealed to an educated *public*. In the process, they created that same public.**
3. Do you have any clues as to who that *public* consisted of? **IMPORTANT TO APPRECIATE THAT IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN A BOURGEOIS MIDDLE CLASS. THESE WRITERS WERE TRYING TO FIND A PLACE IN A LARGELY ARISTOCRATIC WORLD. TO CARICATURE THEM AS THE LITERARY ARM OF SOME SUPPOSEDLY DYNAMIC CAPITALIST CLASS IS NONSENSE IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CONTEXT.**
4. While the *Encyclopedie* was written by committee, the preliminary discourse clearly was not. There are things that D’Alembert says, for example, that the writings of his pal Diderot, and Diderot’s pal Rousseau would disavow in their individual writings. **WHAT MAKES THE *PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE* SO INTERESTING IS THAT IT HIGHLIGHTS THE SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, UTILITARIAN CHARACTER OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT. THAT CAN BE BOTH REVEALING AND MISLEADING SIMULTANEOUSLY. IT IS REVEALING IN THAT IT SHOWS HOW THE ENLIGHTENMENT COULD LEAD TO SCIENTIFIC POSITIVISM AND THE TYRANNY OF REASON. IT IS MISLEADING IN THE SENSE THAT THERE WAS SO MUCH MORE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT THAN RATIONAL SELF-INTEREST. AND, EVEN IN D’ALAMBERT THE SCIENTIST WE’LL RECOGNIZE A BROADER CONSCIOUSNESS.**
5. What does D’Alembert say explicitly about the scope and method of the project? What is even more telling about it than either of these? **The Encyclopedia aims to include all forms of knowledge and the principles behind each division. What is much more interesting is that claim that knowledge is a UNITY, that everything is interrelated/connected, and can be shown to be so. Is this what modern writers suggest? Don’t they tend to stress DIFFERENCE?**

6. What other tendency in addition to UNITY does D'Alembert and the project itself suggest? **A desire to integrate and systematize knowledge.** Bearing in mind that the systematizing impulse here is not as totalitarian as it would later become, what future teleology of Enlightenment could it suggest? **The elevation of RATIONAL SYSTEMS defined primarily by their internal logic and coherence.** Why might that be a problem down the road for Western thought? **Arguably, artificial and rational systems could become totalitarian, couldn't they? BUT SEE PART TWO #16 IN ORDER TO SEE HOW THE ENLIGHTENMENT DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN SYSTEMATIZING KNOWLEDGE AND THE TYRANNY OF SYSTEMS.**
7. At this point in time, why might be intellectually unfair to blame the excesses of rationality on these young writers. Why? **Because it becomes very clear that their agenda is a highly practical one – i.e. to improve the conditions of eighteenth-century life – RATHER THAN TO REIFY REASON.** That doesn't mean you can't take issue with their rationalistic focus (many in the eighteenth-century did; but the attacks of their enemies were typically designed to maintain the status quo not to improve the lives of the majority).
8. The Enlightenment is all about finding reasonable/natural ORIGINS for our ideas and beliefs rather than accepting TRADITION or DOGMATIC AUTHORITY. This *search for foundations and limits of our principles and beliefs* is LIBERATING and EXCITING because it opens us an entirely new canvas for discovering and communicating solutions to life's problems. **But first you have to legitimize the enterprise. YOU HAVE TO AFFIRM THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE.** (Need I point out that this is not necessarily the same thing as equating humanity with materialism.)?
9. How does D'Alembert make the material conditions of life foundational? **He affirms BACONIAN EMPIRICISM as the essential starting point. The origins of knowledge are the SENSES. Knowledge begins as making sense of sense impressions or sensations. THERE ARE NO INNATE IDEAS. Knowledge is overwhelmingly constructed from what we perceives as EXTERNAL OBJECTS. Moreover, knowledge is consolidated for fundamentally UTILITARIAN reasons – i.e. to avoid pain. AVOIDING PAIN LEADS TO AN IDEA OF HAPPINESS, BUT PAIN AVOIDANCE IS THE STARTING POINT.**
10. Although empiricism is the starting point, and Bacon is definitely a hero to these *philosophes*, their definition of reason is much more extensive and practical. What striking combination do they make that ushers in a MODERN CONSCIOUSNESS? **They combine inductive and deductive reasoning. They bring both logic and mathematics into the equation WITH THE PRINCIPLE THAT LOGIC AND MATHEMATICS CAN BE APPLIED TO**

EXPERIENCE BUT MUST BE AFFIRMED BY ‘FACTUAL’ EXPERIENCE. THE NAME THAT THEY USUALLY GAVE TO THE COMBINATION OF INDUCTION AND DEDUCTION WAS ‘NATURE’.

11. Some postmoderns, and earlier the Romantics, condemned the Enlightenment for either negating or marginalizing IMAGINATION in their emphasis upon reason. ART for example was FORCED TO IMITATE NATURE in order to qualify as legitimate art. Why was this not as restrictive in the eighteenth-century as it might later become? **Nature, remember, opens up an entirely new canvas for creativity to explore. The balance of nature and creativity that enlightened authors advocated had its models in ancient Greece as well as modernity, hardly eclipsing the creative spirit. Finally, the emphasis on nature was not confined to external objects but also to HUMAN NATURE, which opened doors for artistic exploration in forms that included the novel.**
12. Those who view the Enlightenment as deifying reason at the expense of creative freedom might also want to pay attention to the discussion of CAUSE and EFFECT in D’Alembert’s introduction. What exactly does he say? **He’s not a nineteenth-century positivist in stressing cause and effect. He suggests that how cause and effect really works is a metaphysical rather than a practical issue. THE PRACTICAL ISSUE THAT IS PARAMOUNT FOR HIM IS ‘THE SOVEREIGN GOOD OF THE PRESENT LIFE TO THE EXEMPTION FROM PAIN’.**
13. Obviously, the Enlightenment puts a secular vision of life front and center and marks a much more radical break from the spiritual worldview than the Renaissance ever did. What other fundamental Enlightenment focus does D’Alembert illuminate (remember that we are still only on page 11 of this introduction!)? **The focus on the individual who rationally deduces that he/she has better odds of avoiding pain and communicating/ffecting strategies for *achieving the sovereign good of the present life* by working together. HERE WE HAVE THE CENTRAL CONCEPTS OF MODERN SOCIETY – THE RATIONAL INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT.**
14. What is language and discourse according to this version of society? **It is the invention of ‘signs’ to communicate strategies and support effective union. How does postmodernity turn this interpretation on its head? I’m sure you know the answer to this one?**
15. Where do the notions of justice and rights come from? **From the observable fact that EACH INDIVIDUAL TRIES TO MAXIMIZE THE USEFULNESS OF SOCIETY FOR HIMSELF/HERSELF. D’Alembert describes SOCIETY AS A COMPETITION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, WITH RIGHTS AND JUSTICE ARISING FROM THE FACT THAT THE STRONG TEND TO OPPRESS THE WEAK.**

16. What is a fundamental difference between *barbarians* and an enlightened people? **Barbarians fail to understand the fundamental equality between individuals and barbaric societies allow the strong to oppress the weak.** Now D'Alembert does not simply let this pass without comment; he tells you something very interesting about the Enlightenment. What is it? **BARBARISM IS THE NORM; CIVILIZATION IS THE HISTORICAL EXCEPTION. THE ENLIGHTENMENT FEARS REVERSION TO BARBARITY.**
17. Thus far, we can easily see the attention to practical reason, the individual and the communication of useful knowledge in the Enlightenment project. What's missing from this picture? **PROGRESS IS PROBLEMATIZED. IT IS OFTEN ASSERTED THAT THE ENLIGHTENMENT BELIEVED IN 'IMPROVEMENT' WHICH CERTAINLY IS TRUE, BUT PROGRESS WAS NEVER SOMETHING THAT COULD BE ASSUMED. ONE HAD TO FIGHT AGAINST THE TENDENCY TO REGRESS TO BARBARITY.**
18. What else is missing from this picture? **D'Alembert bases his analysis of human combination and the communication of utilitarian knowledge, but THE SOCIAL CONNECTION ESTABLISHES ENTIRELY NEW KINDS OF 'AFFECTS' AND 'PLEASURES' – THE EMOTIONAL AFFECTS THAT COME FROM SOCIABILITY AND THE PLEASURES THAT COME FROM PURSUING KNOWLEDGE APART FROM ITS UTILITY. IN A FASCINATING ASIDE, D'ALAMBERT GOES SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST THAT UTILITY BECOMES A PRETEXT FOR PURSUING KNOWLEDGE.**
19. Why am I emphasizing this point? What I want to suggest is that **A UTILITARIAN FOUNDATION FOR SOCIETY NEED NOT IMPLY THE REDUCTION OF SOCIETY TO THE PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY. THAT IS HOW JEREMY BENTHAM AND MODERN CAPITALISM REDUCED THE RICHNESS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT TO A RATIONALISTIC FORMULA THAT REDUCES WHAT HUMANS IN SOCIETY CAN EXPERIENCE.**
20. Utility can never be removed from the human equation. For D'Alembert and the *philosophes* it is foundational and needs to be understood. The *philosophes* helped establish the utilitarian connection between science and technology that helped propel Western Europe into the forefront of world civilizations. How does D'Alembert describe the connection? **He describes the way that observations related to the motion and impenetrability and combinations of distinct material objects led to the construction of mathematics. The key to improving the physical conditions of life occurred when the discoveries of mathematics stopped being ideal abstractions and were brought to bear on the analysis of physical objects to discover laws or tendencies. Technology is**

all about applying possible divisions and combinations to materials in order to achieve utilitarian results.

21. What does D'Alembert – himself a mathematician – expressly explode? **The power of purely speculative thought, in mathematics or metaphysics, to explain nature. At best, these are just more or less *useful* hypotheses that must be related to observation. THAT'S WHY BACON (and Locke) IS ULTIMATELY THE HERO AND WHY DESCARTES GETS SHORT SHRIFT EXCEPT FOR HIS EXPOSING OF THE IDIOCY OF DOGMATISM.**
22. The Enlightenment Project derived a great deal of its optimism (not naïve optimism if you appreciate their misgivings) about the future from its appreciation of the **POWER OF TECHNOLOGY TO CHANGE THE WORLD**. What makes D'Alembert and his buddies different from many promoters of technology today? **Techne or technology is a tool for improving human life. While there is genuine excitement about how it works and what it can do, technology is not for them an end in itself. I suppose you could say that the enlightened emphasis on technology, utility and systematization led towards technocratic visions, but there is lots of evidence to suggest that enlightened writers were not there yet, and you could argue that they would never have approved of such a world.**
23. Enlightened writers like D'Alembert were concerned always to bring knowledge back to the “corporeal world”, however, and their disinterest or distrust of anything that smelt like spirituality is obvious. What kind of God does D'Alembert affirm? **A Deist god. Physical existence is always the starting point and spirituality, to the extent that it is taken seriously, is derivative.**
24. What important lesson must we always keep in mind when attempting to discover nature's laws? **We should never jump to conclusions. We need to LIMIT OUR KNOWLEDGE to what can be observed.**
25. What two LIMITS must always guide us in our search for knowledge? **OUR IDEA OF 'OURSELVES' AND OUR IDEA OF 'OBJECTS' WITH "EXTENSION AND MAGNITUDE".** What fascinating things does D'Alembert have to say about these limits? **THE SELF AND OBJECTS OUTSIDE THE SELF ARE INDISPENSIBLE 'CONCEPTS'; THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO POSSIBLE WAY OF BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THESE TWO BOUNDARIES OF KNOWLEDGE.** Why is this so revealing? **WHILE THE ANALYSIS THAT RESULTS TENDS TO BE MATERIALISTIC, AT LEAST IN D'ALAMBERT THERE IS NO MATERIALISM. WE CAN ASSUME THAT HUMAN BEINGS SHARE SOME OF THE PROPERTIES OF MATTER, BUT WE CANNOT REDUCE HUMANITY TO MATERIAL OR BIOLOGY.**

26. Some might think that this ‘limited knowledge’ is impoverished, say in comparison with the spiritual worldview. Why doesn’t D’Alembert think so? **He and other enlightened writers ‘know something that religious people don’t know’. The more you accept the limitations of knowledge, the more firmly you can build upon and abstract from, basic principles. Otherwise, you end up knowing nothing and arguing about nonentities.**
27. What happens to knowledge when it divests itself of pretensions? **It is accessible to everyone, and its truths can be communicated to anyone who takes the time to follow the principles through to their appropriate conclusions. It is also open to criticism and correction, because it is a communicative form of discourse and not the property of some elite. Finally, it transforms the function of AXIOMS, which are now truthful only to the extent that they conform to actual experience and provide useful knowledge. NO LONGER NEED ANYONE FEAR KNOWLEDGE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER. OF COURSE, IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE TO PULL A FOUCAULT HERE AND TO SUGGEST THAT THE ENLIGHTENMENT DISGUISED ITS OWN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN POWER AND KNOWLEDGE. BUT THEN YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER THE HABERMASIAN OBSERVATION THAT SELF-CRITIQUE IS IMBEDDED IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT PERSPECTIVE. AND CRITICISM OF MODERN SPECIALIZATION DID COME FROM WITHIN THE ENLIGHTENED COMMUNITY, AS WE WILL SEE.**
28. How does D’Alembert himself describe the liberating effects of the enlightenment? **He points out that knowledge is not the prerogative of any group; all men have the ability to reason; the difference between higher and average intelligence is a matter of degree; while some people may be smarter than others, most are capable of intelligent thought if shown the way; geniuses really only do what most people do more quickly and easily.**
29. How does this understanding inform the Enlightenment Project? **The emphasis is upon COMMUNICATING KNOWLEDGE for general improvement. Why is the principle of communication insufficient for the transmission of knowledge? COMMUNICATION IS DIFFERENT FROM EDUCATION. EXCESS COMMUNICATION OR INFORMATION CAN MAKE PEOPLE STUPID. THE POINT IS TO SHOW PEOPLE ‘HOW’ TO USE THEIR OWN REASON TO DISCOVER USEFUL AND PLEASANT KNOWLEDGE. THE ENLIGHTENMENT IS ALL ABOUT THE LIBERATING POWER OF EDUCATION AND NOT SIMPLY ABOUT USEFUL INFORMATION.**
30. Does the Enlightenment have a prejudice that mitigates this liberation? **Yes. At least the French philosophes do? They don’t have much tolerance for diversity on two grounds: 1) diversity obscures the universality of truth and gets in the way of communication; 2) diverse customs and cultures prevent**

- individuals from thinking for themselves and achieving the degree of liberation that is possible.**
31. From here, D'Alembert begins to sum up ethics, politics, history, art, poetry and music in a couple of sentences that almost anyone today will have problems with, especially the limitation of art to the "imitation of nature". **I don't think we need to dwell too much on this, especially 1) since D'Alembert the 'scientist' isn't the best authority on some of these subjects and 2) since these subjects are treated in a much more sophisticated way in the Encyclopedia itself. What is, perhaps, significant, is the *tendency* to seek interdisciplinary connections between all of these subjects in a period prior to the division of intellectual labour. Late and Postmodern critics of the Enlightenment may very well spot an obsession with politics and science that relegates the fine arts to secondary status.**
 32. Did anyone notice the analysis of music? **D'Alembert suggests that if music is going to imitate nature, there is no reason why it shouldn't include all kinds of things that would resemble 'noise' to musically conditioned ears. Interesting in terms of the kinds of realism that music would aspire to. But we should beware of reading too much into this, especially since Rousseau has a lot of interesting things to say about music that are quite different in the Encyclopedia proper.**
 33. There is considerable tension, is there not, between the desire to unify and integrate knowledge in ways that predict interdisciplinarity and the specialization of different sectors of knowledge in order to *improve* them. Are there any interesting things that you can say about this discussion? **One might be the elevation of the mechanical arts in terms of status and income, so as to add incentives to improve them. Another would be to focus on the human needs provided by an occupation rather than some elitist notion of their significance (so much for Humanities professors!). It is doubtful whether D'Alembert and his buddies could envision just how utilitarian education and occupations would become, but it is salutary to consider that the group that he wants to rehabilitate is NOT THE CAPITALIST BUT THE MECHANIC!**
 34. What is implied in all D'Alembert's comments on the mechanical and fine *Arts*? **A RECALIBRATION OF SOCIAL REWARDS IN TERMS OF REAL MERIT AND CONTRIBUTION.** Does that imply a radical reorganization of society? **NOT NECESSARILY; D'Alembert and his colleagues want a mental revolution, not necessarily a social revolution. But you can see how these kinds of ideas could contribute to political revolution in a different kind of context, can't you?**
 35. What does D'Alembert want to hive off and separate from the more utilitarian focus of the Enlightenment? **FEELINGS OR SENTIMENTS – BOTH**

ETHICAL AND AESTHETIC. THESE HAVE THEIR OWN VALIDITY EVEN IF THEY ORIGINATED IN HUMAN 'NEEDS'. IT MUST BE SAID THAT THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME CONFUSION ABOUT 'FEELING' OR 'SENTIMENTS' AND ITS ROLE; BUT D'ALAMBERT CLEARLY WANTED TO SUGGEST THAT THESE COULD NEVER BE REDUCED TO UTILITARIAN CALCULATION.

36. In his discussion of human nature, D'Alembert separates the processing of knowledge into 3 modes that give rise to 3 faculties. What are they? **Reason gives rise to philosophy; memory gives rise to history; imagination gives rise to the fine arts.** Regardless of how successful this kind of Enlightenment obsession with clarifying, ordering and distinguishing, what is D'Alembert's very revealing conclusion: **REASON MUST TAKE PRIORITY OVER IMAGINATION!** Anything else interesting about this discussion? **IMAGINATION REQUIRES SOMETHING CALLED 'GENIUS' WHEREAS REASONING DOES NOT TO THE SAME DEGREE. GENIUS ASTONISHES, WHICH IS WHY MEN OF GENIUS HAVE BEEN ELEVATED TO SUCH A HIGH STATUS. D'ALAMBERT WANTS TO SUGGEST THAT REASON IS MORE IMPORTANT TO OUR HAPPINESS***** BUT SEE THE QUALIFICATION TO THIS IN PART TWO.**
37. It is fascinating to observe D'Alembert's twists and turns as he attempts to simultaneously unite and differentiate and some of this is just anal enlightenment systematizing. But he makes one crucial point of separation between his brand of empiricism and that of his hero Bacon that tells you a lot about the Enlightenment and its critics. What is it? **THE DISCUSSION OF THE STATUS OF 'NATURE' AND 'MAN'. D'ALAMBERT PUTS MAN ABOVE NATURE IN THE HIERARCHICAL CLASSIFICATION AND EVEN RESORTS TO THE KIND OF SILLY (FOR A PHILOSOPH) GRADATION OF MAN AS BETWEEN HEAVEN AND NATURE. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT ENLIGHTENMENT ISSUE; IF MAN IS ABOVE NATURE, THEN MAN CAN LEGITIMATELY CONTROL AND MANIPULATE NATURE IN THE NAME OF HUMAN UTILITY. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OFTEN WORSHIPS AT THE SHRINE OF NATURE, BUT THAT IS A PAGAN GOD; THE REAL DIVINITY FOR D'ALAMBERT IS THE RATIONAL INDIVIDUAL. (We can talk a lot about this because it goes to the heart of the Enlightenment and its tensions; the Enlightenment surely deserves some credit for tuning us into nature, but it also views the human as superior and dominating nature.)**
38. D'Alembert concludes Part I with another revelation. Despite all the peons to communication and the rational equality of men, he suggests that this book was **not written for the 'multitude' but for more 'enlightened' men. Can you think of who these might be?**

PART TWO

1. This section reveals how the Enlightenment viewed itself in terms of human history. How did it? **It viewed itself as liberating mankind from the dark ages of religious superstition and dogmatism. While it involved to some extent a return to the philosophy and practical insights of the Greeks – neo-classicism – it amplified that knowledge with a much more sophisticated understanding of physical and human nature.**
2. How did the Enlightenment (at least in this work) caricature the medieval period? **It described it as 12 centuries of intellectual slumber, punctuated only by solitary expressions of intelligence.**
3. What's the reason for hope in the eighteenth-century? **Reforming intelligence can no longer be confined by dogmatic beliefs and institutions. Useful knowledge is being communicated, especially by a new extra-institutional *republic of letters* that owes its livelihood to no one and that is creating its own readership (republic).**
4. What is the vehicle that is greatly accelerating the spread of knowledge? **Printing, but printing in the vernacular that makes knowledge accessible to more than an elite group of scribes writing in Greek or Latin.**
5. You know that a Frenchman is writing this account of modernity when he focuses on Racine and Corneille as central figures. Why are they important? **They describe the human passions in ways that are much more sophisticated than the ancients.**
6. According to D'Alembert, modern literature developed more fully than other fine arts, especially music. Why? **It could build on the progress made by the Greeks, but there was no record of the music of the Greeks to build on. What assumption does D'Alembert make about Greek music? That it must have been truer to genuine human passions than anything we have been able to produce. Isn't this a stark dismissal of centuries of spiritual music?**
7. Who were the real enemies of enlightenment, earlier as well as today? **The 'schoolmen', theologians or purveyors of scholasticism who constantly annotated and commented on earlier works as though they were sacred. What do you think a philosophe like D'Alembert would have to say about postmodern writers who constantly talk about one another's writings? Would they be postmodern scholastics?**
8. This book is a battle cry. What allies are the *philosophes* looking for? **Anyone who wants to escape out from under the church and the theologians. Interestingly, especially in France, the imagined allies are rulers and those**

responsible for national administration. The ‘enlightened despot’ is often the preferred option.

9. Who are just as dangerous as theologians? **Fanatical preachers who hold sway over the superstitious and definitely unenlightened multitude.**
10. What is an essential character of the French Enlightenment that was not prominent in some other countries like Scotland and America? **It was decidedly anticlerical.**
11. Who is the hero that charted a new course away from absurd *systems*? **Bacon.** What’s the status of the Frenchman, Descartes? **D’Alembert has reservations. The importance of Descartes was his fearless rejection of scholasticism – his willingness to doubt. The drawback was his belief in some innate axiomatic ideas.** Why is Newton so special for D’Alembert? **He was an expert on Newtonian mechanics, but more generally Newton created a new physics by avoiding conjecture and basing his new physics on simple and observable laws. He also married inductive and deductive logic (the practical combination of the Enlightenment) by applying mathematics to astronomy.**
12. Who completed the work that Newton began by consolidating a new empirically based metaphysics or study of human nature? **Locke.** What does D’Alembert conclude as a result of the focus on Bacon, Newton and Locke? **England was the place where the enlightened consciousness began.** To what did D’Alembert attribute this proliferation of modern genius in England? **To the fact that it was a tolerant society where religion could not be oppressive. The philosophes generally were *anglophiles*.**
13. How does D’Alembert promote his buddies the *philosophes*? **Ingeniously, he argues that in intolerant and traditional societies, intelligence generally gets thwarted. With any intellectual thaw, it is the young men who will be the pioneers of new ideas in philosophy and science. “Everything is new to them: thus their sole interest lies in making the right choice”. DOESN’T THIS ATTITUDE RESONATE WITH YOUNG SCHOLARS WHO HAVE TO PUT UP WITH OLD SUPERVISORS, WHO CLING TO THEIR OUTDATED EXPERIENCES?**
14. What’s so exciting about intellectual progress for these young eighteenth-century bucks? **They are grooving on one another, and not only creating national but a transnational *republic of letters*. Writing in the vernacular is accelerating the process of broadening knowledge that simultaneously broadens the minds of those receiving it.**
15. What is a real inconvenience to this dissemination of knowledge and what is D’Alembert’s surprising solution? **There are too many national languages and one will need to know several at least to be well educated as the century**

wears on. D'Alembert surprisingly recommends the revival of Latin as the language of (liberated) modern scholarship so that communication and absorption can be facilitated.

16. Many postmoderns accuse the Enlightenment of rationally systemizing life in ways that eventually lead to the entrapment of the human within bureaucratic and economic systems. There may be something in this, but it is only fair to point out the negative connotation that enlightened writers attached to *systems*. **D'Alembert slams all metaphysical 'systems' and extols the fact that enlightened communication is exploding 'the taste for systems'. What do you think someone like Foucault would say about the distinction between metaphysical systems and the systematizing apparatus of Enlightenment?**

17. Interesting, very interesting. In Part One, D'Alembert advocated putting reason and philosophy before imagination and the fine arts. But here he suggests that there is a danger that "combination and analysis" will have a negative impact on imagination and "sentiment", with excessive rationalism being imported into, dissecting and diluting, works of genius. **Here we have a very clear idea of a dominant tension in the Enlightenment – the tension between intellect and sentiment, between reason and imagination. The two are still in a dialectical relationship. If it is good to improve life by using reason, there is a clear sense that it would be a tragedy if feeling were to be usurped. Is this a matter of balance, where the focus can shift depending on how social evolution is perceived? Some commentaries present D'Alembert as a rationalist, empiricist, materialist and use him to describe the Enlightenment in those terms. Yet in Part Two, with a different and historical agenda, we see something quite different.*******

18. Where did the development of sentiment in the fine arts crystallize in the 15 years prior to the publication of *Preliminary Discourse* according to D'Alembert? **In music.** And what discussion/debate was taking place about music at the time of publication. **The debate over harmony and melody that centered on Rameau's music. This is a good place to end, since we'll be looking closely at Rameau and music in the weeks to come.**

19. One penultimate shot. How does Part Two end and what does this tell you about the Enlightenment? **With a commentary on barbarism being the normal condition of mankind and enlightenment being exceptional. We should not equate an optimistic period with a smug belief in progress. That's an attitude that doesn't really fit the eighteenth-century experience.**

20. One last shot. This work is widely regarded as the battle flag of the Enlightenment. Marx described (warmly by the way) the Enlightenment as the ideological battalion of the bourgeoisie. **Do you see anything remotely resembling a capitalist here?**

PART THREE

1. What class of people is of interest to the philosophes? **The mechanic.** Why? **Because it allows readers to see how things are done.** Who understands the principles behind how things are done – the philosopher or the mechanic? **The philosopher.** What kind of philosopher is this? **A philosopher who is interested in useful knowledge that can improve the human condition.**

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

Kant's *What is Enlightenment?*

1. Ironies, ambiguities and inversions – reversal of public and private idea of liberty. **Reversal of traditional understanding of freedom.**
2. Disdain for unthinking multitude – public are **scholars** and people who formerly brought the 'public' under the yoke – necessary that "some members of the community remain passive" **anti-democratic**
3. **Paradox.** Only a degree of civic freedom in terms of intellectual freedom will work its leaven in society, gradually reacting back on modes of thought. Too much liberty would allow irrational modes of thought too much sway
4. Human destiny lies in progress. Progress defined as purging of errors. Progress defined as establishing no limits that will impede future generations.
5. Religion as big obstacle. First monarchs should get out of the "business of salvation" and not merely as "tolerators" of diversity.

Foucault's *What is Enlightenment?*

1. Kant's uniqueness is in his discussion of the Enlightenment as an **attitude** about what is *modern* rather than as an **epoch or event**. Kant is not concerned with how the present is distinctive, heralds the future, or is the dawn of a new world. Enlightenment for Kant suggests a radical difference in the way the thinking individual achieves **membership in the circle of reasonable humanity**. This is simultaneously by having the courage to view himself or herself as an individual subject that moulds itself and as obedient to a rational despotism.
2. What about this emphasis on obedience and passivity to a **political regime** – admittedly one that corresponds to **universal reason**? Do you see any problem with that? What does F say about the tandem of Mendelsohn and Kant? Where is it leading to?
3. What is it about the Enlightenment that appeals to F? **The way it speaks to the fact that each individual has responsibility for overall progress. The way that it offers a Critique of existing circumstances and institutions. The way that it exposes the ways that we are subjected. The way that it presents itself as a task for action. The way that it challenges and experiments with existing limits. There is something MODERN in this.**
4. What is it about Baudelaire's approach that F. wants to add to the notion of modern. **It's the notion of the 'eternal' in the 'fleeting'. It's the notion that**

you can't simply be a critical spectator of the present. It's the notion that there is no ideal past or future from which or to which you are regressing or progressing. The 'attitude towards modernity' that he prefers is one that simultaneously respects the present while violating it. It is "the exercise of freedom" to realize that you are both the created and the creator. It means that you are shaped by institutions but can also shape them and yourself. So much that your life can become a work of art.

5. **What is F's big insight that he sees in embryo in Kant? It is that a person cannot escape the task of producing himself or herself. What's valuable in the Enlightenment is that we are AUTONOMOUS AGENTS WITH THE PERPETUAL DUTY TO CRITIQUE OURSELVES.**
6. **What is the "blackmail" of the Enlightenment? Either you except or deny its rationalistic viewpoint. Why is the 'dialectical' approach to the Enlightenment not a way out? It attempts to distinguish between the 'good' and 'bad' elements in the Enlightenment which is a useless exercise that overlooks the real revolution in the Enlightenment 'ethos'. The Enlightenment 'event' is too complex to use as a banner, only its ethos has sufficient form and connection to the present to be valuable.**
7. **How does Foucault describe the Enlightenment in terms of an event. As a social transformation, types of political institution, forms of knowledge, projects of rationalization and knowledge and practices, technological mutations. These need serious unpacking to be understood (GENEOLOGICAL APPROACH) even if they are VERY IMPORTANT TO THE WAY WE LIVE TODAY.**
8. **What form should the ethos of CRITIQUE take today for F. Not in defining the limitations of knowledge, but in getting rid of "whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints". BEING AT THE FRONTIERS AND TAKING THE FORM OF POSSIBLE TRANSGRESSION. "I shall thus characterize the philosophical ethos appropriate to the critical ontology of ourselves as a historico-practical test of the limits that we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings."**
9. **Don't we run the risk of letting ourselves be determined by general structures when we do this? While it is true that we won't ever know our historical limits, the STAKES with which we play are substantial. We can DISCONNECT OUR POTENTIALITIES FROM ESTABLISHED AND INTENSIFYING POWER RELATIONSHIPS. WE CAN EXPOSE RATIONALISTIC SYSTEMS THAT OPPRESS US. WE CAN 'PROBLEMATIZE' WHAT SHOULD BE PROBLEMATIZED BUT CANNOT WITHIN THE 'BLACKMAIL' OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT.**

10. What words best describe F's appreciation for Kant? **LIBERTY, COURAGE, MATURITY.** What does it involve? Constantly and painstakingly working on our limits

Foucault's *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*

1. What was Paul Ree's error? **Thinking that there is some underlying logic or meaning to history (i.e. a linear development). In reality there are invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises and ploys because WORDS DON'T RETAIN ANY UNIVERSAL MEANING THAT CAN BE DISCOVERED BUT THEY ARE WEAPONS IN A PEPEUTAL BATTLE FOR POWER.**
2. How does F distinguish his 'genealogical approach' from conventional history? **It doesn't look for 'origins' or 'continuities' in the usual sense of those words. As a result, it requires even more ERUDITION and painstaking exploration of details.** Does F himself do this?
3. Why all the fuss over Nietzsche's use of terms like Ursprung.? **F wants to show that Nietzsche AT HIS MOST VALUABLE is CHALLENGING THE PURSUIT OF THE ORIGIN. He accepts no PRIMORDIAL TRUTH but sees that the essence of things is FABRICATED IN A PIECEMEAL FASHION FROM ALIEN FORMS.**
4. Why does F attack POSITIVE KNOWLEDGE? **Positivism fails to accept the fact that all knowledge socially constructed within relations of power.**
5. What is the new CRUELTY OF HISTORY? **An abandonment of ADOLESCENT QUESTS in which there is some TRUTH than can correct error. All history is in a sense the scene of errors and accidents and always will be.**
6. What does F. mean when he says that every "origin" only has value as a "critique"? **It shows that meaning can only be found in FRAGMENTS of knowledge that encapsulate power relationships.**
7. Whar function does the notion of the SELF play in GENEALOGY? **The self is a chimera. There is a disassociation of the self and it is recognized simultaneously as something mouled and something that we can mould.**
8. What does F like about the term Herkunft and how does he distinguish it from the use of racists? **He suggests that it is about tracing descent and what is 'different'. This allows for the discovery of DISCONTINUITIES. It permits an analysis of the VICISSITUDES of life. It is NOT ABOUT EVOLUTION OR DESTINY. It shows us how much is ACCIDENTAL, ARBITRARY or UNNECESSARY.**

9. Does it sound like F is going to a lot of trouble to rehabilitate Nietzsche? **Yes, because Nietzsche is his inspiration. We really get to see this in F's value laden discussion of Europe as bereft of ideas and creativity.**
10. What is the relationship of GENEALOGY TO THE BODY? Given that relationship WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GENEALOGIST? **Genealogy includes the body and its passions whereas most histories leave it out, because it shows how desires enter into arrangements. The role of the Genealogist is like the Doctor who tries to cure the body of what ails it rather than referring to some metaphysics.**
11. What is GENEALOGY'S approach to POWER? **It SHOWS THE MANY WAYS THAT WE ARE SUBJECTED. IT DOESN'T AIM FOR THE ELIMINATION OF POWER BUT TO "HIGHLIGHT THE HAZARDOUS PLAY OF DOMINATIONS."** Entstehung or 'emergence' shows how these occur always through a "particular stage of forces" not by some Hegelian plan.
12. What does F mean when he invokes Nietzsche's analysis of GOOD AND EVIL as a NON-PLACE or COMMON SPACE? **The categories of good and evil obscure the fact that it is an "interstice" – a drama for the "endlessly repeated play of dominations". The ideas of REASON and LIBERTY are similarly terms that have little value in themselves apart from the uses that they are put to. HOW UNKANTIAN?**
13. What does F. mean when he says that RULES ARE EMPTY IN THEMSELVES? What does F. mean when he says NOTHING IN MAN- NOT EVEN HIS BODY – IS SUFFICIENTLY STABLE TO SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR SELF-RECOGNITION OR FOR UNDERSTANDING OTHER MEN? WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY THE "CONSOLING PLAY OF RECOGNITIONS"? **FOUCAULT'S APPROACH FOCUSES ON POWER AND RESISTANCE AND DOESN'T ALLOW US ANY RESTING PLACE.**
14. Why is academic HISTORY a sterile exercise? **It depends on metaphysics; real life is a series of countless lost events without a landmark.**
15. Why are academic HISTORIANS charlatans? **They pretend to an objectivity that does not exist and is utterly pretentious.**
16. Why are academic HISTORIANS really DEMAGOGUES AND PLEBS in disguise? **They want to show us how the greatest people in history are just like us. They "EXHIBIT A TOTAL LACK OF TASTE". They blur their own partial perspective. THIS IS ALL VERY, VERY NIETZSCHIAN.**
17. What is another word for GENEALOGICAL HISTORY? **Effective History.**

18. What shape does effective history take? **That of COUNTERMEMORY or “the transformation of history into a totally different form of time”.**
19. What are the THREE USES OF COUNTERMEMORY?
- **PARODY – illuminating the masks or identities that Europeans have clothed themselves with -- a CONCERTED CARNIVAL**
 - **SYSTEMATIC DISSOCIATION OF IDENTITY – PLURAL POSSIBILITIES NOT FORGOTTEN IDENTITIES**
 - **THE EXPOSURE OF ‘THE RANCOROUS WILL TO KNOWLEDGE’ AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH AN APPROACH THAT “LOSES ALL SENSE OF LIMITATIONS AND ALL CLAIMS TO TRUTH”**
20. What is the UNAVOIDABLE SACRIFICE that this approach requires and that Nietzsche could not entertain. **THE UNAVOIDABLE SACRIFICE OF THE SUBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE – THE SELF.**
21. What do you think about all of this? Can you anticipate the criticism of someone like HABERMAS? **How can you talk about liberty without some notion of the self? How can you talk about eradicating injustices without some concept of justice? How can you get rid of rationalism without implicitly endorsing irrationalism? Are these genuine problems or simply philosophical misunderstandings?**
22. Foucault lets fly in the concluding paragraphs on the death of the subject. An ethicist in the Kantian vein could counter that the concept of the rational subject underlines the essential dignity of human beings. How would Foucault respond to this? **I’m going to get sophisticated here. Well, he might begin by suggesting that that this is a continuing link between Humanism and Enlightenment that only obscures relations of power. Second, he might argue that real liberty involves experimentation with the very notion of ‘human’ and a recognition of the ‘body’. But the way he ends the essay underlines the notion that the emphasis on reason led to an obsession with truth that transforms the subject of knowledge into a subject of power. Much better, like Nietzsche, to consider the ‘self’ an experimental work in progress than to end up sacrificing him/her on the altar of knowledge. Foucault points out that ‘no sacrifice is too great for this obsession with knowledge’ (an obsession, by the way, that is not simply an abstraction but that is accompanied by historically defined apparatus of power).**
23. What do you think is going on with Foucault’s condemnation of conventional history as the “base curiosity of plebs”? Who are the plebs and what does he have against them? **Your answer goes here _____**

BECCARIA: *On Crimes and Punishments*

1. Ostensibly, this little book is about constructing a rational relationship between crimes and punishments where the relationship is more appropriate. We can flesh out this relationship a bit with terms like mildness, **humanity** and even justice and that's the way that many writers on the Enlightenment used to look at this text. Do you see any shortcomings with approaches that make Beccaria a spokesperson for the **party of humanity**? I might want to talk about his attitude towards **fear and inevitability of punishment**?
2. Beccaria is an opponent of torture. Is it simply because torture is **cruel**? Not really, it is because it doesn't work. Why doesn't it work?
3. Obviously, Beccaria wants laws to be **milder**? Is that because he's like us – a humanitarian? While he may have a dollop of humanitarianism in him, his argument for mildness is that it works better. Harshness, as in harsh parenting, only makes people more harsh and difficult to administer (discipline).
4. What is Beccaria really after with his systematic discussion of crimes and punishments? Something that is **efficient**. To put it another way, Beccaria is all about the **efficient use of force as an instrument of social control**. How does he relate the term *force* to terms like **right** and **justice**?
5. Beccaria is all about **equality before the law**. Quite often he claims that inequalities in formation of law (privileges) and in the delivery of law (Judicial decision making) are unfair and even **despotic**. Is he therefore against all forms of inequality and despotism. Clearly not, since he seems to be a **proponent of Enlightened despotism** and to assume other forms of **social stratification**.
6. Whose Beccaria's real opponent here? **Feudal jurisdictions and privileges**. It's important to point out that this is not simply a case of a **generational gap** among the Milanese aristocracy, as the editor of the book suggests. This is a clear cut case of an Enlightened generation attempting to reform society and to give them the job of advising the monarch and in effect running the state as an efficient machine.
7. In other words, this really isn't a book about a fairer criminal code. This is an **amazingly important work of political science whose major goal is a strong, highly centralized and economically viable state**.
8. How, if you are a member of the **Academy of Fists**, do you want to centralize authority? Well, don't necessarily want equality, but you do want to make everyone **equal under the law**. Once everyone, including the aristocracy is made a citizen, they are brought under the **heel of authority** and their activities are measured exclusively in terms of their contribution to the state.

9. What does Beccaria mean when he talks about **political idleness**? How does this relate to his discussion of **leisure** and **comfort**? Here we might want to talk about the concept of **conspicuous consumption**. What is the new role for the Aristocracy? To stimulate the economy rather than to engage in territorial and dynastic ambitions.
10. This brings up the notion of **property**. Beccaria's discussion of property shows that he is not necessarily trying to establish a bourgeois state based on private property. He does want to get rid of traditional privileges attached to property and to make property a vehicle for economic growth. He clearly understands the importance of contracts in defining *yours and mine* in a more commercial world. But his discussion of property as a **social right** suggests that something very different is going on here. What does he mean by saying that property is a *social right*. (Here, again, we might want to refine and correct the editor's interpretation in the Introduction, which is highly misleading).
11. What inalienable **rights** do individuals have? Here, we might want to talk about Beccaria's basically Hobbesian view of human nature and his use of the concept of the **political contract**. We can usefully go into this to show how Beccaria is really constructing a modern **political science** here.
12. While Beccaria's view of contract shares some important similarities with Hobbes, his idea of *sovereignty* is radically different in the Enlightenment sense. How? **The sovereign may be a despot, but he/she must be an enlightened despot. The state is sovereign, not the Prince.**
13. One might think that this is a constitutional monarchy in the Lockean sense. But that would be incorrect. How is it different? **The state is not the constitutionally elected representative of property owners. Property is subservient to the interests of the state and 'representation' is only functional to the extent that it supports rational efficiency. If anyone is in charge, it is the enlightened technocrat.**
14. The individual retains one right when he enters the state of society – the right that made him want to enter into society in the first place. What is it? **Security of person** – that is why the death penalty makes no sense (in addition to its lack of effectiveness) because no one would ever relinquish their right to life or transfer that right to others. Show how different this is from **John Locke's view of natural rights, even though Beccaria, Verri and the Milanese group obviously was familiar with Locke's argument.**
15. We might want to stop and talk a bit about **revealed and natural law** here. I might want to show why I think the Introduction is wrong when it tries to make the case for Beccaria as a **natural law theorist**.

16. If natural law and revealed law are not what is really at stake here, what are the theoretical underpinnings of Beccaria's efficient state? Clearly, it is **utility**. Interesting that Bentham said that he found all he needed to know about utility in *On Crimes and Punishments*. We could flesh out the theory by showing how it has its basis in the human constitution to pursue pleasure and avoid pain and how it is measured by the overall effectiveness of society in **providing security and delivering happiness**. We could show that the concept of **justice or fairness is completely subsumed under utility** unlike in most ethical systems. We might even cite the way that Beccaria measures things like **contracts and property** overwhelmingly in terms of their **usefulness to the "greatest number"**.
17. Who decides what is **useful to the greatest number**? Is this arrived at democratically? No. Why not? What does Beccaria think about most (i.e. the common) people – they are ignorant? They have one foot in fanaticism and other in barbarity? They are naturally cruel and inclined to be impressed by emotion and flash rather than reason and substance.
18. What does constructing a rational state involve? It involves **understanding people's passions and manipulating them in the interest of the social order**. How does a rational law code fit into this? It suggests the correct **association of ideas** in people's minds that reinforce social order.
19. Some might think that the emphasis on **social order or social control in Beccaria** is exaggerated. How can it be illuminated? Well, one can look at the theoretical relationship between **force and law** that B articulates. One can also look at the way he wants to make sure that the **association between crime and punishment is always reinforced** (one way being to get rid of most of the legislation that doesn't effectively reinforce the connection). Other particular examples could include the emphasis on **surveillance** (i.e. street lighting and guards).
20. Why is B. against juridical interpretations of the law? He doesn't want any **ambiguity**. In addition, he wants centralized state control. He doesn't want judges to mess up interpretations (a big, big difference with Montesquieu who sees judges as providing a useful counterbalance to the executive). As a result he effectively dismisses the **context or the spirit** of the law. Any lack of contextual sensitivity is compensated for by the **mildness of the law**.
21. B. obviously opposes tradition like many philosophes. He scorns the **tyranny of custom**. He affirms living societies in the present over the precepts and lessons of the past. Some of B's arguments might suggest that he has no appreciation at all for the historical context in which lawmaking occurs. Actually his approach (and that of the Enlightenment) is much more complex (and potentially dangerous) than that. Here we might want to talk about his historical distinction between ancient and modern states. We might also want to

talk about the function of **religion** in subduing the passions of a more violent and superstitious people. Overall, we might want to highlight the **pragmatic exercise of reason in the hands of the philosophes, who alone know what is good for society and conducive to social order at any particular historical juncture.**

22. Although B clearly has an appreciation for history and the different needs of different kinds of societies, his approach it to **universalize** legislation as far as possible in order to make **useful citizens** who devote their efforts in productive rather than unproductive activities. The **feelings of citizens** are to be pushed in the direction of the **objects** the state needs, not in ways that fragment or interfere with the needs of the state. B. suggests that rational laws are only one, and probably not even the best way to do this. What's another way that he suggests towards the end of his volume? **EDUCATION.**
23. How does B. describe **authority in the current state of society**? He describes society **sociologically** as a **living society** where tradition is irrelevant. Equally interesting, he defines **sovereignty as the depository of the current will of all citizens.** But **who exactly embodies this will? It sounds like Enlightened bureaucrats.** Talk about how B and Verri describe **KNOWLEDGE (p. 76f) and their role in deciding what it is?**
24. How is the concept of the **public** useful to B and Verri? It sets up an abstract utilitarian definition of the good of all citizens which only the philosophes can understand because only they are **lovers of truth "for itself".**
25. B has a section on **false utility** towards the end of the book, where he points to the problem of unenlightened people making mistakes because they substitute a few facts for a complete understanding of the situation. Why does he think this is more dangerous in a civilized society than an uncivilized one? Because it **universalizes an error with disastrous consequences for everyone.** The ill effects of mistakes in a more **natural society** are minimized because individuals have no interest in anything other than immediate happiness or domination. But in a more artificial society (remember that B. likes civilization) some errors can make everyone unhappy. Here is the irony of **POWER** in a modern state for B. The wrong exercise of it can make *everyone* including the wielder of power. This is an interesting discussion of institutionalization.
26. While B is all about turning the inhabitants of the state into equal citizens, that clearly does not make him a democrat. In addition to the obvious fact that he lived in an undemocratic society, is there anything in the text that suggests that democracy is not on the cards at all for B? **Whenever B talks about the populace or 'popular passions' it is to suggest that these are dangerous. The passions in common people's minds are crude. These are people whose 'imagination' mirrors the irregularity of their passions. They need to be controlled.**

27. What is B's most important innovation with respect to discipline and punishment? **It is the focus on the MIND or PASSIONS of the potential delinquent. The ENLIGHTENMENT is about CONTROLLING MEN'S MINDS. B is suggesting that the MIND RATHER THAN THE BODY is what needs to be focused on. TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT ENLIGHTENMENT PROPAGANDISTS ARE CONSTRUCTING DISEMBODED MINDS UPON WHICH THEY CAN WORK THEIR AGENDA OF REFORM.**
28. Instead of **discovering public opinion**, what are philosophes like B engaged in. **CREATING OR MOULDING PUBLIC OPINION**. Is that different in any way from political science today?
29. B describes a modern society where he is hopeful that military wars will be replaced by a **war of industry**. What does he mean? Is this in any way a bourgeois society? If so, where are the bourgeoisie in his work? Does his discussion of things like contracts or private property imply that he is a champion for the bourgeoisie?
30. A champion for the bourgeoisie (as distinct from a champion for a commercial society) would appear to have to assume rational self-interest as a universal trait. Ultimately, what is B's view of human nature? He thinks people are naturally **despotic**. That natural despotism can give rise to virtue or vice depending on the individual, the choices available, and the social order within which people act. But good and bad behaviour is always hit and miss. What does he find encouraging about modern society? **The people that count have their despotic energies deflected into providing goods (status symbols) and comforts (softer pleasures). While the great virtues of the past should not be expected, the threats to social stability are reduced.**
31. Why did I make a distinction between the **people that count and just plain everyone**? What does B have to say about the common people or the lower classes? One thing that he says is that they **react to immediate feeling** and have very limited powers of reflection? In that case, who do you think is the **target group** for B?
32. Many eighteenth-century legal writers were worried about crimes of violence and the erratic behaviour of the **people below**? Do you think B was very concerned about that? If so, then why does he worry less about tracking down violent than less violent crimes? What serious crime is an exception to the rule and what does this tell you about B's agenda. **TREASON**.
33. What did you think about B's fascinating discussion of **spectacle**? How does it fit in with his assessment of human nature and his strategic agenda?

34. Did you notice B's other fascinating discussion of **imagination**? Where do you think he is getting that from?
35. If B was making an argument for sovereignty and pallying up to an enlightened despot, why was he so opposed to **pardons**?
36. On page 66, B rather dramatically corrects an error that he made in earlier editions concerning commercial society and imprisonment for debt. What do you make of that? Did you find his comment on the **science of politics** at all revealing?
37. If you read the note on **translation** at the beginning of the text, you might have discovered that there may be some problems of interpretation given the translation of Morellet. Do any of you have a take on this?
38. What is the greatest check for B on crime? The **inevitability of punishment**. How does that jive with his reputation for humanity?
39. Why do poor people commit **crimes against property** and how do they **rationalize those crimes**? Does that give you an insight into B's methodology?
40. What is the problem with the **body** when it comes to **torture**? Does that give you an insight into B's methodology and agenda?
41. What is the relationship between **spectacle and fanaticism** for B?
42. How does the proliferation of criminal laws **create new crimes** and **dull the effectiveness of punishments**?
43. Why is it the **natural tendency of men to love cruel laws**?
44. Why is it crucial to instill **fear of the laws** for B?
45. What do the comments on **witchcraft** tell you about B's attitude towards **religion and the separation of church and state**?

Disciplines and Sciences of the Individual

1. The editor has called this section **disciplines and sciences of the individual**. On the face of it, this seems a strange title. Certainly, Foucault talks about **discipline and disciplines** a great deal, but the discussion of **sciences** and the **individual** is not so very apparent, perhaps. First let's get a handle on *disciplines*. By disciplines, Foucault means some of the new ways of controlling and manipulating people that he finds in systems of punishment. We've already met with punishments in Beccaria. What's different? Well, **B is interested in the penal code whereas Foucault is interested in the way that the penal code is implemented in practice which he refers to as a CORRELATIVE HISTORY**. What exactly does F mean by this term **correlative history**? What's going on?
2. Correlative history is a history that is simultaneous with and related to another kind of history. The other kind of history is the standard and progressive history of **the implementation of reason and humanity in the West** that we all store in our heads. It is important to recognize that Foucault does **not deny this history altogether** but thinks that it doesn't tell us much unless we look at the **mechanisms of power** that relate and refer to it. These mechanisms of power he refers to sometimes as **coercive** and sometimes as **exorbitantly singular**. What do you think he means by this?
3. Does Foucault want to suggest that the age of reason and reform – in this particular case juridical and penal reform – is simply a **mask for oppression of one group by another, say for example the rising bourgeoisie**. No, his argument is much more subtle and complex than that. In the first place, he doesn't believe that you can ever get away from the power dynamic. In the second place, it's not a simple case of oppressor and oppressed since the power relationship is dynamic and tends to define everyone within it. Thus, the wielder of power can also be caught in the power vortex. Third, he doesn't think that any of us who write and think in the West can get away from the language of reason or that **irrationality is an answer to the problems attached to reason**.
4. What is Foucault most interested in when studying the social evolution of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century? **He is interested in the MECHANICS of reason and reform. He is interested in the DETAILS of implementation, because he thinks that the devil is in the details. He is interested in what he refers to as *techne* which is something he wants to distinguish from technology.** Why does he want to distinguish *techne* from *technology*. Well it may be because technology has certain meanings attached to itself, say as an external force to what is human and also as an abstraction. But *techne* for him refers to all the mechanisms by which the **body is controlled including those mechanism that view the body as a soul**.

5. How does F differ from someone like Beccaria who clearly has some framework or psychology of human motivation going on in his rationalistic adjustment of crimes and punishments? **Foucault wants to remind us increasingly abstract Westerners that penal mechanisms are ALWAYS ABOUT THE CONTROL AND SHAPING OF THE BODY IN WAYS THAT ARE CONSIDERED DESIREABLE. The soul or psyche is always attached to a body.**
6. Note how this assumption of the **connection between the soul and the psyche** allows someone like Foucault to see a pattern in the development of Western culture that goes back to the Greeks and travels through the Jesuits and through the history of army training etc. in Europe. Some of this Foucault gets from Nietzsche, but he is highly original in seeing connections – i.e. between military training and industrialization – that most historians have overlooked. **Also, the concept of the confessional is something that he develops most usefully, linking monastic Catholicism to the psychiatrists couch.**
7. What is Foucault's attitude towards the **sciences, particular the science of psychology**? Psychology isn't just about understanding human behavior and human development. If you look at it in terms of **implementation** rather than an **abstract body of knowledge**, it's goal is to get people to act in **desirable ways**.
8. What can the sub-field of **criminology** tell you about the **disciplines of psychology (or politics or social science for that matter)**? It is that these are **not simply abstract disciplines or scientific ways of achieving something called knowledge or truth. THEY ARE RELATED IN COMPLEX WAYS TO CHANGES IN POWER RELATIONSHIPS AND THEY PRODUCE KNOWLEDGE. KNOWLEDGE ISN'T AN IDEAL ABSTRACTION AND IT ISN'T A PRODUCT OF SOME IMPARTIAL REASON. IT IS TEASED UP BY POWER. HENCE THE EQUATION BETWEEN POWER AND KNOWLEDGE THAT BECOMES MORE AND MORE IMPORTANT TO F. IN THE COURSE OF HIS INVESTIGATIONS.**
9. O.k., so now we might be getting a better handle on the relationship between **discipline and scientific disciplines, terms that F plays with**. But what is the place of the **individual** in all of this subtle ruminating. **On the one hand, the individual is the particular body that is the subject of control. But this control was handled rather crudely (albeit 'spectacularly') in the past. The major innovation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the 'interrogation' of these bodies in order to see how they could be better managed. FOUCAULT BELIEVES THAT THIS INTERROGATION INVOLVED THE CREATION OF THE 'INDIVIDUAL'.**
10. Does this sound a bit like anyone you know? **Durkheim the father of structural functionalism and the creator of the Discipline called Sociology**. How is Foucault different and opposed to Durkheim, who he obviously respects? **For F "the man of modern humanism" (note the problems with that term in Fs**

lexicon) is the product, not of some increasingly rational social system that is assumed but a host of “details” and “small things” and “methods” involved in the “control and use of men” that contribute to the creation of this thing that we refer to as a “social system”. **NOTICE AGAIN HOW POWER AND CONTROL CREATE KNOWLEDGE. THERE IS NOT SOME ABSTRACT KNOWLEDGE OR TRUTH THAT CAN LEGITIMIZE SOCIAL CONTROL.**

11. We’ve just referred to sociology, one of the sciences. What does F have to say about **Political Science** that is soooo interesting? **He argues that political science has been obsessed with providing a ‘legitimate’ justification for the necessity of social control. Political science has it backwards in that it assumes that one can rationally justify power, whereas in actually power relationships continually redefine legitimacy and truth. That is their nature.**
12. What is Fs attitude towards all of these so called scientific disciplines? **If we really want to fully understand what is going on, we need to look not at the abstractions created by the disciplines but the detailed methods of control that are simultaneous and interconnected with them.**
13. What is Fs attitude towards the **search for truth**? It doesn’t interest him very much except in terms of its **relationship to practice. Political and other utopias are just part and parcel of a bigger package that involved a massive extension of mechanisms of power.**
14. How does F justify his approach with respect to those great eighteenth-century concepts – the **equality and freedom** on the individual? **He points out that practical and increasingly utilitarian mechanisms for creating a rational society have led NOT ACCIDENTALLY to an increasingly HIERARCHIZED SOCIETY WHERE PEOPLE ARE SUBJECTED TO SURVEILLANCE.**
15. What is meant by *utilitarian mechanisms* in Fs context? What is he getting at? **F clearly believes that modern societies are characterized by an ever increasing belief that efficiency is the best mechanism for running a society or political structure and that this thing called efficiency is best achieved by understanding details.**
16. What does F mean when he calls the history of disciplinary institutions a history of **tactics and acts of cunning and attentive “malevolence” that turns everything to account**? What does he mean when he says that these are “not so much of the greater reason that works even in its sleep and gives meaning to the insignificant”. **THIS IS A DIFFICULT QUESTION. SOMETIMES SEEMS TO WANT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND MEANING AND ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION, WITH THE ONE BEING BETTER AND THE OTHER BEING SINISTER. BUT,**

OF COURSE, HE CAN'T SEPARATE THE 'STONE CUTTING' FROM THE GREATER ARCHITECTURE. DOES THIS GET US INTO THE HEART OF FOUCAULT AND SOME OF HIS PREJUDICES?

17. Does F want to reject this thing called **modern society** altogether? **Not at all, he says any real historian would be stupid if he/she idealized the past with respect to the present. BUT WHAT HE WANTS TO DO IS EXPOSE THE LIMITS TO FREEDOM AND THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CONTROLS IN THE PRESENT.** Here it might be useful to refer to Fs agenda in *What is Enlightenment?*
18. Let's look more closely now at Fs very revolutionary examination of **punitive mechanisms to isolate his methodology**. How was F able to write a very different correlative history to the one that was commonplace? **He viewed 'punishments' as complex social functions (not simply about stopping crime), as specific kinds of 'techniques' that could have spin-offs, as related to the development of social and psychological disciplines, and as ones that brought the concept of the 'individual' with a case history into sharp focus.**
19. What does F mean by the **positive functions of crime**? **He doesn't mean 'positive' in the sense of contributing to the well being of society. That would be Durkheim, and F doesn't buy into the idealization of society. What he means by positive does have a certain flavour of Durkheim in that it helps to define what is normal in society (as different from good for F). But he completely turns Durkheim on his head by suggesting that the techniques related to crime help to create the notions of society and the social sciences. The notion of society relates directly to how we intend to control individuals and the social sciences are a body of techniques, many of which have their basis in the attempt to control large bodies of people.**
20. How do the changes in **punitive mechanisms** relate to changes in the mode of **production in the West**? **Both create "political economies" of the body that attempt to get large populations to act in useful or productive ways. Both require a certain 'docility' or 'subjection' of bodies. Both create a literature of the body and its motivations. Both "invest" the body in relations of power and domination. Both are capable of a great deal of abstraction, but they have their origins in a "multiform instrumentation" and they have a focus on making bodies behave in ways that are considered useful. This UTILITY MAY BE DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS/HER HAPPINESS BUT IT IS REALLY IN TERMS OF THE POWER RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS AT ANY POINT IN TIME.**
21. Is power a one-sided relationship for Foucault. **Not at all. It can seem to be but there is nothing stopping those groups who are dominated by a power-knowledge dynamic adopting the language and techniques to serve their own interests.**

22. Why does Foucault call these relationships a **microphysics of power**? It's a metaphor that he uses to show how power and the relationships it embraces are the place where the investigator should be looking if he/she wants to understand how **human phenomena – mind and matter – really work**.
23. How extensive are these power relations that makes them a veritable microphysics? **They run right through all social relations, right from political systems to the gestures we use when we interact with one another. There is no escaping power relationships. The symbols we use, all of our knowledge, has its basis in these power relationships. Some power relationships may be more oppressive than others, but there is never any way of escaping them.**
24. Some thinkers like to look at humans as **symbolic animals who create their world from symbols**. Foucault looks at symbolic formations as products of **power relations. DO YOU THINK THAT WAY?**
25. Why is the binary opposition between **interested and disinterested** not applicable to Foucault's thought? For him the **body politic and the social organism is a "set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes, and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge."** It is a kind of **MATRIX** of power relationships that Foucault thinks is important.
26. How does the **soul** become a "**certain technology of power over the body**". In the form of the **psyche** it becomes the **subject of power relations**. As a novel reference point, it gives rise to a **body of knowledge upon which "scientific techniques and discourses have been built"**. The truth or error of this **body of knowledge is not what is relevant, it is both the "effect and instrument" of a certain "political anatomy."**
27. What does F mean when he says that "**the soul is the prison of the body**"? How does that **transform the concept of incarceration? Note how the idea of the carceral has changed over time from something that simply enclosed the body to a place where the body was transformed into something more docile.**
28. How do these relationships centering on carceral institutions relate to a new knowledge? **There are remarkable similarities between the techniques and theories developed in penal institutions and those used by "educationalists, psychologists and psychiatrists"**.
29. What does F mean when he says that the **great book of Man-the-Machine was written by Descartes and techno-political theorists? He means that writers began to understand that the body of man was a machine that could be trained in useful ways.**

30. F is all about **social control** as everyone knows. What is the fundamental change in the character of social control that occurs especially from the Enlightenment period? **The coercion becomes more subtle and efficient.**
31. How were these controls different from slavery. **They dispensed with violence. They did not require ‘renunciations’ but formed intense relations of exercise. They get ‘buy in’ from those subjected. They involve “meticulous regulations”, constant inspections, an attention to the “smallest fragments of life” and they have their history in the schools and the military in particular.**
32. Beccaria can be summed up as a theorist of the legitimate and utilitarian use of force. How might Foucault be contrasted. **Foucault is a theorist of the ‘tactics’ by which force is recognized as something other than force – as rational and useful.**
33. Like many enlightened thinkers, Beccaria dreamed of a perfect society or utopian state. What is missing from such ideal paradigms for Foucault. **The concept of perfect power, perfect manipulation in the form of turning people into machines.** The people, the bodies, the subjects of manipulation are not clearly evidenced in the Enlightenment and may not even be on the minds clearly of Enlightened writers, but they are on the minds of military men and others in power who see the uses in those ideal models.
34. Durkheim said that society created individuals. What does F say? **He says that discipline creates individuals.** What does he mean, using the example of penal institutions? **He means that in order to make prisoners docile and to reform them a remarkable biography of the particular subject was created and systematically related to other biographies in a hierarchical classificatory system in which each individually detailed subject had his or her life history objectified.******
35. How was the subject put under a **microscope**? **He was subject to a “machinery of control” that involved an “apparatus of observation, recording, and training.”**
36. What does F think was one of the greatest technological “inventions” of the eighteenth-century? **Surveillance.** What’s the symbolic example that he uses? **The panopticon.**
37. How does the penal system go beyond the judicial system for Foucault? **It constantly deals with areas of behaviour that the laws do not speak about. It focuses on the regimentation of the subjects that the laws are indifferent to. It builds the techniques that prevent any behaviour that is deemed unacceptable. It deals in petty trivialities as well as big issues. As such, it perfects disciplinary controls. Note that Beccaria had no interest in things**

like this. His psychological subjects are citizens not inmates. **BECCARIA HAS LITTLE ON DISCIPLINE.**

38. What is the biggest innovation of penal and similar institutions of discipline, much bigger for example than surveillance? **The differentiation of individuals in terms of WHAT IS CONSIDERED NORMAL BEHAVIOUR? Only by differentiating can one define what NORMAL is. The POWER OF THE NORM is “the new law of modern society’.******
39. How does the **examination** reinforce the **power of the norm**? Modern society does **not coerce as much as it constantly examines**. This **informs the subject that they are ‘objects of knowledge’ and imprints the image of power, not directly but in terms of habits and effects**. Examinations are the perfect tool for transforming individuals into ciphers; repeated examinations make behaviours habitual. **CONSTANT EXAMINATIONS COMBINE ALL THE POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF SURVEILLANCE AND NORMALIZATION, MAINTAINED IN A NETWORK OF WRITING (DOCUMENTATION)**. Might want to think about the University as this kind of institution, **ESPECIALLY SINCE MOST PROFESSORS KNOW THAT EXAMS ARE NOT THE BEST WAY OF DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT THOUGHT**.
40. When do **individuals** emerge for Foucault? When they are “**describable, analyzable objects, not measured as unique beings, but in terms of specifics that can be related to norms**.” Foucault describes this as a **completely new modality of power**. Note that the individual is specifically created to meet the needs of discipline not to free up his or her own nature. Thus, for F, Durkheim was mistaken in associating individualism with liberty, even a liberty that was useful or functional to society. At the heart of the individual is more discipline.
41. Why is it wrong to think of the individual as a basic unit of knowledge, either ever present or to be discovered as an **objective truth**? For Foucault, the **individual is a knowledge product – a discursive site – produced by POWER**.
42. How does **panopticonism** differ from earlier forms of punishment? Now the **emphasis is no longer on separating for the purpose of confinement, but separating in order to manipulate**.
43. How does F. formulate the new utilitarian power axis as it applies to penal punishment? **Mildness-production-profit**. Notice the parallel with Beccaria but in a very different context.
44. How is the new power modality completely different from the old? **Power is no longer a product of the brilliance or personality of the wielder. Power is more impersonal, insidious and a matter of minute detail**.

45. Why must the ENLIGHTENMENT BE COMPLICIT IN THESE NEW RELATIONS OF POWER? **Just as it “discovered the liberties”, it also “invented the disciplines”. BUT WERE THESE NECESSARILY THE SAME PEOPLE? WHAT DOES F MEAN BY DISCIPLINES? ISN’T IT A BIT OF A CHEAT CONFLATING ‘DISCIPLINE’ AND ‘DISCIPLINES’? IS THERE SOME TRUTH IN THE CLAIMS OF DEFENDERS OF ENLIGHTENMENT THAT THE VOLTAIRES ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ‘VOLTAIRE’S BASTARDS’ – THE DETAIL ORIENTED BUREAUCRATS? IS IT FAIR TO FORCE ‘SYSTEMS OF RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES’ INTO AN EQUATION THAT THAT EMPHASIZES MICROPOWER.**
46. F talks about the **dark side** of Enlightenment processes. Is that fair? For example, he uses the **rise of the bourgeoisie** as a formula to describe the political agenda of the Enlightenment. Is that accurate? Isn’t it cheating to claim that the Enlightenment was a bourgeois product and that to associate the failures of Enlightenment with the bourgeoisie? **In fact, couldn’t one argue that the real problem was that the Enlightenment was hijacked by the bourgeoisie? The emphasis on detail and control over all the factors of production sounds to me like a bourgeois characteristic.**
47. What is the single most important **knowledge product** of the enormous classification system that developed around penal institutions? **The invention of the NORMAL.** What was the counterpoint of the normal that proved so central to systems of punishment. **The concept of the DELINQUENT. The abnormal person prone to criminal behaviour.**
48. What **defines delinquency?** **What defines delinquency in not the act but the life of the person labeled delinquent.**
49. What is has been the **function of the prison in the power-knowledge relationship that governs the larger society?** **THE PRISON IS “A PLACE FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE THAT WOULD REGULATE THE EXERCISE OF PENITENTIALRY PRACTICE” AS WELL AS TO DEFINE AND ATTACH NEGATIVE SANCTIONS TO ‘CHARACTERS’ THAT HAVE NOT BEEN PROPERLY CONTROLLED IN SOCIETY.**
50. Another way of saying this is that **social deviants are denied the status of normal human beings. They are not so much punished for their acts as subjected to therapies for their soul. THEIR BEHAVIORS ARE THE PRODUCT OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSALITIES THAT REQUIRE TREATMENT. THEY ARE ‘PATHOLOGICAL SUBJECTS’**

51. What happens to the human rights and laws in this new modality? **The law becomes less important than the norm, since delinquency is specified in terms of what is deemed NORMAL.**
52. What does F think of CRIMINOLOGY at least as it used to be practiced? **It was repressive. It did not so much ‘discover’ the character of the criminal as it invented it as a “refinement of penitentiary techniques’. It is no wonder, says Foucault, that people (i.e. *delinquents*) have resisted this labeling process.**
53. Despite its **construction as a technique of power**, delinquency went on to have a very important history in connection with the so-called **sciences**. What does F have to say about this? **He says that delinquency went on to play an important conceptual role in medicine (biological defects), psychiatry (defects in the psyche). Criminology, psychiatry and medicine all built upon and reinforced each another allowing the notion of ‘delinquency’ to “function on a general horizon of “truth”. These discourses also reinvested JUSTICE itself with a complete field for organizing decisions. Now the law was to take into account, not only the act but also the character of the offender.**
54. Despite all the failures of the PRISON AS A CENTRE FOR TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION, IT HAS SURVIVED. Why does Foucault think that this has been the case? Why is it that we think we can’t do without the prison? **The penal institution is at the center of a whole field or system of power-knowledge that pathologizes certain subjects. The penal system is a HINGE in this unified field that classifies normal and separates it from abnormal, and as such is indispensable despite its utilitarian effects in this one particular.**
55. In his interview with Paul Rabinow, Foucault has some interesting observations on the eighteenth-century. What is he particularly interesting in and how does this reflect his approach? **Foucault is interested in eighteenth century preoccupations with ordering urban space and superimposing those organizational schemes of order, control, collective facilities and hygiene on the rest of society.**
56. Why was the city so important in the eighteenth-century? **Foucault suggests that the problems of the cities and their possible solution provided models for governmental rationality generally. It may be, however, that these urban preoccupations were more nineteenth-century and bourgeois than of the Enlightenment proper. MIGHT NOTE HOW FOUCAULT TENDS TO RUN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES TOGETHER. A BIT SLOPPY FOR A HISTORIAN.**
57. What does F. say was one of the great discoveries of the eighteenth-century? **The idea of SOCIETY. Again, this seems to me to be more of a nineteenth-**

century discovery (Durkheim especially). Certainly, F's discussion of space and railroads must be a 19th century phenomenon.

58. In the interview, F clarifies his notion of **liberty and oppression** in ways that are useful for understanding his methodology. What exactly does he say? **He says that these are binary notions that we should avoid. There is never a situation of complete liberty or oppression and, in any case, these terms avoid systematization in ideals or utopias. Power relationships run up and down society. The only way to be more free is to test the limits of power, especially when these are too controlling or exorbitant. ONE PRACTISES FREEDOM.**
59. What about political institutions or constitutions that favour liberty. **While Foucault does not deny that some institutions or constitutions might be more favourable to freedom, however defined, he argues that EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON HOW PEOPLE ACT WITHIN THOSE STRUCTURES. ALMOST ANY INSTITUTION CAN GIVE RISE TO UNLIBERATING EFFECTS.**
60. What does F have to say to those who look for **fundamental factors** in the creation of ideal or efficient societies? **He says "Nothing is fundamental" as far as society is concerned. SOCIETY IS CHARACTERIZED BY RECIPROCAL RELATIONS.**
61. Does F. think that people like BECCARIA or others were sinister in their desire to reform society? **He doesn't think assessing motives or intentions is very interesting. He thinks that many people engaged in reform activities probably had laudable motives. The main issue for him is that there is ALWAYS a gap between INTENTIONS and PRACTICES and also more gaps between DIFFERENT INTENTIONS.**
62. If REASON IS BESET WITH PROBLEMS FOR FOUCAULT, BUT WE STILL NEED TO ACT AS RATIONAL BEINGS, WHAT IS THE BEST STRATEGY FOR AVOIDING THE DANGERS? **F SAYS THAT IT IS TO 'REMAIN AS CLOSE TO THE QUESTION AS POSSIBLE, KEEPING IN MIND THAT IT IS BOTH CENTRAL AND EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE. IN ADDITION, IF IT IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS TO SAY THAT REASON IS THE ENEMY THAT SHOULD BE ELIMINATED, IT IS JUST AS DANGEROUS TO SAY THAT ANY CRITICAL QUESTIONING OF THIS RATIONALITY RISKS SENDING US INTO IRRATIONALITY". F WANTS TO SHOW US HOW AMBIGUOUS THINGS ARE.**
63. What does F. mean when he says, contra Habermas, that the latter makes the error of trying to make a **transcendental mode of thought spring forth against any**

historicism? You might want to think about F's identification with historicism and with Nietzsche here.

64. What does F mean when he says that you can't divorce the history of material life from the history of ideas? What is this idea of **interconnectivity** and how does it relate to power.
65. Why can there never be an exact science of politics (or society for that matter) for Foucault? What's the best substitute? **Talk about his idea of *techné***

Rameau's Nephew

1. As this fascinating dialogue unfolds, we get signs that it is not really an encounter between an eccentric character and an Enlightened philosopher. Who then is the conversation between? **Diderot says that he goes to the Palais-Royal to hold “discussions with myself”. This is primarily an internal dialogue (“thoughts are my wenches”), an examination of one’s own hypocrisy, a questioning of one’s own assumptions.**
2. Why do you think that Diderot didn’t publish it in his lifetime? **Lots of possible reasons, i.e. doesn’t want to make too many enemies, partly a personal diatribe, maybe the case that he wrote it mainly for himself.** How do we know that he expected or wanted it to be published eventually? **If you read the introduction (not necessary) you know that he wrote it out in fine hand and left it with daughter, friends. In some ways, it may be ‘confessional’ in the sense of harbouring his doubts and reservations about Enlightenment.**
3. Of course *Rameau's Nephew* is not simply an inner chat (dialogue/conversation) but it is important to remind ourselves that it is **primarily** that. What else is it? **Well, it is partly 1) a dramatic comedy in which the ‘character’ of Rameau’s nephew plays a role similar to that of Shakespeare’s Falstaff, 2) a way of getting even with the enemies of the Encyclopaedia, 3) a discourse on music and, more important, the philosophy of music.**
4. We’ll get to music later. What is the explicit function of the ‘character’ of Rameau’s nephew. **Diderot says that unique characters allow us to get past social conventions and helps restore “a portion of our natural individuality”. He “shakes up” assumptions; forces people to “take sides” and by doing this he “brings out truth”.**
5. That’s all very well and good, and we can see that function in this dialogue. But Diderot also says something very interesting that might not be so obvious in the dialogue when he says that Rameau’s nephew **“shows who are really good, and unmask the villains”**. What do you think he is getting at here? **Rameau’s nephew exposes the corruptness of an advanced civilization in which people wear masks. Because he is not hypocritical and is entirely forthright about the various masks that he wears, Rameau’s nephew teaches us the various tricks of the trade that people use to deceive one another and themselves. He forces us to examine ourselves and our motives.**
6. Early in the work (difficult to define exactly what it is, isn’t it? Caught as it is between a philosophical dialogue, a play and a novel), there is a discussion of **genius**. The concept of **genius** continually recurs in the book and is contrasted with **mediocrity**. What on earth is Diderot getting at? **Lots of things but here’s one – An advanced and enlightened society is one that requires**

- specialization. Specialization gives rise to men (or women) who have ‘genius’ in a particular area of life or a particular talent that they develop. But a society that is good at creating specialized roles is not necessarily one that is good at molding virtue. A genius could be a quite horrible or nasty person, Rameau being one possible example. The question that Diderot is raising is the one that bothered Rousseau – is a society advancing in the arts and sciences one where people wear masks and one knows not with whom one has to deal.
7. Diderot and Rameau’s Nephew debate good laws and bad laws – clearly an Enlightenment theme. What point does Rameau **who you should now be viewing as Diderot’s alter ego** want to make about the Enlightenment critique of traditional institutions? **What the *philosophes* are doing is encouraging people to pick and choose the laws that they want to obey. In any case the connection between genius and virtue is a tenuous one.**
 8. How does Rameau’s nephew undermine the Enlightened idea of a perfect world – a **utopia on earth**? **He points out that a perfect world is an abstraction that goes against human nature. Most human beings are ‘mediocre’ and not perfectable. They are selfish and envious of others. They care more about the “I” than anyone else.**
 9. Mediocrity is not a problem until one opposes it with a concept of perfection. How does an advancing and **competitive** civilization cause problems for people of average talents (sometimes represented by Rameau’s nephew)? **It makes them “angry at being mediocre”. It can cause them extreme unhappiness, especially if they have a good idea of what genius (being special) entails. But infinitely more dangerous is that mediocre people WANT TO APPEAR SPECIAL.**
 10. Mediocrity is not only a structural problem in a specializing society, but it is an individual problem. Diderot and Rameau’s Nephew are always examining themselves, and when they look closely they discover that **human nature is characterized by mediocrity**. Some people may have refined ideals, but when you look below the surface – **when you know yourself** – you find that many of your thoughts and associated behaviour **revolve around petty human appetites and needs. If you contrast your higher and lower self, recognizing that the lower self has most of the power, you will tend to be disgusted.**
 11. Enlightenment is also a **cultural and psychological problem**. What do I mean by that? **Well, since the world is mostly filled with, and run by, mediocre people, those who have more “taste, intelligence and reason” will find themselves always having to SUCK UP to those with much less. Those of insight will often feel themselves to be OUTSIDERS. If they reveal too much of their intelligence to those who run the show, they will be kicked out. NOTICE HOW RAMEAU’S EXPERIENCE AT THE HOUSE OF BERTIN**

MIRRORS THAT OF THE WRITERS OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA. IN ORDER TO GAIN ENTRY INTO THE ESTABLISHMENT, THEY HAVE TO HIDE THEIR SUPERIORITY.

12. Notice the fascinating pairing of **I and you** in Rameau's nephew's diatribe on page 48. Notice how the exceptional person of talent, genius or insight is a vulnerable **I in a world of you's**. Notice how a sensitive person can be torn between **competing impulses** – wanting to belong and yet to affirm what is special in them. **Notice especially how this is a patently MODERN PROBLEM. The “inner conflict” may strike us as adolescent, but it is also the fate of the ARTIST in modern society.**
13. Rameau's nephew has reconciled himself to a different fate. He recognizes that the world is characterized by mediocrity and he is not going to do what Diderot recommends and, interestingly **“live in a garret”**. He's going to use his **talent as a mimic** to perform in ways that make him more acceptable to the people in power. He admits that this is a **capitulation** to a status quo that is specific and socio-cultural. But he also defends this stance on other grounds. What are they? **He articulates a materialist philosophy that suggests that human beings are primarily sensual creatures who want to feed their appetites. To the degree that he does this, he can define himself as successful.**
14. But we know that Rameau's nephew does not really believe in this sensualist and mediocre stance of his don't we? **He is plagued with self-doubt. He has real intelligence. He has powers of discrimination and a genuine love of beauty. He seems to love his child. He even seems to have a certain level of ‘genius’ when it comes to music. He spouts Diderot and Rousseau's theory of the new music as a reflection of human emotions rather than a pompous musical architecture based on harmony and counterpoint. Hence the interesting critique of Rameau. The ‘character’ also has ‘character’. He's an interesting construction. He has possibilities.**
15. Why don't Rameau's nephew's positive contributions emerge triumphant? **Of course his sensual appetites tend to get the better of him, like Shakespeare's Falstaff. But Diderot is saying something more interesting than Shakespeare. He's saying that the socio-economic environment makes it difficult for talented (if weak) people to shine. THIS WORLD IS NOT BASED UPON MERIT; IT IS BASED UPON WEALTH. THOSE WITH ‘MONEY’ ARE THE ONES WHO CALL THE SHOTS. IT IS A “GOD AWFUL ECONOMY’ WHERE RICHES ROUTINELY USURP LEARNING.**
16. What tends to happen to genius and talent in such an environment? **It goes one of two ways: 1) it serves the interest of the status quo or “sells out” or 2) it becomes alienated. There is an interesting dilemma here that characterizes the Enlightenment. What is particularly interesting is that Diderot sees the problem very clearly: progress is a double edged sword – not only does it**

leave many people behind but also it doesn't necessarily support the best kind of people. Those with money tend to be the ones with power. The quickest way to success is performing the roles that the rich want you to play. But not only do you have to perform these roles like an eighteenth-century *poupee* or automaton, but you have to 'flatter' those in power.

17. What symbol of the lust for money does Diderot use? **He stereotypes Jews (anti-semitism clearly) but what is more informative is that he seems to suggest that the MODERNS are worse than the Israelites. At least his Jewish characters value their friendships, whereas the thoroughly modern deceiver sells them out.**
18. Who exactly has status (is the **Master**) in this modern society? **It is, of course, those who have money (110). Their symbol is the FINANCIER (45).**
19. Hegel was one thinker who really picked up on the insights in *Rameau's Nephew*? One of those insights was the **alienation** that a complex modern society brings. Another was the new **master and servant relationships** that it entailed, bereft of traditional meaning and destructive of a sense of identity.
20. **Dependency** is a feature of most societies. Why is dependency such a **modern problem** for Diderot? **Modern society creates an entirely new and paradoxical form of dependency. On the one hand, it frees up independent thought. On the other hand, it accelerates patterns of dependency that are even less meaningful than those of the past because based on MONEY alone.**
21. We can say *based on money alone* but that's not really accurate is it? Those who have money are not simply about money but power, status and public opinion. Whereas **money used to follow power and status, now power and status follow money.** What **constitutes public opinion is what the marketplace decides. Here's another irony for the Enlightened folks, they want to appeal to public opinion over tradition but the public opinion that they appeal to is fickle and based on a problematic foundation.**
22. What is the net result for the majority of people? **They have to take up positions and carry out the homage that the people with power expect.**
23. Let's talk a little more about these **dependant positions in the new marketplace.** What are the skills and aptitudes that are required? Is thinking and hard study valued in late eighteenth-century France? What is the role of the **teacher**, for example? **This is fascinating! The teacher becomes an employee of his or her 'customers'. In order to have customers or be successful, you have to pander to their value system. This may involve spending more time flattering than challenging your students, for example. Or, in a different context, you might want to appear in high demand, in which case they will think you are good. All in all, teaching and many of the other professions become less about**

- substance and more about appearance, what Rameau's nephew refers to as **the tricks of the trade**. In how many modern professions are the 'tricks of the trade' more important than ability?
24. What's much more important than ability and learning as a scholar or teacher? **Understanding the trends in public opinion and conforming to the prevailing mores. These are the 'idioms' within which one must operate if one hopes to be successful.**
25. Diderot keeps insisting that Rameau's nephew should stick to his guns or standards (both intellectual and moral). What does Rameau's nephew counter with? **He says that it's hard to stick to your guns when you need to make a living.**
26. More interesting than any of this, Rameau's nephew argues that a better or fairer society is ultimately impossible. Why does he say this? **Rameau's nephew argues that a better or more rational society contradicts the sensual nature and mediocrity of people. Sure, he concedes that it might be possible for a few Diderots to become moral and intellectually independent sages. But the vast majority of people don't define HAPPINESS in terms of classical virtue. Most people define happiness in terms of their SENSES – food, booze and sex. And for those, the key is MONEY.**
27. Diderot counters that sensual gratification does not bring happiness but **boredom**. Genuine **progress** means **rising above the human condition**. How does Rameau's nephew respond? **He says two things: 1) that many people who have a claim to genius are not happy, and 2) that many mediocre people who try to suppress their sensual natures are doubly unhappy – because they can't do it and feel like failures in the process. The "discipline" required for moral happiness is not in most natures.**
28. Does this mean that virtue and vice are simply empty or meaningless words? **Actually, what it means is something infinitely more problematic. Virtue and vice retain their meaningfulness but in a way that is completely SINISTER. People will aim for the appearance of virtue. They will assume the mask and character of virtue without any substance. Some will even use the mask of virtue to cover vice. Thus, ironically, Enlightened discussions of virtue can be transformed into manuals of evil.**
29. Diderot has an interesting insight into the **wearing of masks** that might not be immediately apparent. He suggests that people can easily **fool themselves into thinking themselves as having a particular virtue if they assume its appearance long enough. Here is the function of someone like Rameau's nephew – to expose their hypocrisy. RAMEAU'S NEPHEW CAN BE READ ON ONE LEVEL AS A SELF-EXAMINATION (THAT NEEDS TO BE CONTINUAL) TO DETERMINE WHETHER ONE IS ON THE SIDE OF**

THE ANGELS OR NOT. NOTE THE AMBIGUITIES AND PARADOXES THAT ENLIGHTENED WRITERS COULD ENTERTAIN. NOW CONSIDER WHY D MIGHT NOT WANT TO PUBLISH THIS, AT LEAST NOT RIGHT AWAY. WAS IT A BOOK FOR HIS FRIENDS RATHER THAN THE 'PUBLIC' TO READ?

30. Note the story of the dog and the mask on pages 74f. **This is Diderot's moral condemnation of an increasingly artificial and materialistic society where everyone wears a mask. In a society of masks, the most successful people are those who can deceive others most effectively. This is a HUGE MORAL PROBLEM in a polite and artificial society. Why? Because people not only deceive others, BUT THEY DECEIVE THEMSELVES.**
31. Diderot, as you know, is very interested in the **passions as the basis of moral judgment**. I doubt that he sees a contradiction between materialism and morality as argued in the introduction. Sensual feelings are one kind of passion, moral feelings are another. Rameau's nephew loves his child but he tends to elevate sensual feelings over other ones. In any case, he points to a real problem when the origin of ethics is located and described. What is the problem? **People can ape feeling or 'sensitivities' that they do not have. Rameau's nephew is an expert at mimicking feelings. Diderot and others were worried that 'feeling' would become nothing more than a fad, which of course it did with the sentimental literature of the second half of the eighteenth-century. Diderot calls it "simulated virtue".**
32. Note the sharp distinction between **self and society** that Diderot through Rameau's nephew makes on page 81. **"I am myself, and I remain myself, but I act and speak as occasion requires."** Note also on page 86, where Rameau's nephew becomes the model for Dostoyevki's **underground man who needs to 'amuse himself' by highlighting his own superiority to those around him.**
33. One of the literary failings of the book *Rameau's Nephew* is that the **author is continually jumping out from the characters or persona. That's what makes it an interesting work, however. Rameau's nephew really loses his 'character' in a section talking about the way that "nature" punishes those who indulge in sensual excess or other forms of vice. Thus, those who indulge in too much food get consumption. Those who surround themselves with flatterers eventually get their deserts. We can see Diderot as a more TRADITIONAL MORALIST poking out his head, particularly when he says to Rameau's nephew "You are right".**
34. What makes Rameau's nephew so special in Diderot's and his own eyes? **He is not simply a 'character' (fictitious or not) but he demonstrates CONSISTENCY OF CHARACTER. As such, he exposes our own inconsistencies.**

35. But, of course, like everything else in this puzzling work, even that's not strictly true. **Rameau's nephew demonstrates lots of inconsistencies because his author likes him too much not to make him his spokesman at times. He denies non-sensuous feeling but dotes on his child. He claims to know nothing about music, and at other times to understand a great deal (including what he doesn't know). Most of all, he claims not to 'reflect' but to be a creature of pure appetite. But he can't help reflecting. His self-doubt makes him likeable. CONSIDER THIS ABILITY TO DOUBT ONESELF AND ONE'S MOTIVES IN TERMS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT PROPER. IS IT FAIR TO SAY THAT DIDEROT IS WILLING TO PUT THE 'PHILOSOPHES' AGENDA TO THE TEST? IS IT FAIR TO SAY THAT HE IS WILLING TO LIVE WITH AMBIGUITY? DOES THAT MAKE HIM MORE NOBLE?**
36. Rameau's nephew is never more out of character than when he describes truth and beauty through music. **It is worth reading pages 100 and 101 out loud, especially if one thinks (like the editor) that Diderot's self-doubt is about materialism and morality. DIDEROT'S SELF-DOUBT IS MORE ABOUT HIS OWN MOTIVES THAN ABOUT THE VALIDITY OF HIS PHILOSOPHY. CONSIDER HIS READERS AS WELL (ASSUMING THAT HE WANTED THIS READ) WE'RE THEY REALLY GOING TO DISH MORALITY FOR MATERIALISM? DOUBTFUL.**
37. In light of **postmodernism**, isn't it interesting that D is even able to question the validity of **words** as mechanisms for neutral communication. This makes the brief discussion of the **relationship of words to music** most revealing. But we'll look at this in greater depth when we come to Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*.
38. From page 105, Diderot articulates his differences with Rameau who criticized the musical articles in the *Encyclopedia*. **Can you articulate what he has to say about things like harmony and melody in terms of a key Enlightenment theme that has been ignored by the emphasis on 'reason' and 'rationalism'? Here is the place to talk about the 'passions'. Here is also the place to talk about a new definition of 'artistic genius' that would have more play in the Romantic movement.**
39. Education is not a central theme in this work. There is lots of talk about the way education has become tricks of the trade. Moral education is also an underdeveloped theme, although there are some interesting comments on classical morality. Rameau's nephew makes an astute observation about moral education on page 110. What's he suggesting? **He suggests that classical moral education (i.e. Sparta) wouldn't work in the modern environment. You need an educational approach that makes more sense and that is more discriminating in terms of delineating vice and virtue in the modern setting.**

That's going to be a big part of 'sentimental education' in the later Enlightenment.

40. Why does Rameau's nephew envy the *philosophe* Diderot? **He envies his ability to write. Of course, he says that he would simply communicate lies effectively. The ensuing discussion elevates the roles of writer and musician in the eighteenth-century. There is an equally interesting exploration of the 'artist in the garret' discovering his "true-self". All in all the older notion of 'genius' is transported into a new idea of the role and function of the modern 'artist'. No longer a simple wordsmith or craftsman but someone who has a unique perspective on nature and human nature.**
41. However, insights into nature and human nature, while optimistic, need to confront the problem that the two do not necessarily coincide. In one of the most revealing discussions in *Rameau's Nephew*, the protagonists wrestle with the fact that **things don't work out the way that you intend. Life is not fair. Circumstances change everything, and rarely for the better. No one is really free in this world to carry out an independent agenda.**
42. Diderot, not entirely convincingly, argues that **one person is free. Not the traditional sovereign but the 'philosopher'. "Yet there is one person free to do without pantomime, and that is the philosopher who has nothing and asks for nothing."** Of course, Rameau's nephew replies **"Where does this animal exist."** **WE CAN ONLY APPROACH THIS PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAL. BUT DIDEROT CLEARLY WANTS TO APPROACH IT. HE WON'T 'PROSTITUTE' HIMSELF.**
43. What do you think Diderot means with his last comment on Rameau's nephew, when the latter claims consistency? **You might suggest that he is simply damning the consistent character that Rameau's nephew presents, and that would be informative. But there is another way of looking at the phrase "Alas, yes, unfortunately". AND THAT IS THAT WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO ENTERTAIN AND LIVE WITH AMBIGUITY IN THIS LIFE. OUR MOTIVES ARE NOT ALWAYS PERFECT, NOR ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF EVEN OUR PUREST MOTIVES, BUT WE NEED TO TRY TO PURIFY OUR MOTIVES AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS.**

Dialectic of Enlightenment

1. **What's the approach of Horkheimer and Adorno to the movement known as 'The Enlightenment' ?** Horkheimer and Adorno are sophisticated Marxists who believe that 'enlightenment' rather than 'the Enlightenment' is a long term development in Western culture that has its origins back at least to the "marketplace of Athens". The movement itself, which they identify with Bacon primarily, is a merely a **stage** in an intensifying of **power relationships predicated on technological sophistication**. The so-called enlightenment trajectory can be seen as soon as society moves **from a magical to a mythical view of the world** and its real impulse is **patriarchal** involving the **domination of nature as well as the domination of others**.
2. **What do Horkheimer and Adorno mean by dialectic anyway?** You have to wait until Question # 41 (or page #34) to really find this out. Hint: it's nothing like either Hegel or Marx used the term dialectic.
3. **Why is 'Enlightenment' a bad thing for Horkheimer and Adorno?** At all stages on its trajectory, enlightenment intensifies the domination of the majority. Even when its focus seems to be equality or rights, it is only reinforcing structures of economic domination.
4. **On numerous occasions, the authors refer to things like the bourgeoisie, rationally operating property owners, and utilitarian calculation. Do you see any problem in reading back these 19th century concepts into history?** Historians might have some real problems with the lack of attention to **context** here. Anthropologists (ethnographers) might take issue with the appropriation of **culture**. Artists or art historians might have real problems with the **restrictive definition of artistic productions**. Scholars of language might find the reduction of **signs** to evidence of stages of domination problematic.
5. **How do Horkheimer and Adorno describe the role of the bourgeoisie in modern society?** Their analysis is quite sophisticated. The bourgeoisie **no longer wield power as independent individuals** but are caught up and are, in a sense, **victims of the dominating system that they have created**.
6. **Whether or not you find the economic reductionism or *embourgeoisment* thesis limiting, there should be little doubt that this is a brilliant and insightful critique of western culture. The brilliance of the wide-ranging and erudite critique, however, might be somewhat blurred by the fact that Horkheimer and Adorno have some contemporary fish to fry. How does an attention to their own 'context' help to reveal the agenda of the authors?** The authors were writing in a California exile from Germany. They were perplexed and deeply troubled by the seeming **failure of Marxist revolution** and, especially, its co-optation in some European countries by **Fascism** (National

Socialism). They wanted to understand these developments and to chart a new course for Marxism.

7. **How does this affect their approach to Enlightenment?** In traditional Marxism, the enlightenment is a progressive movement initiated by the bourgeoisie that needs to be carried one step further. Marx was, in a sense a fan of Enlightenment and clearly one of its brightest products. What H & A have to explain and address is what they call the “self-destruction of the Enlightenment.”
8. **What was it in the socio-cultural agenda of Fascism that made them feel that they had to go back to the Greeks to broaden out the traditional Marxist analysis?** It was the attention to legend and myth as a source of inspiration for Nazi propaganda. It was the problem that an advancing **economic society** had a tendency towards **barbarism** that seemed to have nothing to do ostensibly with class struggle. There was also the related event that **bourgeois individualism** appeared to be rather easily swallowed up or **absorbed by a combination of corporatization and ethnicity**. Max Weber had referred to these developments as a primitive reaction to rationalization and a willingness to seek belonging with a **charismatic leader**. But Horkheimer and Adorno don't want to accept that basically liberal, if pessimistic agenda. They are longing for a world of **freedom from economic and mythical domination. But they are trapped in a period of time where there does not seem much reason for hope.**
9. **What is it about the nature of oppression in modern (and fascist) society that also causes them problems as Marxists?** The system of domination does not consist only of **external oppression** but the **patterns of domination appear to have been internalized and are part of consciousness itself**. This is reflected in a number of developments but helps to explain why the working class in German society preferred national identification to economic revolution.

THAT WAS LARGELY BACKGROUND TO THE TEXT. NOW LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE TEXT ITSELF.

10. **How do Horkheimer and Adorno begin their analysis and why do they point to Bacon as a crucial figure?** They begin by offering a fairly traditional interpretation of “the Enlightenment” as a **disenchantment of nature in order to dominate nature**. The Enlightenment is also, but only ostensibly, the **shatterer of myths**. Men seek to dominate nature in order to eradicate their **fear** of the power of nature. But, of course, H & A are going to go on to argue that **mythical structures are built into the enlightenment process** and any domination over nature will likely involve a **reduction of man to nature**.
11. **What mental leaps are involved in achieving ‘sovereignty’ over Nature?** First, you have to assume that there is a **concordance between mind and nature** so that you can discover the information you need to control it. Second, you have to **neutralize language** in order to make its primary role the description of

nature. Related to this, you need to **renounce any search for meaningfulness** apart from the manipulation of nature. Third, you need to **“substitute formula for concept, rule and probability for cause and effect”**. This invariably (although not in Bacon’s case) leads you towards **capturing nature numerically**. Fourth, this formulaic and computational approach **makes knowledge primarily TECHNOLOGICAL when translated into purposeful action**. Finally, you have to **systematically rid yourself (at least in practice) of any metaphysical concepts other than those that reconstitute KNOWLEDGE AS A SELF-CONTAINED SYSTEM OF DOMINATION**.

12. **How do H & A sum up this development and what do you think Mr. Foucault would have to say about their approach?** They suggest that **“power and knowledge”** become **“synonymous”**. Foucault patently would reject this approach as overly reductionist.
13. **How does the Enlightenment play a game with the old metaphysics of thinkers like Plato and Aristotle?** While it rejects their belief in things like **ideals or essences**, it uses some forms of metaphysics to dismantle others in the *idola theatri*. Its internal dynamic, however, is systematically to get rid of any concepts that do not conform to **computation and utility**.
14. **Why do H & A then argue that the structure of enlightenment is itself MYTHOLOGICAL?** Enlightenment is a series of **conceptual abstractions** based upon **essentializing everything as a combination of facts or atoms and idealizing a utilitarian system that effectively NEGATES ANY EXPERIENCE THAT DOES NOT CONFORM TO THE LOGIC OF THE SYSTEM.*******
15. **What do H & A mean when they say that “bourgeois society is ruled by equivalence”?** It destroys whatever is **unique** in order that anything can be measured in the same way as anything else.
16. **Why are H & A so interested in ‘magic’ and ‘ritual’ and what’s the distinction that they are trying to make?** Magic originally is **not susceptible to routinization, allows for unique spirits and forces, and a certain degree of creativity in how one approaches a nature that is animated by magical forces**. Magic originally implies a variety of possibilities. Ritual begins a process of **dominating nature by formalizing and repeating established rites**. As they become routinized, those in power **highjack the ‘magical mode of production’**.
17. **How is the SELF created as a result of the movement from MAGIC TO MYTH?** In the original world of magic, man and nature are inseparable although the one does not totally subsume the other. As magic becomes ritualized and moves towards myth as successive practices of domination, **there emerges the notion of a SELF THAT IS SEPARATE FROM AND HAS SOME ABILITY**

TO CONTROL THE FORCES OF NATURE. The more powerful confident this emerging self becomes the more it takes on the character of an IDENTITY.

18. **What is the nature of this process as far as the emerging ‘subject’ is concerned?** It is a progressive **distancing of oneself** very different from the mimetic world of early magic where one can actually imitate nature and, by doing so, become one with nature. The latter is **milieu-bound** whereas the **reality-adjusted ego** manipulates nature through **technology**.
19. **H & A, as I’ve said, are particularly interested in MYTH as a foundational stage in man’s attempted domination of nature. What about MYTH does he find retained in even the most progressive versions of science, technology and utility?** The world of Myth is the world of **repetition**, nothing is unique. The world of Myth is a world of exclusion, anything outside of the mythical domain is **irrelevant**. The world of myth is a world where **subjects order themselves and their behaviour according to intelligible, routinized and universal objects**. The world of myth is a world of **‘conceptual unity and domination**. In fact, while particular mythical structures may be subject to **domination from enlightenment**, the **pattern of domination and ordering oneself within that system of domination is remarkably similar**.
20. **What is the conventional difference then between Enlightenment and Myth?** H and A suggest that these “old diffuse ideas” of “conceptual unity” become increasingly secular, regulated and truer to the notion of pure **domination**. **But we know that they share a similar origin** because both define anything outside of their conceptual unity as **TABOO**. They **limit possibilities in order to perpetuate patterns of domination**.
21. **How do we know that dialectical thinking is already present in Myth?** Language is already being used in ways that **objectify**. Nothing can simultaneously be that what it is, and that what it is not, as in the early world of magic and animism.
22. **What do H & A say is the patent ‘drawback’ of the historical age of myth? How does it still reflect the magical or animistic approach to nature?** It still has most of its basis in **fear (“the cry of terror” that is the inverse of awe)**, a kind of **healthy respect for nature** that prevents the kind of risk taking necessary to **master nature**.
23. **What attitude eventually tames while disenchanting nature?** The notion of **repetition**.
24. **What cultural effect does the taming of nature (reducing it to a repetitive system) have?** It effectively **separates art from nature** argue H & A. Art seeks the **universal in the particulars** whereas science and utilitarianism seek

to manipulate the particulars. Poetry, for example, depends on the power of words apart from their utility as ‘signs’. We might want to discuss this a bit, especially in light of the enlightenment notion of art as imitating nature.

25. **Why then does “bourgeois society” tolerate art? What do H & A mean when they say that this same society (modern – whatever you want to call it) tends to tolerate faith more than art? Why do H & A suggest that those who are motivated by religion typically have “bad faith”? Why is religion a “swindle”?** Lots can be said here, but the essential point is that art and religion are defined and restricted by Enlightenment rationalism and restriction rather than being engaged in any form of dialectical relationship with it. We might want to discuss the Weber thesis of religion here or Herman Hesse’s ideas of the problem of art as outlined in *Steppenwolf*.
26. **What do H & A say the pattern of domination and the production of culture really reduces themselves to in bourgeois society?** The division of labour. H & A seem to assume the economic structure/cultural and political superstructure argument rather than to explicitly address it. Shows, in a sense, who they view their audience as being, I think.
27. **Why do H & A want to attack Durkheim?** His idea of organic solidarity totally obscures the pattern of domination and oppression that they want to illuminate.
28. **What is the nature of consent and the collective in modern political society for H & A?** It becomes part of the **machinery of coercion and repression**. These notions, as Vico tells us, are products of the “marketplace of Athens” and reflect its understanding of domination.
29. **Why do H & A say that none can feel safe with respect to the conceptual apparatus of modern society?** Concepts are consumed or permeated by patterns of domination. Moreover, there is no bond between the **concept and actual being** in a **nominalist world where concepts are adopted either as descriptions or according to their utility**. In such an environment, words that have no technological use become either illusions or deceptions. Thought has no life or significance of its own, it is simply another object in a system of domination. Some concept clusters may have a degree of freedom – i.e. those of the artist or those of the followers of a cult – but only to the extent that these do not interfere with the technological “adjusting of reality” will they escape the systematic net.
30. **Why is Kant one of the bad guys for H & A?** He’s an oracle of the technological society because he restricts the ability of reason to critique. Reason becomes deficient and a liability when it is not carefully doing what the scientist or technologist wants. Note how this emphasis on limits is different from the one we explored in Foucault.

- 31. What do H & A say about the subject object relationship that is made so much of by those who see the modern world as liberating this thing called the “self”? In order for the self to have any significance other than in the processing of information within a self-contained system, the “I think” would have to be able to legitimately explore its own uniqueness and limitless possibilities. As it is, the subjective thinking person is paired up with an objective universe in which he or she is simply an object. The subject is not free but constrained by the objectively given, which in turn is a cycle of repetition absorbing supposedly objective ‘facts’. Even the past is not really unique but is predetermined by the new.**
- 32. How do H & A describe this systematic and calculating knowledge that the ‘modern’ finds herself trapped within? KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT HOPE.**
- 33. What example do they use to describe the effects of this disenchanted world of severely reduced options? The notion that people have to face up to the facts even when these same facts are brute facts.**
- 34. How do H & A describe characteristic human behaviour in this modern world and does it remind you of anyone else that we’ve read? They say that the “individual is reduced to the modal point of the conventional responses and modes of operation expected of him”. Well, of course, there is Foucault who talks about the “recordable” human being. But there is also Diderot whose character Rameau’s nephew talks about a world where people have to “take up positions”.**
- 35. Do you find H & A’s attitude towards ‘animism’ kind of strange for Marxists? After all, it does end up looking a bit utopian when compared to modern technological society. This might also lead into a discussion of Marx’s view of technology that H & A appear sometimes to agree with. But their distaste for technology makes them appear not to be Marxists much of the time. Might be interesting to discuss.**
- 36. What is the emotion behind myth and enlightenment prior to domination? FEAR running towards TERROR and expressing itself in a desire for SELF-PRESERVATION.**
- 37. What for H & A has the Enlightenment achieved with respect to this desire for SELF-PRESERVATION? First, it has made self-preservation the EXCLUSIVE rationale for society. Second, it has generated the SELF almost solely for the purpose of PROVIDING PRODUCTIVE ENGERGY towards this agenda of preservation turned into domination. Third, it has EXACTED A HEAVY PRICE FOR THIS SELF-PRESERVATION IN THE FORM OF ALIENATION FROM NATURE AND FROM ONE ANOTHER. Fourth, it has forced people to MODEL THEIR SOULS TO FIT THE**

TECHNOLOGICAL APPARATUS. Fifth, it **ABANDONS THE CONSTRUCTED SELF** in the focus keeping the technological machine going. This is clearly a case of **technology against humanity rather than in the service of humanity.** It **“subjects the whole of life” to its maintenance.** Finally and ironically, in the **AUTOMATED WORLD OF SELF-PRESERVATION,** the net result of the process is **SELF-DISGUST.** **THUS, THE ESSENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT HAS BEEN DOMINATION AND OPPRESSION. BUT THAT DOMINATION HAS ANOTHER AND EVEN DARKER SIDE.*******

- 38. What is the SIREN’S SONG that is now (1944) leading the Enlightenment into BARBARISM?** It is the **DESIRE TO REVERT BACK TO PRIMITIVE NATURE, TO LET GO OF THE “I” THAT REPRESSES AND TO FIND COMMUNION WITH NATURE’S SONG, TO SUSPEND THE SELF IN AN OLDER MEDIATION BETWEEN “SELF-PRESERVATION” AND “SELF-DESTRUCTION”.** **THE ENLIGHTENMENT HAS NEVER BEEN COMPLETELY IMMUNE FROM THIS DESIRE TO REVERT BACK TO A NATURE FROM WHICH IT HAS BECOME ESTRANGED. IT MAKES THE CHOICE SIMPLE AND BLACK AND WHITE – EITHER SUBJECT NATURE TO THE ‘SELF’ OR CHOOSE SUBJECTION TO NATURE.**
- 39. Why do H & A spend so much time discussing Odysseus’ experience with the Sirens?** The Sirens represent a former world when men and women were closer to nature. The lure of the song of nature remains powerful among those who are permitted to use their **imagination.** There’s lots here to unpack about Odysseus as property owning bourgeois individual and his rowers as workers (not entirely convincing but creative). They get their ears plugged and have to row away while he disciplines himself (or has himself tied up) to allow for a moment or two of indulgence.
- 40. H & A spend a lot of time pushing Enlightenment backwards into Myth but do you notice anything missing from this analysis that would seem to need to be here?** **WELL, THERE’S NOTHING HERE ON ROMANTICISM, WHICH WOULD SEEM TO FIT A BIT BETTER WITH THE ALTERNATIVE OF BEING ‘ABSORBED BY NATURE’ OR ‘EXHIBITING UNIQUE POSSIBILITIES AND ENERGY’.** **PERHAPS THE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT MAKING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND ROMANTICISM, OR THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENLIGHTENMENT AND NINETEENTH CENTURY UTILITARIANISM WOULD PROBLEMATIZE THE THESIS OF ENLIGHTENMENT RATIONALISM AS DOMINATION AND OPPRESSION. BUT IN ANY CASE THE FAILURE TO DISCUSS THE VARIOUS ADAPTATIONS OR REACTIONS TO THE ‘MOVEMENT’ KNOWN AS THE ENLIGHTENMENT WOULD SEEM TO BE A PZZLING OMISSION.**

- 41. H & A later reveal why they ignore romanticism or absorb it in Enlightenment. The argument on page #45 is very interesting. What are they saying? They are suggesting that the romantic critique is a part of the dialectic of enlightenment and not a genuine critique in its own right. It is the counter coin if you like of dominating nature – wishing to be absorbed by it. More on this later.**
- 42. What is the dialectic of Enlightenment that the tale of Odysseus and the Sirens represents? It is the tension between SUBJECT AND OBJECT THAT THE ENLIGHTENMENT ENGENDERS. It is a seesaw between ever increasing domination with the potential reversion to barbarism that characterizes the Enlightenment. SUBJECT – OBJECT, DOMINATION – ABSORPTION, SELF-EMANCIPATION – SPECIES LIFE, COGNITION – ALIENATION, SELF-PRESERVATION -- FREEDOM. Are those typical ways (DICHOTOMIES) that a Marxist would use the term dialectic?**
- 43. What major obstacle to human liberation does the tale of Odysseus and the Sirens illuminate? The way that most people have had their senses and imaginations stunted by an increasingly technological society. Thus it should not be surprising that the majority of people are capable of regression into something approaching barbarism. They have become mere “species beings” inseparable from one another. Their irritation with the domination and their desire to escape its alienating injustice is palpable. But they are already psychologically disabled. The Enlightenment has left them only with two choices COMMAND OR OBEDIENCE. The DICOTOMY BETWEEN SUBJECT AND OBJECT MAKES THEM ONE OR THE OTHER.**
- 44. Why might a socialist revolution not change very much for H & A? It would retain many of the features of Enlightenment domination. It would still be a society tied to concepts like repetition, necessity, a quantitative and mechanical approach to nature and human nature. Both socialism and capitalism could be absorbed in the same TOTALITARIAN MACHINE.**
- 45. How do H & A feel about concepts like ‘liberated technology’? These and other antidotes to the problem of modernity don’t really come to grips with the fact that the ENLIGHTENMENT HAS BECOME A TECHNOCRACY OF NEEDS in which human ends, and even the imagination to discover them, have been systematically nullified. There is no longer anyone even in control of this self-perpetuating system.**
- 46. How do H & A view the story of Odysseus or the Homeric narrative? They interpret it as the tale of the prototypical bourgeois man navigating the trajectory between MYTH and MODERNITY.**

47. **What fundamental insight does the tale have to offer us readers?** By reading it correctly, we can spot the fact that many elements of MODERNITY are already present in MYTHICAL discourse and, in fact, this is a **story about how to dominate nature during a period when nature still had some attributes of terror.**
48. **How do we know that Odysseus is a representative of a more recognizably modern form patriarchy?** We can see it in the way that controls his men; we can glean it in his relationships with his wife. But we see it especially in his **cunning**, which has a direct relationship to the rational calculating type that we recognize as **homo economicus**. The question is to you buy this kind of **reductionism**? Do you think a classical scholar would?
49. **In any case, this is not the first work that views Homer's classic as representing some very modern characteristics in its realism and rationalism. H & A have a very interesting account of the various characters that Odysseus confronts representing different stages in the evolution towards a dominating view of nature. BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK H & A'S POINT IS IN SPENDING SO MUCH TIME ON THIS CLASSIC OF WESTERN CULTURE?** One reason is to confront the German neo-Romantics and archaists who fail to understand that the society of legend and myth that they want to return to is already part and parcel of Enlightenment and its Domination. Their idealized alternative is simply a more primitive and barbaric form of domination. They think they offer release from alienation, but they will simply tighten the bonds.
50. **What do H & A say specifically about Homer's writings in the context of MYTH, EPIC AND MODERNITY?** They suggest that Homer's epic is already dismantling mythical structures in essence while respecting them in a literal sense. Odysseus reveals the power (not yet complete) that the rational individual has with respect to the mythical domain. In particular, they want to reveal the extent to which Homer reveals the characteristics of domination and exploitation that exist in epic and myth. **THESE IN OTHER WORDS DO NOT PROVIDE ALTERNATIVES TO THE DOMINATION OF ENLIGHTENMENT BUT MERELY CONTRIBUTE TO IT.**
51. **What do H & A find most interesting about Homer's technique that ties him to the modern novel?** It is the **INDIVIDUATION** of HIS CHARACTER. **HE IS NOT ONLY CREATING SOMEONE WITH SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT ALSO CLEARLY SHOWING HOW HIS DEVELOPS CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF. HOMER IS ALREADY SECULARIZING THE MYTHICAL WORLD. ODYSSEUS' TEMPTATIONS ARE ALL ABOUT STEERING HIM AWAY FROM SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS BUT HE MAINTAINS HIS COURSE UNTIL HE COMES INTO HIS OWN.**

52. **What do H & A have to say about the exchange of ‘gifts’ in the Homeric epic?** That these already resemble **barter** and, in the form they take, are on the way to **rational exchange based on self-interest**. What do you think about this attempt to make Odysseus a bourgeois capitalist? I think it’s highly anachronistic, not to mention stretched. The argument about capitalist exchange and **equivalencies is pretty damned ingenious even if it is wrong**.
53. **What do you think of H & A’s phrase – “The latest ideologies are only versions of the most ancient”?** **What dialectic do they all try to hide?** Your opinion is solicited? The dialectic that they try to hide is the **tension between rationality and irrationality** that requires **cunning to cover it over**.
54. **What sacrifice is Odysseus not willing to make in his voyage?** He is not willing to sacrifice his **concept of self**. He remains in control of himself, but interestingly enough, his men – the prototypical masses – do not.
55. **What do H & A describe the entire epic as really being about?** They call it a **prehistory of subjectivity**. What exactly does that mean and why must it always involve **renunciation**? Why must the road to subjectivity involve **artifice**?
56. **Why is subjectivity or the ‘ratio’ really a ‘mimesis’ in its own right?** Because the fragile self has to keep imitating itself right up to **death**. While it no longer imitates a nature that is animated, its newfound freedom involves continual self-reconstruction.
57. **How has Odysseus “successful-unsuccessful” encounter with the Sirens affected all songs?** In western culture, music has become a conundrum – an objective part of civilization/civilizations as well as having an emotive claim to universality. You might want to think about this also with reference to our appropriation of **world music**. Isn’t it a real problem to simultaneously enter into a piece of music that is meant to invoke the spirit of a community and to juxtapose it to other pieces of music from other cultural domains.
58. **How is Odysseus like Robinson Crusoe for H & A?** Both are **atomistic individuals**. Both already embody **“the principal of capitalist economy”**.
59. **How do H & A discuss the ‘risks’ taken by Odysseus?** They see it as similar to the way modern economists talk about **risk capital** – the risk justifies the unequal rewards that the protagonist acquires.
60. **How do H & A address the issue of happiness in utilitarian society through the character of Odysseus?** They contrast the happiness acquired through rational calculation with that of the Lotus Eaters who are closer to nature. The happiness acquired by men who are **driven within systems** is clearly a different construct from that of people in pre-history. Already Eden has been lost for the Homeric hero and people have to earn their happiness through their labour or

their cunning. Odysseus is superior to and occupies a leadership position to others precisely because he has the bourgeois problem solving mentality required in a more complex society.

- 61. What does the struggle with the Cyclops demonstrate for H & A?** It not only illuminates the **mental superiority of the bourgeois type** but also justifies the **right to dominate more primitive cultures. It also highlights the possible patronizing, patriarchal and paternal attitudes towards those cultures. A brilliant analysis, even if it is wrong.**
- 62. For H & A, Odysseus is a prototypical bourgeois hero? But he has a fault, doesn't he? What is it?** He has hubris in his ability to use language to outwit his more primitive opponents. But that same hubris involves him in too close a contact with a state from which he has emerged. **All his success is owing to his detachment. The minute that he reveals too much of his power he opens the floodgates to revenge. Think about this in terms of the class struggle and the position of the masses.**
- 63. Do H & A think that Odysseus is repressed?** Yes, he's not simply a repressor but someone who is repressed in his own right. Detached selves may have power over nature and others but they are themselves dominated by the systems they create. Sometimes they may have **false consciousness reflected in hubris** but they are also oppressed. Do **you** think that Odysseus is repressed?
- 64. Why are women a threat to bourgeois patterns of domination from Odysseus to the present?** Because they represent a particularly seductive form of **nature** and a completely different power dynamic that relates to pre-history. In order to tame this power, the bourgeois man has recourse to a **contract** (i.e. modern marriage) and the bourgeois woman sacrifices her own pleasure to that of the male. He is the contractual master. Her pre-history nature lives on only in a defanged **shrewdness**. This antiseptic and anesthetized relationship safely permits the systematized reproduction of anally retentive bourgeois types. Companionship in old age is the booby prize for the nullification of a natural relationship. **Cool stuff even if you might not agree! Ah, the sacrifices we make to self-preservation!**
- 65. What's the problem with humour after the Greeks?** It has lost most of its former elemental force. Laughter becomes a conditioned response, and even when a force of nature, only illuminates the distinction between nature and the repressed self. H & A could have made a lot more of this I think, by focusing on the way humour becomes mere word play as civilization progresses (or regresses as the case may be.)
- 66. Why is Homer's epic a "novel first and a fairy tale after" for H & A?** Your answer goes here _____.

Essay on the Origin of Languages

1. The title of the work includes the word “origin”. Do you see anything problematic in that usage? **Rousseau always wants to take us back to a purer origin or an origin with different possibilities. Trying to identify this kind of origin is like trying to describe an earthly paradise before original sin. It ends up being a device that allows you to criticize what you don't like from a relatively unassailable position.**
2. What is it exactly that Rousseau doesn't like about modern society, specifically the Enlightenment movement? **Rousseau believes that the “ratiocinating century” committed to progress in the arts and letters is not only an artificial environment but also an immoral one.**
3. Where do you find the evidence that Rousseau's “Essay” is really about morality, and why do you think he adopts that particular compositional strategy? **The evidence comes in the very last sentence of the “Essay” in the form of a quote by Duclos on the way that the “character, the morals, and the interests” of a “people influence its Language”. This comes at the end rather than a beginning thesis statement because Rousseau wants to argue 1) that language is the “first social institution”, 2) that language is what separates man from the animal kingdom, 3) that original language was a “natural” development, and 3) that morality is an elaboration upon certain relations that can be better analyzed by looking at the inception of language.**
4. What factor, derived from Montesquieu, does Rousseau feel that he has to explore to fully understand the development of language? **He feels that we need to look at the influence of locality and particularly climate on the development of language. Again, this is part of an attempt to get closer to the natural origins of language and different languages. You might want to ask yourselves why Montesquieu and Rousseau were interested in questions that we today would either 1) not bother to ask, or 2) consider to be dangerous stereotypes.**
5. Having said that, Rousseau's stereotypes about climate, language and social development are extremely interesting. Rousseau routinely undercuts and explodes the assumptions of the European Enlightenment. How? **For one thing, he does not subscribe to a euro-centric view of the world. He constantly wants to separate mankind from man (includes women) in particular situations and to tease out those particular variables in ways that expose the ethnocentric and often violent approach of Europeans. He is particularly hard on the English (“barbarians”) and French. He even offers a critique of European domination**
6. Let's follow Rousseau's own plan of action by focusing on language in general before looking at climate influenced language development. What is Rousseau's

fundamental breakthrough about the origin of languages and why is it so important to his overall approach? **Language did not develop, as most people think, as a vehicle for communicating in order to control nature, allowing people to work together in some utilitarian fashion to provide for their needs. Visual gestures would have worked well enough for that. Rousseau goes so far as to argue that modern civilizations could have been built upon a system of gestures.**

7. Let's stop for a second and make an important distinction that Rousseau clearly wants to make. **Rousseau is not suggesting that utilitarian considerations have not affected language – in fact that is the basis of the distinction that he wants to make between writing and speaking – only that originally language had nothing whatsoever to do with utility.**
8. Then what was the **causal factor** that determined spoken language? **It was the articulation of the social passions, to use a different language; it was the impulse of the heart rather than baser material reasons that led to the development of language. Language was absolutely necessary for individuals to communicate their feelings to one another. In order to communicate complex feelings fully, you need to make an appeal to the ears as well as the eyes. You need to be able: 1) not only to tell your story but also 2) to do so in a way that conveys feeling.**
9. Wouldn't it be possible to argue that this same connection could be made by gestures and complex scenarios of sentiment conveyed by pantomime? **That's an interesting question that leads us into the heart of Rousseau's belief system. For Rousseau, pantomime might conceivably be a way of delivering an argument to the eyes but could never capture the accents of human emotion. In gesture or pantomime, the "Sign has said everything before a single word is spoken." These kinds of Signs are maximally efficient at achieving their ends. But, as far as Rousseau is concerned, they do not have the power to emotionally 'move' another person. As far as emotion is concerned, a picture is definitely not worth a thousand words! Human beings "interest is aroused more effectively by sounds.**
10. Let's not leave pantomime just yet. Pantomime finds its home in the **theatre** – the artistic form *par excellence* of the eighteenth century and the model for much of its discourse on politeness and propriety. Adam Smith's model of morality, for example, is distinctly dramatic. What does Rousseau have to say about the theatre? **He suggests that emotional appeals to the eyes are extremely dangerous because 1) they have no lasting power (think of a sad movie), but 2) they flatter us into thinking that we have fine emotions (because of our temporary ability to shed tears). Rousseau's criticism of the theatre is scathing precisely because it has become a substitute for genuine feeling.**

11. Why is feeling, in particular **compassion**, so important for Rousseau? **Because it is the foundation of morality. Rousseau's approach to ethics is anti-rationalistic. Logical argumentation can never be a basis for morality. Quite the reverse. Excessive rationalism is antithetical to the genuine morality bases on a community of feeling. A society based upon reason is a society already in serious ethical trouble. Moreover, a social movement that critiques traditional value systems without appreciating that these are the very structures that house moral meaning actually destroys ethics.**
12. Does this mean that one should jettison reason completely? **Rousseau's approach to this issue is typically complex. Reason like feeling is natural. Reason is the primary tool used by communities to obtain their material needs. Reason is also a tool for governing men (inclusive) in ways that support and reinforce communal feelings. But human beings are much more than reasoning animals; they are feeling animals capable of communicating feelings through speech. In this case, our "instinct" is more important than any "chain of reasoning".**
13. The eighteenth-century "chain of reasoning" easily allied itself to a materialist philosophy based on the senses. What fundamental problem does Rousseau have with this utilitarian approach? **It completely overlooks what human beings in society are. It turns them into isolated, self-interested units seeking their own well being at the expense of everyone else. It totally inverts the role and function of the senses – which allow us to communicate 'feelings' as well as 'needs'. Moreover, this sensual-materialist philosophy is so grossly unnuanced in its focus on the observation and communication of facts (centered at least originally on the eyes) that it overlooks the real importance of communication to the ears. While it claims to focus on the senses, it can't even explain the remarkable phenomenon of speech, except in the most reductionist manner.**
14. Why is materialist philosophy nonsensical for Rousseau? **Because the way that we understand ourselves as social beings is emotional. The social passions cannot be understood materially, even if they evidence themselves in material ways.**
15. Can you think of another way of expressing the difference between many Enlightenment thinkers and Rousseau? You might want to take a look at the second page of chapter one. **Rousseau makes a quite remarkable distinction between object and subject. Moreover, he captures human subjectivity in speech. This sounds very contemporary in some ways and describes one of the postmodern critiques of Enlightenment. An interesting distinction, however, is that Rousseau does not think that writing or its particular use of signs captures the human essence. Writing is actually a corruption, especially when usurps vocal usage.**

16. Of course, there's lots of evidence in this Essay that Rousseau views human beings originally as isolated actors focused on their own **needs**. The only unit he permits in the state of nature is the incestuous family. Moreover, his ideal society conforms to the supposedly bourgeois model of a **contract**. Doesn't it seem a bit strange, therefore, that he should have such a problem with possessive individualism. **Rousseau is not interested very much in some original 'state of nature' apart from countering Christian and Hobbesian notions of original corruption. A major claim of Rousseau is that society completely transforms our original natures and turns us into social beings. As social beings we have very different needs that are passionate and moral. To base the social contract on the state of nature is to completely misunderstand the remarkable change that occurs when man enters into the social bond.**
17. In what ways and why is speech socially foundational for Rousseau? **Speech does not have didactic but emotional origins. By defining speech as primarily emotional in origin, Rousseau wants to elevate feeling over reasoning in the social bond. Reasoning and instrumentality distance or dominate man; feeling brings them together. The passions refer to the moral needs of man. Morality cannot be based on reason. Reason has to take a back seat to the passions when it comes to understanding or analyzing the social bond.**
18. What is the fundamental and potentially disastrous error of the Enlightenment when it tries to examine primitive (small-scale would be a better term) societies or the function of the passions in modern societies? **It totally misreads its subjects because it applies empirical and "geometers languages" to issues that are emotional. It is ridiculous in its analysis and arrogant in its hubris. It fails to see what is being lost in the rush to supposed progress.**
19. What is Rousseau's own attitude towards modern progress? **That progress in the arts and sciences represents a net decline in morality.**
20. Why is poetry and figurative language so interesting to Rousseau? **For him, it is closer to the original source of language. It conveys feeling. Literal meaning is a later development because speech is fundamentally an emotional form of communication.**
21. Don't you think Rousseau is exaggerating the separation of instrumental and emotional language? **You might, but then you would be ignoring a very interesting analysis of the importance of feeling in speech. Even if Rousseau is exaggerating, he arguably is only illuminating and countering the Enlightenment tendency towards instrumentalism.**
22. This essay is more than, but also, a critique of Rameau. We've seen Rameau's ideas critiqued before by Diderot, but Rousseau's critique is far more radical. What is his fundamental argument about speech and music? **Music is the ideal**

vehicle for communicating feeling. In early societies, the distinction between speech and song was probably very small. Songs and speech are perfectly suited communication tools because they can be ACCENTED to a very high degree to communicate subtle nuances of feeling. The human vocal equipment got developed precisely because to the human desire to convey emotions more precisely. This is “PASSION SEEKING TO COMMUNICATE ITSELF”. This is anything but an abstract rationalistic language. Its purpose is TO MOVE RATHER THAN CONVINCe.

23. What is so objectionable about Rameau’s musical theory for Rousseau and how does he counter it? **Rameau bases his theory of music on harmonics and instrumentation. These for Rousseau are ‘abstractions’ that have little to do with emotion. He counters Rameau’s focus on harmony with a notion of melody that has more in common with the way we ‘feel’ when we hear a piece of music.**
24. What is Rousseau’s attitude towards so-called **primitive societies** with respect to speech and music? **They are more natural. Their speech and their songs reflect shared ‘sentiments’.**
25. What is natural and unnatural for Rousseau about the further development of language in these societies? **A shared language based primarily on feeling allows societies to develop laws or at least customs and conventions. As societies get more complex and as ‘enlightenment spreads’ “precision” tends to replace “passion”. Language becomes less passionate and more “cold”. The more different societies have to deal with each other, the more language will become conventional, take the form of writing and a shared alphabet. The alphabet likely was invented by “people engaged in commerce”. The important thing for Rousseau is not to allow the instrumental needs of society to obscure the emotional ones. That has been the mistake of Europe.**
26. Obviously language becomes more **instrumental** and takes a written form. This written form is for Rousseau a change in the genius of language. It “substitutes precision for expressiveness”. The difference between **an oral and written culture is substantial**. In terms of socio economic stages, what 3 different states does Rousseau want to highlight. **Savage – focused on objects; barbarians – signs for words; and civilized – the written alphabet.**
27. What human **needs** does written language depend upon and how does this relate to development? **Instrumental/material/governmental needs. Some societies move in this direction more rapidly than others because they have more pressing needs for survival economically or with respect to dangerous neighbours. Rousseau will go on to make an important distinction between the northern nations that have proportionally greater need to ‘master’ their environment.**

28. What is Rousseau forced to concede about written language? **That we do not have hard evidence of a time when people did not write in one form or another. Do you think that this is a problem for his theory? And what about later on in the “Essay” when he says that writing may even have preceded speech in the case of the Poles?**
29. Why do you think Rousseau is so interested in Homer and the Greeks? **Homer is a poet and representative of an oral culture. When the Greeks committed Homer to writing, they probably destroyed his essence. In the process of developing writing, they probably began a process of assimilating dialects. Writing tends to “assimilate” and “dominate”. Even the popularity of Homer in written form may reflect the fading ‘charm’ of a poetic artifact of a vibrant oral culture.**
30. In Rousseau’s France, there was a lot of emphasis on allowing variations in the language by using accents. What does Rousseau have to say about these so-called accents of the grammarians? **Rousseau suggests that these have absolutely nothing in common with the real accents of speech. They rarely make any change in pronunciation only in the precise meaning of the words. Thus they have to do with ‘fixing’ the language in its instrumentality rather than allowing variations of emotion. Such accents “count for naught”.**
31. You will remember that Diderot thought that Italian was closer to the emotions and therefore more suitable to musical operas than French. What does Rousseau have to say about this? **That it misses the point completely. Italian is a written language that has little to do with genuine emotion. It just so happens that it lends itself better to music than the harsher French. ROUSSEAU’S POINT IS THAT ALL “LETTERED LANGUAGES” LOSE THEIR VIGOR WHEN THEY TAKE A DEVELOPED WRITTEN FORM.**
32. How does learning the English language reinforce Rousseau’s point about the distinction between spoken and written language. **He suggests that to really know English one has to learn it twice, the difference between pronunciation and eyeballing the text is that great.**
33. What is the GREAT FAILING OF EUROPEANS? **“Always to philosophize about the origin of things in the light of what happens right around them.” They have an attachment to their families and regions perhaps but an “aversion to their species”. They are actively “hostile to the rest of the world”. This is a quite remarkably prescient critique of Eurocentrism.******
34. How does Rousseau hypothesize about the different development of languages in different climates? **The northern Europeans developed a much more aggressive and less emotional approach to speech because of their need for survival. As they moved from barbarism to civilization, they took a particularly instrumentalist approach to language that reflected their culture**

and environment. Whereas former European “conquests were nothing but manhunts”, their contemporary successors continue to practice domination or “to devour men”.

35. Why is the development of an agricultural society for Rousseau both a **good and an evil development**? **It involves the creation of property and laws that suppress humankind. It invents new forms of “wretchedness and crimes”. It makes some men soft at the expense of others. It involves all the “arts” and “writing” that establish false distinctions between men, developing a taste for what is not essential and a desire to be seen as possessing the talents that come with the arts and sciences.**
36. How is the development of both European and non-European agrarian civilization a double-edged sword? **On the one hand it brings people together and develops the fruits of sociability. On the other hand, as these societies develop in power and rapaciousness they become increasingly rapacious and bent on domination. Here is the best quote in the book:**

“He who willed man to be sociable inclined the globe’s axis at an angle to the axis of the universe by a touch of the finger. With this slight motion I see the face of the earth change and the vocation of mankind settled: I hear, far off, the joyous cries of a heedless multitude; I see Palaces and Cities raised: I see the birth of the arts, laws, commerce; I see peoples forming, expanding dissolving, succeeding one another like the waves of the sea; I see men clustered in a few points of their habitation in order there to devour one another, and turn the remainder of the world into a frightful desert, a worthy monument to social union and the usefulness of the arts.

37. Rousseau’s discussion of human settlement contains a quite interesting discussion of nature that mirrors somewhat Enlightenment norms in terms of the domination of nature. How is the balance of nature maintained prior to the domination of humans? **Rousseau describes it as a chaotic “jumble, trees, vegetables, shrubs, grasses: no species had time to seize for its own the terrain that best suited it.” Once “nature attended to the equilibrium which the hand of man preserves today.” This consisted in “warfare of the elements”. Rousseau seems to suggest that human beings had a right to tame this chaos and goes so far as to say that much of the world might be under water and the larger predators destroyed the smaller without human intervention. This is very different from modern environmental attitudes towards eco-systems, but not uninteresting as a potential critique.**
38. What other eighteenth-century Enlightened convention does Rousseau fall into with respect to original human settlement? **He views the pastoral or small-scale agrarian community as the “happy age when nothing recorded the hours, nothing required**

them to be counted; the only measure of time was enjoyment and boredom. True to form he also regards this as the period of love when “young people gradually forgot their ferociousness, little by little they tamed one another; in striving to make themselves understood, they learned to make themselves intelligible. Here the first festivals took place; feet skipped with joy, an eager gesture no longer proved inadequate, the voice accompanied it with passionate accents, pleasure and desire merged into one and made themselves felt together. Here, finally was the true cradle of peoples, and from the pure crystal of the fountains sprang the first fires of love.” **ISN’T THIS NOTION OF A GOLDEN PASTORAL AGE JUST A LITTLE CLOYING? AGAIN IT IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE NOTION THAT THE FIRST LANGUAGES WERE ONES OF ‘PLEASURE’ RATHER THAN ‘NEED’. BUT THE PASTORAL DEVICE IS RATHER ARTIFICIAL.** This is all part of trying to locate that one perfectly balanced time when the social passions and language was at its most innocent and ethically purest.

38. What happens as “new needs are introduced” into more complex societies? They “forced everyone to think only of himself and to withdraw his heart within himself.” **WHATEVER ONE THINKS OF THIS GENEALOGY, ROUSSEAU IS CLEARLY POINTING TO WHAT HE VIEWS AS AN ETHICAL PROBLEM – AN INCREASINGLY SELFISH AND INSTRUMENTAL SOCIETY THAT DESTROYS HUMAN MEANING.**
39. What is the problem with men, especially the “men of the North”, when they become “subject to so many needs”? They are easily irritated, quick to “lash out”, inclined to domination. What is the problem when such people confront other societies? They use reason as a weapon and, when they judge others “in the light of their reason” they merely compare one set of prejudices with another without ever understanding the culture they are dissecting.
40. Why does Rousseau suggest that a westerner will never be able to understand the religious passion of a Muslim? The *Koran* comes from a different kind of oral tradition and speaks directly to the heart. It is not open to an instrumentalist interpretation. That is precisely why Muslim fanaticism is a completely different king of SUBJECT than our so-called fanatics in the west. **THIS MIGHT BE WORTH UNPACKING.**
41. Towards the end of the “Essay”, Rousseau goes after Rameau and the gloves are really off. Unlike other philosophes, Rousseau has no fear (when he writes). His argument is that music was originally language; passionate language is naturally melodic, with heavily accented sonorities and rhythms, and that harmony should be a servant to melody and not obscure it. Rousseau suggests that both the baroque and the modern make way too much of the abstract concept of harmony that has little to do with speech and language. Thus, what counts as music is divorced completely from language and turned into the preserve of the trained musician.

42. Why is Rameau **stupid** according to Rousseau? **What Rameau effectively does is to define musical taste (which is really pleasure) in terms of the physical properties of sound. What he fails to realize is that that sounds have no very great significance in themselves or their counterpoints. They do not strike the ear merely as “sensations” but as “signs or images” of the passions. As such, they must be “moral” in character. They cannot be neutral to a harmonic scale. Rameau makes the typical mistake of the Enlightenment in confusing a *techne* or technology for true understanding. This to him is the artistic equivalent of saying that art is all about how colours strike the eye and blend into one another. It leaves out the drawing or HUMAN AGENCY.**
43. Why can't harmony be the foundation of music for Rousseau? **Because it is artificial. It takes a long time to develop an appreciation for it. It is ‘sensation without human significance’. The pleasure that it gives is limited (certainly not *volupte*). It can't be natural because it is so obviously abstract and artificial. It resembles the extremely artificial conniving of the Enlightenment and inflates the egos of the few at the expense of the many.**
44. Imitation of nature was a big theme in the Enlightenment and Rousseau was not immune to this strand of enlightenment thinking. What is melody ultimately about for him? **Imitating the human passions. Melody is signs of human passion. Harmony, on the other hand, is not the ‘sign’ of anything other than its own reification of cords.**
45. What does Rousseau mean when he says that European languages have lost most of their “musical inflections” and that **“the men of the north no more die singing than do swans”**. **The meaning is pretty obvious given what we've said so far. But it's also an interesting critique of Rameau's operas, which are artificial attempts in bombast.**
46. How is Rousseau a precursor of symbolic interactionism? **Rousseau is interested in the way humans use ‘signs’ to convey meanings and to play roles, like that of the honest friend and the good citizen. Sounds themselves are less important than the ‘meanings’ that we attribute to them. We need to distinguish between “exclusively sensory impressions and the intellectual and moral impressions which we receive by way of the senses but of which the senses are merely the occasional cause; let him (the philosopher) avoid the error of attributing to sensible objects a power which they either lack or derive from the affections of the soul which they represent to us.” It is the group mind that decides meaning. And different groups will certainly have different symbols and sounds for conveying those meanings. Rousseau, of course, differs from the symbolic interactionists in having a clear sense of the general shape that emotionally significant signs will take.**
47. What does Rousseau have to say about Condorcet or Condillac's materialist philosophy? **He says that it “deprives the human sentiments of all morality”.**

ROUSSEAU IS A MORALIST AND HE IS AFFRONTED BY MATERIALISTIC PHILOSOPHY'S NEUTRALIZATION OF HUMAN AGENCY. Rousseau has no time for this or other intellectual productions of the SYSTEMIZING SPIRIT.

48. Why are REASON's analogies inappropriate and not to the point when it comes to moral issues? **Morality is based on feeling not reason. Reason can deal only with 'relationships' and has nothing to say about 'fundamentals'. Reason may give you instrumental properties but it doesn't have anything to offer when it comes to emotional sensations. When reason tries to explain these attributes of human nature, it typically ends up by absorbing or appropriating them to fit its own very limited paradigm. Reason ends up treating "living beings" as just so many other objects, something that Rousseau finds abhorrent.**
49. Why will Rameau's "rational music" destroy any art? **It will be vapid because it lacks the "primitive energy" and "accents" of melody. It will, in effect, resemble "noise" rather than music and it will have a limited effect on its listeners. What do you think? Some modern classical music might resemble noise. Some might appeal to the brain rather than the emotions.**
50. I guess you figured out that Rousseau liked the Greeks, at least the Greeks at a certain stage in their history before they got too big for their britches and when their rationalizing usurped their poetry. It is the democratic Greece of small farmers meeting occasionally in the square as citizens and thriving in their patriotism that Rousseau likes. Not surprisingly he has a positive analysis of their music. Although it is almost impossible to know what Greek music sounded like, what does Rousseau tell us? **He basically tells us that we are far too corrupt to be able to understand Greek music today and he lampoons the scholars who try to reproduce it. These he says are grammarians with no appreciation for song or poetry. The CATASTROPHE for Rousseau was when Greek civilization was overthrown by barbarians who "destroyed the progress of the human spirit, without eliminating the vices that were its product." Decaying Greece may have been experiencing corruption but it still had more moral vitality than the "crude men of the North". Note here how Rousseau subscribes to certain aspects of the Enlightenment's notion of the 'dark ages' and has a decidedly neo-classical bent.**
51. What does the medieval and baroque music/singing of the English and French amount to for Rousseau? **The croaking of frogs. Do you agree? Have you heard any of it?**
52. What did singing eventually become in the West? **An exercise in harmony with long notes being stretched out without much in the way of inflection. Music theory came to be a self-contained exercise in harmonic analysis culminating in Rameau. MUSIC WAS NO LONGER THE VOICE OF HUMAN NATURE but a monstrous abstraction.**

53. Speech was not only separated from music but also suffered in its own right by having its song or the melodic line deveined. Thus the lifeblood of both music and speech suffered according to Rousseau. Language was not more about convincing than persuading or moving among. The language directed at the multitude took a number of undemocratic forms. What one in particular does Rousseau deride? **Sermons. A worthless bellowing from the pulpit. Sermons, he suggests, are just the other side of ‘public force’ – there is really nothing to try to persuade people of any more since there is nothing that they are allowed to do in an age of “public force”. To the extent that sermons try to move and persuade, they are just a pale imitation of democratic converse. The only one that works up a sweat is the preacher.**
54. How does Rousseau characterize the modern politics that mirror the debasement of language? **It is a society where private interest has usurped the public; people are divided and conquered; ‘subjects’ no longer count; the only ‘objects’ that mean anything are “arms and cash”; there is nothing to say to the people because they have no liberty.**
55. Why is the language of modern politics a sham for Rousseau? **It is a language that it is not possible to “make oneself understood by the people”. As such it is a “servile language”. No one can be free that speaks that language.**
56. Rousseau clearly feels that modern society is corrupt. He sometimes appears to wash his hands of it. He certainly doesn’t think we can go back to ancient Greece. He’s an unhappy guy insofar as even the talents that he has developed could be seen as part of the problem rather than part of the solution. In other writings, of course, he shows some ability to temper this universal criticism and to point to ways to overcome the lack of liberty in modern society. But his solutions are applicable most clearly to small-scale societies at a precise stage of development. He himself suggests that he’s not responsible for being born in the age that he was and that he cannot be blamed for exercising the talents of writing that he fell in love with as a younger man. His moral writings, he suggests, will not be socially applicable but may help some individuals maintain their own integrity in the midst of corruption. **One of his most interesting pieces of advice for people like us – specialists in the arts and sciences in a corrupt age – is to be aware of the corrupting tendencies of our age. He advises people to 1) be aware that the dynamic of modern knowledge is not truth but domination, 2) control oneself from seeking praise for talents that either one was born with or that are Rameau’s nephews ‘tricks of the trade’, 3) understand the seductive power of a corrupt society where appearance is more important than substance, 4) speak with a broken voice whatever truths one can without fear, 4) police your own ego rigorously and continuously. For anyone who thinks that academe and virtue are complementary, Rousseau hopes that you will have a rude awakening and come to your senses!**

OF GRAMMATOLOGY

Some Questions on Derrida and Rousseau in General

1. Is there a reason why Derrida wants to focus so much on the **deep structure** of Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*? **For Derrida, this is the western text that exposes – while still adhering to – the fundamental problem of western metaphysics (and by implication western patterns of thinking). Its characteristic movement is to communicate (and also to distinguish and decide) by forcing language (and therefore thought) into binary and mutually exclusive categories or oppositions such as:**

**Presence/absence
Subject/object
Subjectivity/objectivity
Nature/nurture
Good/evil
Self/other
Origin/supplement
Life-love/death
Need/passion
Truth/falsehood
Reason/irrationality**

2. What is the characteristic tool that Western metaphysics uses to construct **decidability** and how does Rousseau **expose** its artificiality for Derrida? **The tool, of course, is reason and Rousseau more than anyone else attempts to illuminate: 1) its narrowness and 'artificiality' in terms of explaining what is intrinsically human, and 2) its functioning as a 'dangerous supplement', especially in the form of writing.**
3. What do Rousseau's discussions of **pity, sexuality and song** all have in common for Derrida? **They show how difficult it is to posit an 'authentic' human nature apart from the creative manipulation of 'signs'. This is true of the pre-social 'state of nature' as well as some relatively pure state of society.**
4. What, for example, does the concept of the **self** depend upon for Derrida? **It requires a notion of the 'other' and a reflexive comparison. In other words, without the 'other' there can be no concept of the self.**
5. What, for example, does the concept of **presence** depend upon for Derrida? **To have an idea of 'presence', you need to have an 'absence' that you can compare 'presence' to. Presence and absence, therefore, ultimately should not be viewed as binary opposites but as signposts that identify one another.**

6. What implications does this have for the concept of **origin** in Rousseau's *Essay* as far as Derrida is concerned? **Just as there can be no pure 'presence' apart from a system of 'signs', so too there can be no pure 'origin'.**
7. What does the notion of **origin** depend upon? **It depends upon the notion of 'supplement'?**
8. Why is Rousseau's *Essay* so very revealing for Mr. Derrida? **1) Rousseau's language constantly points to the predicament of the 'supplement', 2) his convolutions in attempting to distinguish between moral and immoral supplements illuminates the impossibility of the task, and 3) his 'disquiet' throughout this attempt that he appears to consider so very important reveals the impotence of western thought whenever it confronts its own 'boundaries'.**
9. What do Rousseau's investigations into human nature (pity, sexuality, song) all reveal about the nature of human understanding for Derrida? **You might think that Derrida views these as 'social' constructions, but then you would be putting too much emphasis on 'society' – in effect confusing a complex symbol presuming a host of binaries for a thing. It would be much closer to Derrida to say that all of these so called 'natural' investigations reveal the constructive role 'played' by the 'imagination' or the 'psyche'. There is no escape from the imagination in the construction of what we call reality. There is no reality apart from the human imagination. What western metaphysics lauds as 'reason' and 'reality' is impossible without, and closer to 'imagining' than we might presume.**
10. Is Derrida suggesting that we dispense with **reason**? Could he possibly be going farther and **problematizing the possibility of communication**? **Not altogether, but he does want to do several quite unsettling things. First, he wants to illuminate the disorder (actual and potential) in orderly or logical communication. Second, he wants to expose the hidden assumptions of all communicative acts, especially those that would like immunity from 'interpretation'. Third, he wants to deprive texts of 'excessive' and 'authoritative' intentionality. Thus, he attacks not only the 'canon' but also the very concept of 'canonicity' itself.**
11. Does the foregoing suggest that **authorial intentionality** has no place in **critical interpretation**? **Not really, intentionality like 'context' is part of the path of critical analysis, as Derrida's exploration of the dating and structural paradoxes of Rousseau's *Essay* clearly attest. But Derrida deconstructs communication in such a way as to 'forbid' concepts like the author or the context to create artificial 'boundaries' to interpretation.**
12. Why do Derrida's writings have greater appeal to those working in literature than in philosophy or sociology? Why is there such resistance to applying Derridan

analysis in the latter? As Derrida suggests, literary criticism is used to treating the 'text as transparent' in the broadest sense. The literary text privileges 'imagination' and literary criticism cannot dispense with the fluidity and flexibility of the 'imagination'. The focus on the imagination increases the possibility of multiple meanings and multiple interpretations and re-interpretations. In philosophy, logic pretends to limit the number of meanings. In sociology, pretensions to being 'scientific' (western rationalism at its most dogmatic!) also close the text to insiders. Derrida wants there to be a possibility to 'deconstruct' all texts and sign systems.

13. What is Derrida's fundamental claim about writing in grammatology? **It is that writing always was and always will be. Furthermore, it is writing as a 'system of signs' that creates as well as conveys meaning. It is writing (again as a system of signs and symbols) that is 'entirely' responsible for such fundamental concepts as 'good' and 'evil'. Writing creates the self and society – not merely moulds some original self and society – but actually creates it. There is no escape from writing.**
14. Assuming this claim to be true (whatever that means), what is Derrida's attitude or stance towards his **systematic dismantling of systems?** You could usefully compare this to the stance of Rousseau in the *Essay*? **Rousseau desperately wants to get to some foundation for humanity that escapes the 'corruption' of a 'ratiocizing' society. All his efforts are focused on getting to a foundation that can provide a more authentic meaning. For Derrida, such authenticity is impossible and unwelcome. Derrida's agenda is to ILLUMINATE THE PLAY ELEMENT AND POSSIBILITIES FOR CHOICE.**
15. Does Derrida, therefore, have no moral agenda himself? **That's a very difficult question to answer. Derrida is notoriously difficult to pin down because he has no 'faith' in moral absolutes in a symbolic world where good and evil are conceptual constructions. But he does use deconstruction to ethical effect in exposing the way that European binaries support colonialism, imperialism and racism. Furthermore, his agenda can be construed as an OPENING UP OF COMMUNICATION to OTHERS that have been excluded by JUDGEMENTS THAT ARE AT ROOT INDEFENSIBLE.**
16. Obviously, Derrida cannot be thinking about writing as the objective system of signs that we discover, say, in letters and texts. So what is writing and why does it make no sense to talk about its **geneology** in some teleological sense? **Writing cannot be confined to scribbles on a page or symbols on a wall. It has no beginning that can be historically identified, because writing 'invents' and 'invests' everything. To the extent that human beings use their imaginations to create 'metaphors' writing has ALREADY ALWAYS BEGUN.**

17. Why is Rousseau's attempt to fundamentally distinguish between **speech and writing** an impossible task? **While it is possible to make some distinctions between societies that possess or don't possess writing in the common sense – i.e. in terms of accumulated memory and increased possibilities for technological mastery – any FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPEECH AND WRITING MUST BE ARBITRARY.** The same symbolic processes are in effect.
18. What does writing end up being for Derrida? **Something that reflects the structure of the 'psyche', the structure of the 'sign'. Writing is something that depends on PERENNIAL alterity.**
19. Thus far, we have managed to avoid mentioning two **active concepts engaged in play** that are central to Derrida's analysis. What are they? **DIFFÉRANCE and TRACE.**
20. Without limiting its flexibility, how would you define **différAnce**? Différance is a word that is neither a noun nor a verb. It is a word that can't easily be pigeonholed in the way that western culture like to pigeonhole. It suggests **conceptualizing and distinguishing** but implies **agency** (i.e. deferring) in the conceptualizing process. **It is for Derrida a 'playful' word that moves back and forth between 'signifier' and 'signified'. Whereas western culture looks for oppositions, deconstructionism plays with differences.**
21. Is there another special meaning in the way the word is accented? **Yes indeedly. Derrida argues that all western culture, despite its dependence on the 'text', privileges the 'voice'. The real presence, for example, is the author; the text is a way of conveying authorial intention; objects are real, symbols are 'imitations' of real objects, etc. But here is a word, WHOSE MEANING IS ONLY ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WRITING. When spoken, it ends up 'sounding' like the French word 'différEnce'.**
22. Is Derrida simply playing a nonsensical game with this use of **différance**? **It is a game, but it is a very serious game, designed to shake us out of our FIXED HABIT of trying to label, classify and pigeonhole knowledge.**
23. How exactly is **différAnce** activated in Derrida's own writing? **It seeks to explore and follow all kinds of developments (description, analysis, argument, synthesis) in all kinds of writing without 'buying into' the binary distinctions that creep into all western texts. Derrida refers to it as a KIND OF EMPIRICIST EXPLORATION but one that does away with the SUBJECT-OBJECT DISTINCTION (difference) that western metaphysics has made second nature. With respect to Rousseau's *Essay*, Derrida analyses Rousseau's geneology of the SUPPLEMENT as a way of demonstrating his false distinction between 'primitive needs' and 'false desires'. He further shows how Rousseau cannot maintain hard distinctions**

because there must always be an **IMPOSSIBLE EQUILIBRIUM** between them if these ‘differences’ are to have any meaning.

24. How can the concept of the **trace** clarify this **impossible equilibrium** further? **Presence is a fundamental concept in western thought. The speaker is present. But presence is not the ‘essence’ that it wants to pretend to be (especially in philosophical concepts like ‘being’). Presence can only be defined by ‘absence’. It is not an object that can be seen; it is a relationship. It is a relationship defined by the GAP or DELAY between presence and absence. The TRACE is the play of presence and absence. It is insubstantial, like a shadow, but without the TRACE meaning is impossible.**
25. Is there another way to use the concept of **trace** to develop Derridan analysis? **Yes, whenever you see a ‘sign’, you cannot take it as “a homogenous unit bridging an origin (referent) and an end (meaning), as semiology, the study of signs would have it.” Every sign contains a trace of ANOTHER SIGN WHICH NEVER APPEARS AS SUCH. Grammatology is the study of writing whose seemingly systematic structure is “already inhabited by the trace.”**
26. Trace also resonates in the sense that the study of human writing (in the broadest sense) is a never-ending **series of sign chains**. In order to understand writing, you have to both understand its structure (perpetual alterity) and its chain of signs that constantly **refer** and **defer** to other chains. What is the net result of this understanding of Derrida’s? **Texts are opened up. Texts are unscrambled. There are many more conceivable avenues of ‘deciphering’. For example, you look at what WRITERS DO NOT SAY as well as what they DO SAY.**
27. Why can there be no **sovereign writer/author** under Derrida’s critical regime? **The answer should be obvious, but you won’t really understand Derrida unless you also realize that there CANNOT BE ANY SOVEREIGN SELF either. All of us inhabit the symbolic domain of writing – we cannot stand apart from it – we can only play within it.**
28. Derrida is always taking about the **economy of writing**. In that particular economy or system (of alterity rather than binary opposites) there are many ways of tapping into **reserves of energy** to temporarily fix **identity** and stimulate **action**. At the same time, Derrida seems to think that there are two fundamental human drives that inhabit the economy of writing? What are two basic poles of this economy? **Derrida, via Rousseau, pays a lot of attention to two drives or instincts – eros and the death instinct. They define one another. Do you have any problem with Derrida constructing these two poles as fundamental? Is there a sense in which he is too close to people like Freud or Nietzsche rather than a player in the symbolic world of chance?**

29. What does Derrida mean by **effacing signs or putting them under erasure**? It is his way of saying that signs that attempt to fix conceptual understanding need to be **effaced** or noted as such. They ignore the **trace**. Why is **science a particular candidate for effacement**? **Western metaphysics already hides from the trace in its search for origins and an authentic presence**. Western science arguably goes further in fixing reality and denying the claims of the imagination.

Questions on “Nature, Culture, Writing” or Part II of Grammatology where the author encounters and confronts Rousseau.

i. The Violence of the Letter

1. What is the problem with western philosophical texts for Derrida? **They are part of an historical attempt to construct unity and establish closure. They ‘violently’ exclude possibilities that Derrida wants to open up with a new methodology.**
2. Why is the genealogy of a text impossible to pin down *prima facie*? **Texts are a series of roots. They inhabit different historical periods and are subject to different interpretations. They build on other texts. They contain assumptions about author-subject-audience that are untenable upon closer observation.**
3. Why are the texts of the eighteenth-century particularly problematic for Derrida (and Rousseau for that matter)? **They attempt to FIX binary relationships between NATURE and CULTURE that he wants to undermine**
4. What is **bricolage** and what’s its significance for Derrida? **Bricolage is a kind of building or construction with whatever is at hand. Western writing building as it does on Greek metaphysics often resembles this kind of ‘bricolage’.**
5. Why is Derrida interested in Lévi-Strauss? **Partly because Lévi-Strauss is a ‘modern’ disciple of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose work Derrida is primarily interested in, and because he turns what is a ‘problem’ in Rousseau to problematic conclusions. In effect, he, rather than Rousseau, crystallizes the concept of the noble savage. The noble savage serves an ethical purpose in Rousseau. It becomes a construct of anthropological science in Lévi-Strauss.**
6. What does Lévi-Strauss’s **confrontation** with tribal ‘savages’ represent for Derrida? **The violent imposition of western and binary categories of understanding on the ‘other’. These are modes of signification that close the door to ‘real communication’ between cultures.**
7. How does Lévi-Strauss impose his categories on the people that he is studying? **He projects an age of innocence prior to the *teche* of writing. He assumes an age of innocence that will be corrupted. But he also categories his subjects as ‘children’ in the history of the human race.**

8. What fundamental error does Lévi-Strauss make by **differentiating speaking from writing** among his subjects? **He fails to appreciate that most of the problems that he associates with writing – and the fundamental categories of good and evil – are already present in the society in which he is a participant observer. The distinction between writing and speaking that he explores in “The Writing Lesson” makes him prejudge behaviours in ways that are unwarranted. What is even more serious they reflect an ethnocentric bias. The fact that this ethnocentricity is parading as anti-ethnocentricity should not put us off the scent.**
9. Why is Lévi-Strauss’s **scorn for writing** really an ethnocentric bias? **It is the desire of someone from a ‘servile culture of writing’ dreaming of the lost ‘plenitude’ of ‘presence’ supposedly characterized by speech. It is a European problem masked as celebration of the Nambicawara. It is the ‘a priori’ imposition of western categories on a non-western people.**
10. Why is the taboo around **naming** anything but what Lévi-Strauss thinks it is -- i.e. a symbol of innocence? **Because the taboo already assumes a system of classification, of naming, within a system of writing (that does not need to be written). Lévi-Strauss commits a further act of ethnocentrism by presuming that writing is such a ‘determining’ system.**
11. The violence that Lévi-Strauss attributes to the written word, therefore, is already there. Naming has a place in a classificatory system. What word does Derrida use to describe the system of writing without actual written texts? **Arche-writing, which implies that some innocent self-presence prior to naming can “only be dreamed of” and the so-called “split” between pure and impure has already occurred. Indeed, it has always occurred.**
12. What tradition does a significant amount of eighteenth-century writing take from Rousseau to Lévi-Strauss that Derrida wants to point to as interesting? **Confessional writing. The anthropologist is using his subjects as a way of confessing his own remorse for a loss of supposed innocence. It is all about him not the society. Rousseau was more authentic in his confessions because he admits that his anthropology is a ‘confessional’ document.**
13. How is confessional anthropology simultaneously a **teleology**? **Because it is about a good ‘nature’ or innocence that has been lost, its other side is a ‘dream’ of paradise regained. With Rousseau the attempt to obtain perfection, to redeem mankind, is always a subtext. This, if nothing else, puts him in the tradition of the eighteenth century? But in Rousseau’s case, there is this inversion – civilization is what has taken us out of the garden of Eden and we cannot go back. We must, therefore, seek a different route.**

14. Much of western thought from the eighteenth-century is characterized by a search for a lost innocence or **unity with nature**. This often takes the form of a proposed **difference** between **empirical reality and essence**. How is this distinction between 'empirical' and 'essential' reflected in Lévi-Strauss's comments on the negative qualities of the Nambiwara? **He supposes that any of their bad behaviours should be attributed to corruption from 'without', specifically civilization and its writing.**
15. This is why writing must be seen as an act of violence from without, as a sharp break or **discontinuity**. But such a proposition is, for all its apparent sympathy with the victims of this violence, **an ethnocentric posture**. Why? **Because it perpetuates a difference between writing and non-writing cultures. Writing is by nature a violent activity practiced by cultures that are violent. Writing by nature 'excludes' other cultures as below or outside it.**
16. Why does Derrida find this theory of a sharp break ridiculous? **It couldn't possibly describe any historical development of writing because it must have been "laborious, progress, and differentiated in its stages."**
17. What does Derrida say about violence and the **arche writing** that is its real locus? **He suggests that writing (broadly understood) is violent. He argues that writing cannot be "thought of outside of intersubjective violence". There never has been a golden age WHERE KNOWLEDGE WAS SEPARATED FROM POWER.**
18. Where is the ethnocentrism of a phonetic writing culture displayed most clearly? **It is displayed in the translation of concepts of small-scale or other societies into domestic equivalents. The world of the 'other' is absorbed into the words and constructions of the writing culture, rather than discussed on equal terms. The "mechanisms of ethnocentrism" are "assimilation/exclusion".**
19. Does an understanding of writing (broadly conceived) as an axis of power undermine all claims to the search for truth? **One might think so, but Derrida has a more subtle and interesting answer. The SEARCH FOR TRUTH CAN STILL BE MAINTAINED, BUT IT MUST RELINQUISH ITS CLAIMS TO A SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE. TRUTH CAN NEVER BE SOMETHING 'FIXED' OR 'INFINITELY TRANSMISIBLE' (EVEN THEORETICALLY). BUT THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH (WITHOUT CLOSURE) REMAINS A LEGITIMATE MISSION OF THE HUMANITIES.**
20. What problem does Derrida have with those who, like Adorno or Levi-Strauss want to view the development of Western culture exclusively in terms of violence, exploitation and domination? Bear in mind that Derrida has problems with Western metaphysics but his analysis of arche-writing doesn't allow him to reduce Western civilization to negative traits that are themselves *essentialist*. **Derrida points out that it is difficult to separate things like political domination from political authority, mental enslavement from liberation. He punctuates this point by**

showing how the Rousseau of *The Social Contract* would have shuddered to read his disciple, Levi-Strauss's, treatment of law.

21. Derrida goes on to highlight the convolutions of the anthropologist seeking some ever disappearing essence in a small face-to-face Rousseauian community where social communication is conducted through **authentic speech rather than artificial and corrupting writing**. What he (Levi-Strauss) ends up doing is constructing a fictitious notion of **community that must always be being corrupted even if it still contains elements of an original innocence**. Even more problematic, the anthropologist must conduct his exercise as a form of **bricolage building his analysis from the materials at hand (language is already 'there')** into a model that is **ESSENTIALLY THEOLOGICAL**. The anthropologist's knowledge is a **patchwork quilt rather than anything that gets at some pure essence**.
22. Derrida is absolutely brilliant at showing how writers practice this thing called **bricolage and how it obscures/hides binaries that have something like a theological status**. But Derrida also has something interesting to say about bricolage, doesn't he? He suggests that **all writing must in a sense be bricolage; we need to work in a world of symbols that is already there and are the tools that we must construct with**. But Derrida insists that **some forms of bricolage are better than others**. Not all bricolage is equally worthwhile; "some bricolage criticizes itself."
23. How, for example, would Derrida **redeem a concept like 'social authenticity'**? The term is ethically significant, even necessary, but **only if gives up dreams of a pure world of presence**. It needs to "master the delusion of presence" if it is to have any real validity. It needs to be a "strategy" – what Derrida calls a "lure" – rather than a morality that masks itself as essence. **Morality is called into play by arche-writing**. Morality and immorality – good and evil – are inventions of writing. They depend on each other. Clinging to them as binaries simply will not serve. The absolute good that writers from Plato to Rousseau are seeking does not exist. It certainly is not to be discovered in the range of some communal voice. It cannot be found in some "illusion of full and present speech".

ii. "That Dangerous Supplement"

1. Derrida constantly want to say that Rousseau is engaged in a certain kind of assertion about *speech*. What is it? **Rousseau is moralizing**. He is not so much interested in speech as it actually was historically but in speech as it **should have been**. He is identifying, longing for, *presence*. But Derrida wants to tell us that the loss of presence (death) is a power that inhabits the very heart of "living speech" and that Rousseau has no justification in separating speech from writing, at least not in the way that he proposes, i.e. presence – absence, good –evil. Rousseau's envisioned 'dispossession' of speech is "speculatory".

2. How is Rousseau's activity as a writer reflective of the problem that he has in putting writing at the axis of evil? **Rousseau himself not only needs to substitute writing for speech (which is interesting) but the only way that he can make a distinction between being present and self-awareness is through the act of writing. Writing allows for the "symbolic reappropriation of presence" just as "death inaugurates life".**
3. What does Derrida want to call this opposition of *presence* and *absence*? **For Derrida, it is an economy of différance that cannot be captured by the classical concepts governing metaphysics that differentiate presence from absence and, ultimately, truth from appearance. Hence the play of différance that allows the "desire for presence" its "breathing space".**
4. What does Derrida say about Heidegger's emphasis on **being**? **That it is still trapped in the fallacy of Western metaphysics. To have a "sense of being", you need to have a binary system. But before you have that binary system, you need the "active moment" of différance that makes it possible.**
5. What word characterizes all Rousseau's explorations of the development of writing and why does Derrida think it points to a major problem, not only in Rousseau but western metaphysics? **The word is 'supplement'. Rousseau is constantly describing a process of supplementarity that takes us away from presence. The problem is that he has enormous difficulty in discovering an original point from which the supplement begins. The origin clearly takes the shape of an 'ought' rather than an 'was'. What Rousseau can't grasp is that supplementarity always was, is and will be. There is no return to an original garden of Eden.**
6. Presence, for Rousseau, *ought to be self-sufficient*, but Derrida suggests Rousseau's system contradicts that *ought to be*. Why? **Because it is inherently and inescapably a 'system of supplementarity' in which sexual attraction, society, and education substitute for nature. If Rousseau's presence was really self-sufficient, could it be replacable? Could any 'cultivation' (even according to nature) be anything but a deviation?**
7. What is cultivation in Rousseau's system of supplementarity for Derrida? **It is the provision of providing for something that is "lacking".** What is Rousseau's ideal type (as opposed to ideal) of this lack? **Childhood, where it is necessary to remedy inherent 'weakness' and a nature that is 'unruly'.** What is the initial agenda of speaking for Rousseau's child? **It is to meet one's needs – moving the world with the tongue.** What kind of problem is this going to give rise to in Rousseau's system? **A difficulty in establishing speech as originally an organ of need or an organ of passion.**
8. How does Rousseau's concept of **Nature** problematize his analysis of origins and reinforce Derrida's point that Rousseau is creating a **system of supplementarity**? **Rousseau's concept of Nature is itself a supplement or a way of fixing what is**

lacking in a cultivated society. Nature is not independent of society, its language, or its writing. All of this relates back to Derrida's concept of différance.

9. What is interesting about Rousseau and western metaphysics' attitude towards a supplementarity that 'plays' on 'différance'. **They cannot tolerate the supplement. Western rationalism wants to obliterate supplementarity. It views supplementarity or the play of opposing forces as an insult to Reason and some objective Nature. It is dangerous. For Rousseau, it is a 'catastrophe'.**
10. What is Derrida's approach to Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages* and what can this tell us about his methodology of deconstruction? **He wants to read it as a *text* rather than as a *document* (with a context and an author) in order to "draw out a signification" (at a deep level) that evidences the text's "economy" or the way it "regulates" itself. This approach is not meant to "fix" meaning, but only to highlight a "functioning" that is "indispensable" to the texts internal "movement". Derrida is going to illuminate the way in which the word "supplement" simultaneously governs and undermines Rousseau's argument. He is going to show how Rousseau contradicts or critiques himself. By implication, he is going to show how Western metaphysics undermines itself, or is "blind to" its own operations.**
11. Why is the author Rousseau not really very important in the long run, despite the fact that Derrida obviously thinks of Rousseau's approach as highly original? **Because supplementarity is neither new nor original. It characterizes western thinking.**
12. Why is *auto-eroticism* (masturbation) a key to understanding Rousseau and western thinking? **Masturbation is a supplement to mother love that draws on the imagination to embrace pleasure. But that pleasure is always viewed as a loss of real maternal presence and vitality. It is a potentially 'fatal' separation from Nature – "the presence of the thing and the duration of being". But it is also 1) an indispensable 'sign' of the 'self' – the separation of myself and the "distinction" of myself and 2) a discrimination of Nature and the mother, who could not be perceived without separation. The "moment" the mother disappears, "substitution becomes possible and necessary". The "play" of maternal "presence or absence" begins.**
13. What can't Rousseau understand about this separation that is so important to Derrida? **He can't understand that this "alteration" or painful "absence" is not just something that happens to him, IT INVENTS HIM, it is the "self's very origin".**
14. What is the role of language with respect to presence? **It is only through language that we can understand presence. Without language there is no "restitution" of a "presence" that never existed prior to language. A pure presence is an "illusion" that only comes to us through "the sign, the image, the representation". What 'sidetracks' us to this "chimera" is our inability to see**

that what language makes ‘present’ to us it must also **ABSOLUTELY DEFER**. In order to have presence, objects, and relative origins, we must understand that there is no pure presence, reality, origin.

15. Is Derrida suggesting that reason is meaningless? Is he advocating irrationalism? **Not at all. The ‘system of the supplement’ should not be given up. But it must be understood that rationalism depends on a ‘process’ of supplementarity that is always a given. Moreover, this supplementarity (relative distancing and mastering of signs) is BASIC, IT INHABITS THE SPOKEN WORD ALWAYS, IT IS NOT A FUNCTION OF THE SO-CALLED ARTIFICIALITY OF WRITING. THE MINUTE WE USE A “SYSTEM OF SIGNS” WE INHABIT A “PLAY OF DIFFERENCES”. THERE IS NO FRONTIER BETWEEN ‘NATURE’ AND ‘CIVILIZATION’ BUT ONLY AN “ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION”.**
16. How does Rousseau’s *Therese* illuminate Rousseau’s dependence on supplementarity? **Therese presupposes a ‘system of supplementarity’ in general. She is a substitute for masterbation, which is a supplement for intercourse, which is a substitute for “Mamma” which is a substitute for an unknown mother, which is a substitute for Nature, which can only be conceived within a system that objectifies substitutions. The “play of substitutions” extends “to infinity”. The “real mother” has never existed. And WITHOUT THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ANY PRESUMED NATURAL PRESENCE (Death, at least of the self) MEANING WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.**
17. What is meant by saying that absolute presence means death? **Since there can be no concept of ‘self’ without presence and absence operating as différance, if one could achieve presence, it would effectively mean the death of the self.**
18. Rousseau clearly has sexual obsessions. Then why is any attempt to understand Rousseau through psychoanalysis “banal” and “naïve” for Derrida? **One can’t begin to understand Rousseau’s symptoms until one has appreciated the “tissue of the symptom”. Any psychological reading of Rousseau puts the author ‘outside of the text’ whereas any deep reading makes it virtually impossible to separate Rousseau from the text, the signified from the signifier. This does not mean that the text is not “historically articulated”, but if we are serious about history then we need to appreciate the DEEP HISTORY OF THE TEXT OR THE ENCOMPASSING POWER OF LANGUAGE TO WHICH THE AUTHOR IS SUBJECT. “THE PERSON WRITING IS INSCRIBED IN A DETERMINED TEXTUAL SYSTEM.”**
19. Why is psychoanalysis a problem for Derrida? **It fails to locate its own identity in the “already-thereness of the language or that of culture”. It pretends to be able to explain that of which it is already a part.**

20. What is Derrida's "exorbitant" choice of theoretical analysis and how does he defend it? **He wants to examine the presuppositions of western logocentrism at its heart to tease out and problematize its "accepted oppositions". His approach is "empirical" but without any belief in a separation of subjects and objects. Therefore, it seeks to explore from within the 'closed' system of signification itself. ALL TRACES OF MEANING NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD WITHIN A SYSTEM OF TRACES THAT CAN NEVER BE TRACKED TO GROUND.**
21. Why focus on Rousseau in this exorbitant investigation of the "structural necessity of the abyss"? **Rousseau (not Jean-Jacques the person) is a "decisive" and "revealing" "articulation of the logocentric epoch". He reveals the "BLIND SPOT" in Western metaphysics.**

iii Genesis and Structure of the Essay on the Origin of Languages

1. What is Rousseau's agenda in the *Essay* for Derrida? **Rousseau wants to identify a 'dangerous supplement' (i.e. writing) in order to establish a "reserve" of vitality that is life empowering rather than corrupting. He wants to affirm the self-presence of 'speech' over writing by describing its 'origin'. He seeks in part to escape the tyranny of supplementarity while staying inside the structure of supplementarity. He intends to do this by making a sharp and decisive break between good and evil supplementarity.**
2. What is the irony of the concept of the origin for Derrida? **The concept of the origin is the "myth of addition" that "annuls supplementarity" by TRACING it backwards. It incorrectly assumes that you can EFFACE THE TRACE. However, the TRACE 1) DOES NOT EXIST, and 2) CAN NEVER DISAPPEAR IF THE PLAY OF DIFFÉRENCE IS GOING TO DO ITS WORK.**
3. Derrida uses the word **matrix** to describe the self-closure of this symbolic economy. What does the concept of a matrix imply? **It implies that there is no exteriority.**
4. What exteriority is Rousseau in particular trying to derive from his distinction between speech and writing? **He is trying to establish and privilege a 'political' exteriority of "liberty and non-liberty". Liberty is associated with speech while servitude is associated with writing. Speech cannot for Rousseau be "dispossessed" of liberty because it an activity of the real self in presence rather than an appendage of an artificial world dominated by written symbols. Rousseau associates the quintessentially eighteenth-century obsession with the degradation of politics with the degradation of language. An artificial 'society' has corrupted a 'natural community' by separating the sign from the signifier.**
5. What is the site of this artificial separation of sign from signifier for Rousseau? **The usurpation of natural pronunciation for precise rules of grammar. This takes ('rips' – think "catastrophe") the 'accent' out of speech.**

6. What do natural ‘accents’ represent for Rousseau? **They represent the ‘passions’ rather than the ‘needs’. The two passions that Rousseau wants to explore are ‘pity or compassion’ or ‘sexual passion’. Writing, for Rousseau, lacks pity or passion. It is characterized by rules, regulations, abstractions that are increasingly ‘fixed’ rather than reflections of authenticity.**
7. Compassion plays a huge role in Rousseau’s interpretation of human nature. Rousseau views compassion, as opposed to love, as an emotion evident in the state of nature. What does Derrida have to say about compassion? **Derrida argues that pity is “always already” supplementary. Its function in Rousseau’s system is to “take the place of” and “remedy the lack” in institutional laws. It is already a supplement to “self-love” in the state of nature. It “defers” self-love and builds up a “reserve” that contributes to species life. Moreover, “nature” itself is a supplement. For example, it a supplement to an already given institutional life – the GENTLE VOICE as opposed to the AUTHORITATIVE VOICE.**
8. How is the “amorous passion” clearly a supplement even with respect to Rousseau’s own system? **As Rousseau himself suggests, the “amorous passion” is not natural. “It is a product of history and society.” Moreover, it is a “perversion of pity” since it attaches the self to another self rather than to the species. Rousseau views this essentially as the domination of men by women (a “denaturalization”)that needs to be countered by yet another supplementary form of education and authority in which women are trained to be ‘submissive’ to men. Culture is controlled by culture. Sign is modified by supplement.**
9. Leaving aside Rousseau’s highly gendered analysis, what can love or the “amorous passion” tell us about the role of reason and imagination in Rousseau’s schema? **Love’s development is related to ‘passion’ rather than ‘need’. Rousseau is attempting to set up “two series” – one related to need, instrumentality and reason, the other to passion, imagination and speech. The first speaks to the control of nature, including the domination of man by man. The latter series is the only one that speaks to man’s humanity and the only one capable of leading to political liberty and perfectability. Thus, one can work through the supplementary dangers of love and turn that passion to good account.**
10. Rousseau suggests that the key to actualizing human potentiality – essentially waking the natural potential in compassion – is through the **imagination**. In small-scale (hut) societies, the “reserve” potential in compassion is actually very limited. It can only flourish when man’s identification with his fellows is attenuated through the admittedly more artificial “amorous passion” that opens up the mind of the adolescent (i.e. Emile) to his fellows. Desire awakens sleeping sociability. It **stimulates the imagination**. What’s the problem with that? **By destroying the primitive equation between desire and the imagination, the EMANCIPATION OF IMAGINATION allows for TRANSGRESSION against NATURE AND ITS RESERVE OF VITALITY. At the same time, perfectable humanity is delineated by this possibility.**

11. Derrida thinks that Rousseau is wrestling with some classic issues, including death, in a characteristically original way. In some ways, Rousseau is even unsettling classical logic by illuminating the significance of the imaginative use of ‘signs’. If we ‘buy into’ Rousseau’s world view, we might miss out on what is really interesting in his turn from the “pure auto-affection” of childhood and the primitive to paradise regained in the auto-affection of man in society. What does Rousseau’s emphasis on the imagination and its potential make him **blind** to for Derrida? **Rousseau is blind to the fact that he and other proponents of perfectability in the eighteenth-century (and after) are SUBSTITUTING AN EVOLUTIONARY ‘DYNAMIC’ FOR WHAT IS, IN EFFECT, A PLAY OF TRACES. ROUSSEAU, OF COURSE, IS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO RE-WELD A ‘BREAK’ OR ‘CATASTROPHE’ TO ESCAPE THE ‘LACK’ THAT HE PERCEIVES IN THE TRACES OF SUPPLEMENTARITY. ROUSSEAU IS ENGAGED IN A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO END SUPPLEMENTARITY FROM WITHIN THE MOVEMENT OF SUPPLEMENTARITY.**
12. How does Derrida describe Rousseau’s attempt to escape the play of supplements? **He says that Rousseau is attempting to “neutralize oppositions by erasing them; and he erases them by affirming contradictory values at the same time.”**
13. How is Rousseau’s treatment of **pity** or compassion a good example of his **paradoxical approach**? **Rousseau suggests that pity is natural to man in the state of nature and that pity is foundational for morality. However, pity in the state of nature is not synonymous with morality because we don’t really “get outside ourselves”. The way we know pity as a “reserve” and as an agent of perfectibility is when we enter into a social union and experience the suffering of others THROUGH THE COMPARATIVE IMAGINATION. This opens up a “certain non-presence in presence”. PITY AS MORALITY IS “CONTEMPORARY WITH SPEECH AND REPRESENTATION”.**
14. How does this insight into Rousseau’s “procedure” correct a great deal of scholarship into Rousseau? **There is a debate as to whether the *Essay* contradicts the *Second Discourse* where pity in the state of nature is affirmed. By showing how Rousseau wants to talk about pity as a non-moral reserve (in the state of nature) and as a fundamental basis of humanity (in the social state), Derrida is able to show that there is no fundamental contradiction between the texts. THIS, OF COURSE, INVOLVES A DEGREE OF FAIRLY CONVENTIONAL SCHOLARSHIP THAT DERRIDA WOULD ESCHEW LATER. BUT THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT HE IS INDICATING HOW THOSE WHO WANT TO DISCUSS MORE SECONDARY (AUTHORIAL AND CONTEXTUAL) PROBLEMS IN TEXTS REALLY CAN’T DO THIS PROPERLY UNLESS THEY UNDERSTAND A TEXT’S DEEPER STRUCTURE.**

15. How does the DEEP STRUCTURE of the essay reflect its ARCHITECTURE? **Despite the fact that the *Essay* may appear to be about music, its unified intention lies elsewhere. The essay is about language and only peripherally about music. Rousseau's message is that there is "no music before language" and that language is born with the "social passions". Music is important, only to the extent that it reflects the accents of living speech. Music is only music to the extent that it maintains those accents in the form of melody.**
16. What is Rousseau saying about speech and music in the state of nature (if there is/was such a state)? **Rousseau believes that neither exists in the state of nature. Speech is musical because it 'signs' the passions of a more developed society. SPEECH ORIGINATES BY IMITATING THE SOCIAL PASSIONS. Those passions are speech's IDEAL LIMITS.**
17. The birth of society is the birth of speech, which is inseparable from song. But society is simultaneously the genesis of good and evil. Society frees the imagination that allows for **transgression and separation**. Rousseau's discourse attempts to crystallize a moment in time that could not possibly even be conceived without a previously perceived separation of speech and song. What does Derrida have to say about this procedure? **Derrida argues that this 'severing' or 'degeneration' cannot have had any prehistory but must have "always already begun". It follows the law of the supplement.**
18. How has the SUPPOSED EVOLUTION that we now know cannot have happened taken a parallel course in MUSIC and LANGUAGE? **Music had degenerated into the abstraction that is HARMONY. Language has been fixed by calculation and grammatically. Both involve a loss of energy and a substitution. Neither modern music nor writing are neutral, but are evil. They usurped the natural function that is nonetheless social ("the twofold voice of nature"). Whereas it is possible to discover the traits of nature (released by the socially informed imagination) in melodic music and early speech, there is nothing of nature in the "slow growth of the disease of language".**
19. What is interesting about this EVIL for Derrida? **Derrida suggests that this is not an evil that occurs in any recognizable time and space that includes "disease and death in general". Rousseau "wishes" to find an outside to what he perceives as evil. He "chooses" to ignore the fact that the inflections and accents of language "always already" lend themselves to "spatialization, geometricization, grammaticalization, regularization, prescription: or to reason." He wants to posit an ethical rather than an historical "catastrophe".**
20. How is theatre complicit in this EVIL for Rousseau? **Rousseau suggests that the theatre transformed the imitation of the passions in speech, song and gesture into a set of artificial rules. All imitation took the form of routinization thereafter. This is not simply 'imitation' which Rousseau cannot avoid but SUPPLEMENTARY ACCELERATION IN THE FORM OF A LAW OF**

GEOMETRIC REGRESSION. It means the substitution of servitude for freedom, articulation over accentuation, the consonant over the vowel, the northern states over the southern, the capital over the province.

21. What is the irony of this GEOMETRIC REGRESSION? **It illuminates the truth and virtue of the “preceeding circle” or more virtuous society. IT EFFECTIVELY CREATES THAT TRUTH.**
22. How does Rousseau try to undermine the classical notion of PROGRESS? **He shows us how progress is taking away our humanity and “taking us closer to animality”. But, in reality, this is just an INVERSION of ENLIGHTENMENT RATIONALITY. Progress implies regression and the status of this binary is undermined by Rousseau’s own logic of the ‘supplement’.**
23. What is the problem for Derrida of Rousseau’s attempt to separate “beneficial imitation” from “dangerous supplementarity”? **It presumes that the representer can separate himself/herself from the represented. It also presumes that “imitation” is a simple act of mimesis rather than a ‘supplement’ that contains within itself the seeds of good and evil.**
24. How does Derrida’s understanding of the problem that Rousseau faces in distinguishing a supplementarity that is o.k. from one that is dangerous inform his reading of *Emile*? **If you see this problem as informing the deep structure of all of Rousseau’s work, it illuminates the problem in education Emile. On the one hand, you can only teach him by “example and good imitation”; at the same time, the love of imitating in society can easily become a vice or EVIL. Without imitation, we would never get outside of ourselves, but imitation contains its own seeds of corruption.**
25. What is the parallel between imitation and signs for Rousseau? **Social man, at least in his ethical and aesthetic relations, is affected “not by things but by signs” but signs establish a “system of differences” in which the forces of life and death both operate. In fact, sign systems give birth to both forces, which, in turn, depend on one another.**
26. Why does Derrida think that Rousseau’s critique of western philosophy – having KILLED SONG – cannot be construed as RADICAL? **It inhabits and cannot escape from the same conceptual framework as western metaphysics.**
27. Derrida makes a great deal of Rousseau’s discussion of the MELODIC LINE in music. Why? **For Derrida, the melodic line is line the artistic outline of a drawing. Neither can be considered a pure imitation or mimesis without becoming a ‘technique’ of imitation. The moment that something allows for reproduction it is supplementary and creates openings for calculation, rationality, intervals and the like that are “fatal to energy”. THINK OF THE**

PAINT BY NUMBERS EXERCISES THAT WERE SO POPULAR IN THE 1950s and 1960s and that pushed artists of greater integrity into abstraction.

28. What happens when you put too much of a burden on an **OUTLINE** (in music or art) for Derrida? **You get into all kinds of form/content problems by pushing one side of the dichotomy. In Rousseau's case you "exhaust yourself" trying to separate good from bad. As Derrida puts it: "There is harmony already within melody" – good and evil are inseparable, the needs and passions define each other. Of course, DERRIDA'S ARGUMENT WILL ALSO BE THAT SPEECH AND WRITING ARE EQUALLY INSEPERABLE.**
29. Why does Derrida suggest that Rousseau's analysis of Western music is **ETHNOCENTRIC**? **It is, he thinks, ethnocentric to label any society, its science or its music, as intrinsically EVIL. Stereotyping your own society notwithstanding, is still stereotyping.**
30. Why is Derrida's distinction between musical accents and harmonies a misleading one? **Bother are linked to "spacing, to the calculable and analogical regularity of intervals". Corruptibility (the concept is relative rather than objective) is there from the beginning.**
31. Why does Rousseau constantly rely on *oughts* and the *conditionals* when he talks about the origins of language? **He is trying to FORCE discourse to take the binary shape of good and bad; he is trying to get 'outside of the inside'; whereas good and bad are simultaneous. There is no 'origin' or 'natural plentitude'. DISCOURSE HAS ALREADY ALWAYS "BROACHED PRESENCE IN DIFFÉRANCE."**
32. What is commonly meant by the **turn of writing** and what does Derrida want to say about this? **It is commonplace to either view writing as an important positive 'turn' in human society, or to view it as a negative 'turn' from something more humanly authentic. But for Derrida, either viewpoint has the drawback of being a declaration of faith.**
33. What does Derrida have to say about the concept of **origin**? **For Derrida:**

"the concept of origin has merely a relative function within a system situating a multitude of origins in itself, each origin capable of being the effect or the offshoot of another origin, the north capable of becoming the south for a more northern site, etc., Rousseau would like the absolute origin to be an absolute south . It is in terms of this diagram that the questions of fact and principle, of real and ideal origin, of genesis and structure in Rousseau's discourse must be asked anew. The diagram is undoubtedly more complex than one generally thinks."

34. Why is the distinction between needs and passions problematic in Rousseau? **Because ultimately “passion animates needs” and “need constrains passions”. This is from the “inside of the system”. Need is permanently within passion. To the extent that there are ‘differences’, these are différences of a POLE rather than absolute distinctions that can be maintained universally. To attempt to separate them in terms of some ‘origin’ is to misunderstand their semiotic functioning.**
35. What is the European Ethnocentric doctrine of faith that Rousseau subscribes to? **He views the temperate regions of Europe as the ones best suited for creating “citizens of the world” who are not captured by extremes and open to the “horizon and diversity of universal culture.” THIS HAS BECOME A CLASSIC ARGUMENTATION. ONLY FROM A CERTAIN STARTING POINT CAN ONE “DISCERN DIFFERENCES” AND DISCOVER WHAT IS UNIVERSAL IN MAN. A CLASSIC STANCE OF EUROPEAN HUBRIS.*******
36. How is writing a METAPHOR FOR DEATH in Rousseau? **As articulation increases and becomes rigidified in written form (writing replacing and dominating speech), so the energy and vitality of a society dissipates. Eventually, writing hollows out speech. Those who control writing dominate society, which in turn becomes an instrumental machine of domination.**
37. What evidence does Derrida provide for suggesting that Rousseau cannot even maintain his argument on its own terms? How does Rousseau show the impossibility of maintaining distinctions between speech and writing, in other words? **While Rousseau distrusts writing whenever its precision or instrumentality interferes with passion, he can take a quite different approach in terms of “clarity, univocity, and precision” when applied to speech or song. HOW CAN YOU ALLOW FOR PRECISION IN EXHIBITION OF PASSION, ON THE ONE HAND, WHILE CLAIMING THAT IT DESTROYS FEELINGS OF THE HEART ON THE OTHER?**
38. One of the really masterful parts of Derrida’s analysis of Rousseau is his painstaking examination of Rousseau’s discussion of the way that the argument for the origin of language fits together with his account of the origin of languages. Derrida’s analysis hinges on the idea of NATURE in Rousseau and the different ways that it operates depending on the terms of his discourse. What is Derrida’s argument? **He suggests that Rousseau uses the concept of NATURE and NATURAL in two different ways. Rousseau’s first appeal is to an original state of nature characterized by presence. Rousseau’s second appeal is to an original ‘society’ that is characterized by a degree of supplementarity where the ‘sign’ predominates. Depending on the terms of his argument, this will lead Rousseau into paradoxes that may not be contradictions. For example, a gesture (mute speech) in the state of nature will be benign and free, but in a state of advanced society “where no one is there for anyone, not even for himself”, the same gesture can be positively monstrous. All now depends on the degree of supplementarity that**

begins with small differences but can accelerate geometrically with the advance of writing. **WHAT IS CLEAR FROM ROUSSEAU IS THAT HIS ARGUMENT HINGES ON SUBSTITUTIONS THAT CAN BE 'NATURAL' OR 'ARTIFICIAL' DEPENDING ON THEIR DISTANCE FROM THE CENTRE. So Rousseau's analysis is not 'contradictory' in this sense, but it is in a FUNDAMENTAL sense.**

39. Why is speech privileged in Rousseau's supplementary catalogue of the NATURAL? **It is privileged for several reasons: 1) its supposed origin is the passions rather than the needs, 2) it presumes 'face to face' and therefore more authentic interaction, 3) it reinforces presence rather than dispersal, 4) it is 'warmly' persuasive rather than 'coldly' calculating, thus reinforcing heartfelt bonds, 5) it is less governed by rules, 6) it is less easily objectified, 6) it does not intimidate, 7) it does not elevate a caste of scribes, but invigorates a people.**
40. Why does Derrida argue that this schema is flawed by a massive contradiction? **Rousseau fails to recognize that WRITING actually PRECEDES SPEECH AND INCORPORATES IT. WHILE IT MAKES SENSE TO THINK OF WRITING AS AN HISTORICAL ACCESSORY TO SPEECH, WRITING NEEDED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE QUESTION OF THE PASIONATE ORIGIN OF SPEECH COULD APPEAR. WRITING EXPLAINS SPEECH TO ITSELF.**
41. That's only one part of the contradiction, what's the other? **Rousseau himself suggests that the first language "had to be figurative" or metaphorical. But the concept of the metaphor already presumes PASSIONAL SIGNS that have the effect of COLOURS.**
42. Yet another? **The voice 'penetrates' the ear with ACCOUSTIC SIGNS that already REPLACE THE FEELINGS OF THE HEART. And there is already a certain VIOLENCE in the act of penetration that FACILITATES DOMINATION. Why should writing any more than speaking be considered an act of domination? Why should any one sense or combination take precedence in the domination department?**
43. What does ARTICULATION already always imply? **Articulation implies difference, substitution and supplementarity. WRITING as Rousseau wants to categorize it – as a violent catastrophe – has already begun in speech. When language "pulls out of the cry" it is multiplying "tenses, quantities, and consonants". To the extent that Rousseau wants to think of language as 'degradation' – "language is born out of the process of its own degradation." A 'simple origin' or "zero degree" is not possible in a system governed by a syntax "without origin". Everything that is said, or for that matter 'thought', is "inscribed" within that system.**
44. **Here is the quote par excellence that sums up Mr. Derrida (p. 244)**

“Thus supplementarity makes possible all that constitutes the property of man: speech, society, passion, etc. But what is this property of man? On the one hand, it is that of which the possibility must be thought before man, and outside of him. Man allows himself to be announced to himself after the fact of supplementarity, which is thus not an attribute – accidental or essential – of man. For on the other hand, supplementarity, which is *nothing*, neither a presence nor an absence is neither a substance nor an essence of man. It is precisely the play of presence and absence, the opening of this play that no metaphysical or ontological concept can comprehend. Therefore this property of man is not a property of man: it is the very dislocation of the proper in general: it is the dislocation of the characteristic, the proper in general, the impossibility – and therefore the desire – of self-proximity; the impossibility and therefore the desire of pure presence. That supplementarity is not a characteristic or property of man does not mean only, and in an equally radical manner, that it is not a characteristic or property, but also that its play precedes what one calls man and extends outside of him. Man *calls himself* man only by drawing limits including his other from the play of supplementarity: the purity of nature, of animality, primitivism, childhood, madness, divinity. The approach to these limits is at once feared as a threat of death and desired as access to a life without *différance*. The history of man *calling himself* man is the articulation of *all* these limits among themselves. All concepts determining a non-supplementarity (nature, animality, primitivism, childhood, madness, divinity, etc.) have evidently no truth value. They belong, moreover, with the idea of truth itself – to an epoch of supplementarity. They have meaning only within a closure of the game.” “WRITING WILL APPEAR TO US MORE AND MORE AS ANOTHER NAME FOR THIS STRUCTURE OF SUPPLEMENTARITY.”

45. SIGNIFIEDS PLAYING ON THE REGISTER OF PLUS OR MINUS IN TERMS OF DESIRE is how Derrida sums up this game.
46. How does Derrida demolish the HISTORY OF IDEAS? He suggests that no such enterprise is possible unless one begins by “disengaging this space before articulating its field in terms of other fields.” Metaphysics has been caught up in an ensemble “for which the name history is no longer suitable”.
47. Rousseau, for Derrida, is the supreme case of someone caught up in this GRAPHIC OF SUPPLEMENTARITY. Thus, he ends up describing what he doesn’t want to conclude, that life is death and presence is absence. This is a case of ‘bricolage contradicting itself’.
48. Why is there no “text whose author or subject is Jean-Jacques Rousseau”? Because Rousseau’s text and even his very personhood is caught up in a system of signs and supplementarity characteristic of western metaphysics.
49. What is another word for language “uncontaminated by supplementarity”? It cannot be the ‘child’, since “without the summons of the supplement, the child would not speak at all.” Moreover, such a child might know how to cry but would not

know how to sing. The notion of pushing breath in ways that are uncontaminated is essentially an onto-theological concept encapsulated in the word NEUME. Rousseau longs for this kind of self-presence, seems to approach it in the *Reveries* but he cannot find a time or a space or a structure inhabited by anything like the NEUME. He hopes to find it in a kind of ‘almost society’ that never existed.

50. Neume is a church music term. At the end of the day, Derrida thinks that Rousseau’s discussion and the obsessions of western metaphysics have a distinctly onto-theological character. How does he illuminate the HEAVENLY CITY of the Western Philosophers in Rousseau in particular? **Rousseau sometimes seems to think that pure presence and pure auto-affection is given only to God or to those whose hearts accord with God. Supplementarity illuminates the difference between ourselves and God. Moreover, the finger that moves parts of the globe towards sociability from barbarism appears to belong to God. It strongly suggests God, in so far as the “geneology of evil” is always a theodicy. It almost certainly involves a providential force in the sense that “perfectibility” is the desired outcome despite the fall. Of course, this “external theodicy” in one form or another helps to explain Western metaphysics, which is never as secular as it might hope to be.**
51. Is Derrida willing to relinquish God in his own understanding of the “cruel game” that is “the play of the world”? **Unlike Rousseau who “resigns himself to it” in its contradictions, Derrida seems to reject it (at least in this work).**
52. What corresponds to the Neume in Rousseau’s writings about the origin of language in the southern climes? **The Festival and its Dance (at the oasis) is the closest thing to pure presence for Rousseau.**
53. What is the precise break with nature or the natural mother that Rousseau seems to want to identify with the birth of society according to Derrida? **The prohibition on incest.**
54. What does all this stuff about the water hole, the festival, and the prohibition on incest in Rousseau suggest to Derrida? **It suggests that all of these attempts at dividing, spacing and differentiating should be seen as the attempt to attach limits rather than to establish any serious “linear order”. A lot of the scholarly ‘contradictions’ in Rousseau’s texts disappear when you realize that he is expressing a wish and establishing limits within concentric circles rather than attempting to establish origins. Rousseau is not trying to establish hard and fixed origins but to describe the natural voice of the heart and what he sees as dangerous movements away from it. We should not saddle Rousseau with contradictions that mistake his intention. We should respect the “coherence” of his theoretical discourse. But the real contradiction in Rousseau’s text is his futile attempt to escape the never-ending play of supplementarity as the natural order of things.**

55. What does Derrida find revealing about Rousseau's description of the festival and how does he distinguish his own position? **Derrida points out that there is no "play" in Rousseau's ideal situation – the festival. This "happy age" combines pleasure with desire hence eliminating the play of différance. Moreover, the happiness is, like Rousseau's brief encounters with neume, transient. Rousseau's festival has the interdict on incest weighing heavily on it. To Western metaphysics' search for certainty in the shadow of the Fall, Derrida appears to prefer the DIVERSE interpretations that are possible within language and languages once one relinquishes the search for an absolute presence that would, in any case, be death. Life exists in the play, the very serious play to be sure, of supplements.**

JULIE: Or the New Heloise

General

1. **What's *modern* about this book?** It breaks with the past and charts a new path for the novel by focusing on interactions in private life. And although there are elements of a plot, the book is really about the unfolding of the emotional personalities of the central characters. Thus, there are no significant actions; the plot is really only a shell for the reader to watch the evolution of personalities.
2. **How is this book a signpost in the evolution of the modern self?** The key personalities in this novel -- Julie and St. Preux -- develop by building their inner resources, not by playing 'roles' -- heroic or otherwise -- in the 'world'. Indeed, the world outside the lovers has an inferior reality to the world created by their love.
3. **What modern technique does the author use to convey this superior reality?** He uses letters that describe their 'feelings' towards one another. **Although you may find the classical prose used by these characters as high flown and excessively literary, what is Rousseau attempting to do with their language?** To document real, unsophisticated and genuine feelings appropriate to their age and status.
4. **What would be considered highly unusual about Rousseau's approach for contemporaries?** Not that he makes the *passion of love* the pivotal action of the novel, but that he explores the way that love might make connections, grow and mature in the experience of *ordinary life*.
5. **What might contemporaries regard as even more unusual?** Rousseau attempts an incredibly interesting and difficult strategy by allowing the sexual energy of love ample room to manouver, prioritizing warm love over cold reason, and allowing love to correct its own mistakes and excesses.
6. **What does Rousseau need to do in order to make love the consistent dynamic and tension of the novel what can this tell you about the *soap opera* that is *Julie*?** He needs to follow the characters through their entire life and relationships.
7. **The soap opera quality of *Julie* should not be uninteresting to you, since it describes entirely modern proclivities that may be dismissed today by high culture but that is fascinating sociologically and psychologically. But we shouldn't get too excited about Rousseau's modernity. We need to situate him in his context. What's decidedly not *modern* about this novel?** It is obviously a moralistic treatise in disguise. Rousseau is not so much interested in creating the modern individual or self. His interest in internal states only goes so far as to discover and privilege what is moral in intimate relations. Despite any

ambiguities and breaks with traditional thinking about marriage and morality, the moralist's heavy hand is on the text (and not in the conservative footnotes that are meant to cover his ass with the censors). For us today, the characters are decidedly *unreal* because their inner life is far less ambiguous than modern individualism demands. For us, the evolution of these characters could seem too forced and shaped by the moralist.

8. **For contemporaries, however, there are some powerful messages. What do you think is the most powerful message for a still aristocratic society?** Marriage should be based on love. While children, especially women, have an obligation to obey their parents, this obligation should never stand in the way of the love 'match'. **What is critical about this love match in terms of social values and roles?** That it be based upon a genuine meeting of minds that should not be negated by trivial issues like rank and income.
9. **There is a socially revolutionary argument here. The egalitarian Rousseau understands that modern society is and will likely continue to be unequal and hierarchical. For Rousseau, there can be no genuine morality without equality. But the equality that is lacking in the wider society could to some extent be remedied by the equality inherent in love.**
10. **Some, not all, modern feminists might view Rousseau's attitude towards Julie as entirely patriarchal to the extent that it constantly teases out male and female attributes. Why might too rigid an analysis of male and female roles miss the point?** The real heroine of the novel is Julie. In many respects, she is St. Preux's mentor; she's his moral salvation. While someone like Mary Wollstonecraft may justly criticize this deification of the female as segregation to a domestic sphere, it can also be seen as liberatory for women and for a female point of view. Women especially were fascinated with books like *Julie*.
11. **Julie helped to usher in a sentimental genre in which not a few authors were women. Can you guess how Rousseau's novel might differ from more typical sentimental novels, especially of the British variety?** In British sentimental novels, the authors attempted to define a balance between reason and emotion and the emphasis on rational self-control and *prudence* often interferes with character development. In *Julie*, arguably, reason and self-control are not at all the moral drivers, passion corrects itself through the further refinement of passion.
12. **How does this conform to what you already know about Rousseau?** Rousseau considers reason, including reason in the form of self-control, as something that lends itself to 'cold instrumentality' and 'cold relationships'. He wants to oppose that Northern view of the world with passion.
13. **How does this message play out in the novel?** The other characters in the novel, Bomston and Wolmar and Claire are attracted, not only to Julie and St. Preux, but also to them as an ideal coupling that provides an antidote to cold modernity.

- 14. Love is the real hero in the novel. Love as a passion. But this is not romanticism and in some ways is closer to sentimental love. What does Rousseau want to emphasize right at the beginning of the novel about the love between Julie and St. Preux?** It is an attraction of “souls” and of “sentiments” “far more than those of a person”. Although many elements of romantic individualism can be found in the novel, Rousseau is clear from the beginning that **he is not interested in the person as such but the impulses of the heart that are amplified in the sentimental connection.** There is, of course, no doubt, that this attachment is also ‘sexual’ but Rousseau knows how socially and personally destructive sex can be when divorced from intimacy (consider the ‘dangerous supplement’).
- 15. Nonetheless, Rousseau knows that sexual attraction can go in completely different directions and one of the most fascinating and perhaps unconvincing struggles in the novel is to continually bring sexuality back to the beloved. This is in many ways a modern struggle as well, so we shouldn’t be too eager to criticize it as artificial. What two things is Rousseau bravely willing to explore in the discussions of the two lovers?** St. Preux’s possible temptation to masturbate and his infidelity in a brothel. **What’s interesting about their attitude to you?** You might find it interesting that their love is able to rise above the occasional infidelity.
- 16. Marriage, arguably, is a primary social institution. What is Rousseau saying in 1761?** That love is more important than marriage. That marriage without love is inadequate. That the love bond in marriage, and its continuation in a family, might be the only thing that saves society from itself.
- 17. What are the enemies of love?** A social structure that separates love from marriage and an urban world of artificial values that distorts and disorders human feelings.
- 18. What is the distinction between the ‘individual’ in the state of nature and the modern individual that always haunts Rousseau?** The so-called noble savage has no reason to do harm and contains at least a reserve of compassion that can be made use of by a genuine community. The modern individual has a potential ‘interest’ in doing harm to others at worst and a fear of intimacy at best.
- 19. How does the novel explore these fears?** The characters constantly ‘check in’ with one another, even when apart, in order to dissect confront modern pitfalls. They strive to maintain their natural instincts in the face of a society that has lost its connection to nature.
- 20. Why are the Julies and St. Preux’s of the world so important to its moral regeneration?** First, it should be said that considered as individuals, they are just nice people that you would like to be around. But, second, and more important,

as unusual representatives of love, they provide a clear and present antidote to the selfishness of the modern world.

- 21. What must Rousseau be suggesting about these ‘private’ and ‘average’ types of individuals if this plan for social regeneration is to be effected?** Forget Rousseau the egalitarian for a moment, Julie and St. Preux have a realistic chance of a secure position in provincial society where they can have influence. They would not be landed magnates, but they would have status based on a combination of patrimony and intellect. This is a plan for the regeneration of society based on the creation of a new elite.
- 22. What’s interesting about this elite?** It isn’t a political elite in the sense that we would normally consider it. It’s a program for moral regeneration that puts private life in the provinces above the capital. Of course, if there were a lot of talented St. Preux’s around, they could obtain positions in government suitable to their status.
- 23. Why does Julie have to be the heart and soul of this relationship?** Because the sentimental males obviously have to make their way in a world of dangers to the moral personality. Whoever’s at home, minding the fort – the heart of the family – is going to have to take major responsibility for the moral highground.
- 24. What then becomes the major moral responsibility of the male who would be virtuous?** To revere the woman that he loves as a sacred duty and to take her advice seriously whenever she acts in her capacity as a moral monitor.
- 25. Is this a messy and confusing paradigm? Is it a paradigm that severely limits the exploration of the individual who will become the subject of dialogic treatment in that modern art form – the novel?** Sure it is. In literary terms, especially, this novel is unreadable for most modern readers or approached as a soap opera. But in terms of who and what we are today in relationships that are simultaneously companionable and sexual, it is highly prescient to say the least.

Specifics

Keyed to page numbers

26

What could be considered ‘modern’ but ‘shocking’ to contemporaries in St. Preux’s first letter to Julie? Passion is clearly elevated over prudence in the matter of love.

26

How is love defined that is perhaps not so very modern? It is defined in terms of being ‘touched’ by gentleness, purity of soul, and sentiment.

27

What is St. Preux going to be trying to do for a heck of a while? Recovering his reason. **But more important how is he going to do it?** Not by the abstract deployment of reason and self-control, but by attachment to the beloved object.

27.

What is crucial to the success of love in this case? Giving up any ‘game playing’; attempting to be as authentic as possible; sharing one’s motives as well as emotions.

28

How does Rousseau describe the first blushes of love and the attempts to connect with the beloved? As a combination of a ‘consuming fire’ and ‘unbearable uncertainty’.

28-9

Why is rationalism so useless when it comes to love? Because it takes hold before one realizes it. **What is ‘tragic’ about real love?** It cannot calculate in terms of benefits and afflictions and can as easily lead to the latter as the former. **What is so ‘noble’ about real love?** That it has to be able to accept the afflictions as well as the benefits. **What can we deduce about this kind of love?** It is its own reward.

30

Why is love so important morally? It makes us desire not only to obtain, but also to be **worthy** of the beloved object? True love, based on genuine affection, is inherently unselfish.

31

What does a woman always have to consider about a would-be lover? That he may be a ‘artful seducer’ rather than a genuine beloved. **What do both men and women have to consider seriously when they enter into a relationship?** Their motives. **What is an inherent problem with the ‘language of love’?** That it is capable of imitation. **This is why Rousseau is so painstaking in exploring the emotions of love as they evolve, to separate the artificial from the genuine. What might Derrida have to say about this attempt to find a pure space in an impure world?**

32

Why is the risk in love worth taking despite all the pain? The “sweet union of two pure souls” is the closest thing on earth to a pure ideal. Note that Rousseau cites Plato and his theory of ideal forms on several occasions in this novel.

33

What is the nature of female power according to Rousseau? It is a “pure and celestial beauty” – an empire of virtue. **How do you feel about this placing of the female on the pedestal of virtue?**

33

What is interesting about the relationship between Claire and Julie? Claire represents traditional values, with a strong emphasis on prudence. This kind of

friendship is going to be totally **eclipsed** by the love bond, that eventually Claire will recognize and support. She in fact falls into something like virtuous love with St. Preux through identification with Julie's superior insight into love.

34

What realization does St. Preux have early on because of his love for Julie? That his love for Julie is unthinkable without a love for virtue. **How does St. Preux refine and redefine the traditional aristocratic concept of 'honour' as the novel progresses?** Honour is no longer a masculine virtue but altogether connected with the love and veneration due to the beloved object. Masculine (martial) strength and courage is redefined as the ability to put love and the love bond first and foremost.

36

Why do we not criticize Julie for making love to St. Preux very early on in their relationship? Interesting. Rousseau makes us identify with the couple very early on, and sexual coupling seems natural despite social taboos. **What is most interesting for 1761 is that Rousseau is making a statement that virtue remains in the unmarried relationship and has nothing to do with chastity. The key is whether or not the hearts of the lovers are genuine.**

37-8

Why is the more traditional Claire in fits? Because she is suspicious of love partly and mostly because she knows what trouble can occur if Julie gets pregnant or her parents suspect the relationship. **What's going to occur in the head of Claire and even in Julie's mother (not father, of course)?** They are going to respect and even admire the love bond once convinced that it is genuine? **How might the story have evolved if Julie was 'taken in' by St. Preux or got pregnant or became socially disgraced?** Uncertain, of course, but she must still have been 'virtuous' because her heart was so true.

40

What happens to St. Preux once he's had a taste of sexual union with Julie? He suffers because he wants more. He's in conflict between his needs for closer sexual union and the purity of his idealized love. **What's going to have to happen to make this novel's message work.** Virtuous love is going to have to conquer sexual love. **How realistic is that? How realistic would it seem to a modern reader? Is it even possible? Why is Rousseau so determined to see this through?**

42

What does the "moment of possession" represent for true love? A crisis point. From here on in begins the struggle to maintain the selfless virtue that love initiates.

43

What gender stereotype does Rousseau repeat in the discussion between St. Preux and Julie? That women don't face the same conflict between sexuality and affection that men do; that their sex drive (clearly there) is less. **Does that tell you anything about**

why Julie is always referred to by her first name and St. Preux by his last? It may be that women represent intimate virtue at its source. **What gender stereotype does Rousseau explode?** That women, like Eve, are the temptresses of men and inherently evil or at least dangerous.

43f

What's going to be the life story of the would-be virtuous modern male? Conquering the conflicting passions in his heart. **How's he going to do it?** By devoting himself to the virtuous woman. **What's the woman going to have to do in this relationship?** Remind the male what's at stake. **What does Julie call herself and gets called by St. Preux?** A preacher. **What does all this signify in terms of gender roles? Remember, Rousseau is the guy that kicks this stuff off. So how influential is this novel, for ill or good?**

46f

Although Julie is the 'preacher', St. Preux takes on the role of male moralist in his discussions of his experiences in the world, echoing many of Rousseau's own ideas. If Julie is sometimes the 'preacher', St. Preux is the 'schoolteacher' to this 'schoolgirl'. How does the 'preacher' pre-empt the 'schoolteacher'? She reminds him that his 'book learning' (to which she often defers) needs to be connected to 'heart learning'. That would seem to be obvious, but is interesting in the way it evolves and the ways that it pricks the balloon of the male ego. But even more interesting in some ways is the way that Julie preaches not only the heart but also a more practical 'common sense'. This seems to be because she is more connected to the real life of small scale interaction and not led away by fads or abstractions from common life. **For more on male/female, see p. 104.**

52

The first kiss ends up making St. Preux delirious. How do you think impressionable readers related to this description and the upcoming liaison in the bowered garden? Certainly, this must have had a powerful effect at the time. What is interesting for me is the way that the kisses and love making cement the relationship and make Julie's *empire of dominion* over St. Preux's heart much firmer. This clearly is love idealized but not love platonic.

55

How do we see love's empire demonstrated? How does Julie transform St. Preux? She makes him behave practically as well as virtuously, by taking some of her money despite his traditional objections based on 'honour'. Remember that we are talking about a 'kept man' in 1761! There is an astonishing demolition of traditional roles going on here, and admittedly the creation of new ones. But it is not simple what's happening here.

56

What is the upshot of this new kind of modern relationship? The complete demolition of the code of honour. And it will continue through the novel. Rousseau is very similar to those other Enlightened writers that he often differs from in this attempt to ground modern morality in a new code and to dissolve traditional masculine notions of honour.

59

A moral conflict besets Julie. What is it and what does it tell you about Rousseau's agenda? Her duty to her father and her love for St. Preux are put in opposition because of her father's obstinate opposition to a real love match. Now, in the mid-eighteenth century, unlike in its Romantic succession, sentimental writers did not want to place love over family duties. In part, this may be because this is a transitional period. But remember that sentimental love was supposed to lead to companionable marriage and a close knit family where children were raised in love. So, putting the individual first would have made that agenda nugatory. At the end of the novel, St. Preux comes to help Julie's husband Wolmar raise the kids after Julie's death. Family values culminate the novel, even if the orthodox family got sabotaged by a patriarchal father with traditional ideas of honour.

60

How does St. Preux reinforce family values? By contrasting himself as the exile "wandering without family"

62

Practical Julie does everything she can to bring around her father and mother to the idea of considering St. Preux, but all to no avail. Why couldn't this novel have a happier ending? Oh, that is a very good question! Even if I asked it myself! There could be many reasons. One might be that Rousseau is a sufficiently skillful writer to understand that readers sympathize more with virtue in distress than virtue triumphant because compassion is next to love in the ethical lexicon. Another might be that Julie's virtue, and especially St. Preux's virtue, might never be demonstrated to such an extent (a la Heloise and Abelard) without the ultimate test. If love was possible from such a distance and over such a time, then maybe love is greater than any self-interest.

62f

Wouldn't it be possible to say that this love of St. Preux's is just an obsession and that Julie is a flirt who wants to keep him close? Yes it would, but Rousseau is well aware that this might be the reader's opinion. So he writes many more pages and develops this soap opera to an extraordinary extent in order: 1) to show love developing to greater maturity, 2) to highlight the different stages through which true love moves past obsession, and 3) to illuminate the true nature of 'obsessive' behaviour, not in love but in the 'world'.

64f

Rousseau wouldn't be Rousseau without writing a diatribe about the artifice of Paris through St. Preux's letters. This confrontation with the 'world' is interesting

because it is the real challenge that St. Preux faces and the one that, interestingly, love enables him to get through. **How does this lengthy discussion of the city, its effects, its temptations show us a somewhat different Rousseau?** The male St. Preux speaks like Rousseau in the discourses about the evils of city life and the artificiality. Julie allows him to soften his criticisms and discover the lingering humanity beneath the artificiality.

66f

What convention does Rousseau begin to establish in order for St. Preux to distinguish between what is real and what is artificial in modern society? The distinction between town and country that is going to become stock and trade of romantic literature. Genuine humanity still exists in private life in the countryside.

The Valais countryside descriptions are particularly interesting in this respect because they highlight the cancer of modern city that is beginning to extend itself. What does St. Preux say about the visits of merchants to Valais? They are treated as friends because they are just passing through, whereas in the urban centers, their self-interest would be much more dangerous. The people are depicted as happy and virtuous because immune from contamination. Such pastoral scenes are a bit galling, and Adam Smith, for one, would explode them in his analysis of the countryside.

70

St. Preux comments on the letters of Heloise and Abelard. He doesn't think Abelard worthy of Heloise and his heroine is the latter. Be that as it may, what doctrine of love does he suggest that might mitigate against any unreality in Rousseau's discussion. He says that the 'idea of perfection' of the loved object is crucial because virtue/morality can't be inspired without a model of perfection in the mind. What the male does, therefore, in putting his love on a pedestal, is ethically significant in any conceivable situation. At the same time, he suggests that idealistic love need not be so unequal **where love is equal and lovers are bound by "mutual attraction"**. This is an interesting case of a translation of the older idea of chivalric love into the context of the companionable marriage.

72

How does Julie monitor St. Preux's observations on love and life? She constantly reminds him to tone down his prose in order to maintain intimacy.

74

How does St. Preux monitor himself and his reactions as he begins to make his way in the world? He 'imagines' Julie's reactions to the scenes that he witnesses. Julie becomes a kind of second and better conscience based on genuine feeling rather than abstract notions of justice.

75

How do we know St. Preux and Julie are truly in love? Their 'harmony of souls' covers all distances and bridges all experiences. **What does their love put into**

perspective? Riches, status and all the artificial distinctions of society are insignificant in comparison with their bond.

77

Julie's letter to Claire about a possible elopement is a 'soap opera' development designed to increase the tensions over closeness to family and lover. We can predict how this will end because Julie could never put her personal happiness over the happiness of others and will be loyal to aging parents. Or, at least I could have predicted that having read a lot of 18th Century stuff. But there is something interesting here that you might not have noticed. The breaks in the prose, the fragmentariness of the emotions (i.e. ...) are ways that the author tries to get at real feeling without the artifices of language – this is a new and interesting technique for exploring/representing strong feeling or passion.

78

What is the significance of the letter to Claire wailing about her (Julie's dilemma)? When caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, Julie feels betrayed or put into a terrible situation by St. Preux. What's interesting about the dilemma, in which she only has one choice, is that although she feels demonized by St. Preux, her love conquers that emotion. Note how we all label behaviour that conflicts with our needs or values and a lover can easily become an enemy when circumstances dictate. But Rousseau shows us that Julie has ordinary weaknesses because of her situation, but that she quickly rights herself in her commitment to love (but not to the elopement).

82f

How does the episode develop? Julie tells St. Preux in a heartfelt letter what a predicament she is putting him in. The communication is no longer "easy" because of the tug of war of emotions. They are further complicated by Julie's father's attempts to marry her off respectably, which fires St. Preux with jealousy. What's interesting is that these events, which would be the death of most lovers, are overcome by a higher love. They both come to realize that their love is superior and "will be the main business of our lives" whatever else happens. Love is above events and situations.

90

How is love's virtue redefined? As "strict virtue" and "principled love" punctuated by "inviolable candour"

94

What happens next? The love scene in the garden aided and abetted by Claire. **Why is it a mistake?** Because it puts them in ever increasing danger of discovery. **Why is it hard for them to see the danger?** Because by now their love and passion is so strong that they see the world through the eyes of love. The birdies sing, the creek babbles, all the greens are greener etc. like never before for them.

96

Julie's being immature and St. Preux is being careless. Why must we forgive them? They are such warm and caring people; their care for each other doesn't interfere with

their care for others. Julie, for example, is no spoiled brat who is infatuated but now we see her taking the duties of landed society seriously and helping out a poor peasant girl who wants to marry a lad who has enlisted in order to pay her rent. St. Preux helps out this scheme admirably. Now, Rousseau wants to show you what caring couples with power do in their society, how they help right wrongs and engender happiness. This is designed to make the reader sincerely wish that they could be married, continue the d'Etange estate, and perform the paternal functions of the landed gentry.

101

The dominion of the heart is consolidated by these acts of beneficence. Now Julie and St. Preux are a married couple in all but name taking on the functions of a couple. Julie reminds St. Preux what the only obligation is. What is it? “To love perfectly, and all will work out by itself”. Of course, in one sense it doesn't work out. In the practical sense, we are in store for more confusion and heartache. But in the important sense it does work out because now love can survive all obstacles.

102

What's the Englishman, Sir Edward Bomston's role in the novel? This is interesting, especially since Rousseau is going to be befriended by David Hume. Here's what I think. Bomston eventually serving St. Preux's interests show that the stoic with some capacity for sympathy needs to defer to the champion of passion and to deploy his superior worldly prudence to helping out the representative of love. Reason and self-control, in other words, are at best supports for virtue defined in terms of passion and benevolence. This growing friendship between a Frenchman and an Englishman has all sorts of implications, but the main one being that the Englishman defers. The Englishman can only really appreciate love and passion vicariously. Thus begins a debate on the relative merits of sentiment and self-control that runs through eighteenth-century literature. **When we get to Adam Smith, someone like Lord Bomston will be the hero and someone like St. Preux most definitely will not. And there's no equivalent for Julie in the very masculine philosophy of Adam Smith.**

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Julie is always the final voice of authority in the novel and in Letter XLVI she comes down decisively on the issue of gender. Gender difference runs through the novel but it is in this letter that Rousseau makes it decisive. What's he say? He says that males and females are constructed differently and that, hence, their ideas of virtue and perfection must also differ. Women are made for nurturing and men are made for action. Men are more audacious, women more modest. Modern readers might find these stereotypes objectionable but, at least, we can say that Rousseau does not present Julie as any lesser on the scale of humanity than her man. And, to the extent that he idealizes her virtue, she still comes across as a very real person. Moreover, to the extent that her mind operates differently, she clearly has a mind of her own, complete with the ability to chastise and correct her forward lover on occasion. Finally, in a most interesting analysis, she tells St. Preux that he doesn't understand her half as well as her friend Claire and that he puts her on a pedestal. But what's interesting here is that she acknowledges the pedestal placement as love indulging in the illusions of heartfelt love. **Love is an**

illusion, but it is an honest, heartfelt and natural illusion. The important point for her is that she ‘accepts’ this love, but that she is not ‘seduced’ by it into thinking of herself as an angel or divinity. I don’t know about you guys, but I find this sort of analysis just fascinating.

This is as far as I got!

A Treatise of Human Nature

1. Did any of you wonder why this book is entitled a treatise “of” rather than “on” human nature? **While Hume thinks that the ‘science’ of human nature is the only real science, he may want to point out that any ‘rationalist’, ‘essentialist’ or ‘materialist’ understanding of human nature is impossible. We can only approach human nature in terms of ‘common sense’ understandings. In particular, we need to understand the problem with this activity that we call reason and that is the *raison d’etre* the Enlightenment.**
2. In the beginning of the *Treatise*, Hume sets himself in the tradition of British empiricism with Locke and Berkeley. He’s going to end up being very different from them, however. What does he say about the nature of human understanding? **Hume states that all the information that we have comes from our senses. But he’s going to add that these senses can’t tell us about some objective reality. All we have to go on are *impressions*.**
3. What is the relationship between ideas and impressions? **Simple ideas correspond to simple impressions. More complex ideas are constructed by linking simple ideas together. This means that we cannot talk about ‘innate ideas’ (Descartes or Plato) but we have to look at the way the mind connects simple ideas. The distinction Hume makes is between impressions and “REFLEXION”.**
4. What does Hume say about this ‘reflexion’ that is so unusual for metaphysics? **He says that we can never know the *cause* of this reflection; all that we can do is describe its characteristics. In fact, as we shall see, the whole idea of a *cause* is problematic for Hume.**
5. What two faculties of the mind does Hume want to distinguish and why are we going to have to pay a lot of attention to this distinction as Hume develops his argument? **He distinguishes between memory and imagination. Memory he considers to be much more reliable for human understanding than imagination. However, later on in the text Hume will argue that imagination is the basis for all kinds of human understanding, including memory. The problem for Hume is that the *terms* are distinguished in discourse.**
6. How are ideas united for Hume? **Hume refers to the “association of ideas” which he describes as a “gentle force” or propensity. While we can never understand the force, power, or agency involved, we can see that this associating takes a characteristic formation. That formation involves “RELATING” certain ideas together on the basis of a certain kind of “ATTRACTION”.**

7. Hume reiterates what he does not want to do and thinks that no one can do. What's that? **He says that we can never know the "original qualities" of human nature.**
8. Hume wants to show his readers the "relations" between simple ideas that lead to understanding. He wants to show us how we get to more **abstract understandings**. What's he say about this? **That more abstract understandings have to be, must be, built from simple impressions. That their purpose is not to give us 'exact' knowledge, but knowledge that is 'useful' for life.**
9. What problem is there with abstract ideas? **The "words" we use for them take on a life of their own. We often mistake our abstractions for "things". This is the power of "CUSTOM" or "HABIT" to make us think we know more than we actually do. Entire sets of "habits", he suggests, can be revived by the mention of a single "WORD".**
10. What is the difference between a "genius" and a person of ordinary understanding for Hume? **A genius has a better imaginative facility for associating ideas. Hume calls it a "kind of magical faculty in the soul" because no one understands why some people have it and others don't. But experience makes us all capable of some kind of "reflexion" and we take it for granted rather than looking at how it works.**
11. I don't want to focus on *space* and *time* any more than necessary here, because the argument gets quite technical. But what is the basic point that Hume wants to make? **Space and time have no separate reality from our impressions; both are relationships, either of points on a line or points in time. Our minds only recognize time and space by 'comparing' impressions to one another and trying to link or 'associate' them in ways that make sense of our reality. Hume really wants to counter mathematical arguments for a reality that is superior to, or that organizes, sense impressions. Notions like "infinity" or "infinite divisibility" have no meaning for him. You can't derive an 'infinite' from a 'finite' – an argument that Hume will also apply to religious belief.**
12. So Hume wants to say that we have to have "successive perceptions" to have any notion of time or space. Space and time are "compound impressions". What does that imply? **Space and time are visible and tangible 'points' combined in a certain order. This implies that there can be no "steady unchangeable object" that conforms to space or time. Can you think of what else that implies? There can be no perfect unchangeable God; there can not even be a SELF, except as an organizing principle.**
13. Hume says that "such as the parts are, such is the whole", what does he mean? **All knowledge is sensational, i.e. coming from the senses.**

14. What, therefore, are such notions as “equality”? **They are “imaginary standards”. There is no such a thing as a “perfect and entire equality” in mathematics or life. We form the “loose idea” of perfection and equality without being “able to explain or understand it”.**
15. Hume is an empiricist but not a Lockean. What does he say about “phenomena”? **Hume suggests that we can never know phenomena and that we must make a distinction between that unknowable and the workings of the mind.**
16. Why is the mind often misled in its attempt to understand phenomena? **Because the mind tends to connect things by ‘resemblance’ and almost anything can be connected this way. Moreover, the imagination enjoys making connections that surprise or amuse, whether or not these have any basis in experience.**
17. What are the 3 connecting principles that Hume wants to point to in his analysis “of” human nature? **RESEMBLANCE (objects that seem similar are grouped together), CONTIGUITY (objects connected in time and space are linked), CONSTANT CONJUNCTIONS (objects that appear to be always connected are thought to be in a relation of causation). These principles of association are, of course, extremely useful for life and we take them for granted. But Hume wants us to pay attention to them precisely because they are ways of associating rather than anything that objectively exists in nature.**
18. What distinction does Hume want to make between the “vulgar” and the “philosophical” understanding with respect to cause and effect? **He suggests that the vulgar understanding is in many respects “superior” because it is designed for real life. But when understanding or “enquiry” goes too far beyond our sensory impressions our conclusions will be full of “uncertainty”. This is what makes Hume a SCEPTIC; he thinks philosophy should be “skeptical” of any and all arguments that are too abstract.**
19. Why is Hume skeptical even of “external existence”? **He suggests that all that we can ever know is our sense impressions, we can never know external objects in themselves. All we have are our perceptions. That is why ‘materialist’ philosophy (French Enlightenment) makes no “sense” to Hume. How can we make causal arguments about something that we can never know?**
20. Hume’s greatest argument is about cause and effect. What does he say? **He says that all cause and effect arguments boil down to PROBABILITY. There is no NECESSARY CONNECTION that can conclusively demonstrate agency between something called a cause and something called an effect. And yet, CAUSATION is crucial for human understanding because it is the only thing that can really get us beyond grouping of sense impressions to provide what**

we would call **REAL KNOWLEDGE**. And yet, the more we abstract knowledge from sense impression, the more weak that knowledge will be.

21. Hume says that causation is neither “intuitively” nor “demonstrably” certain. If it is not based on inner intuition or more rigorous demonstration, then what exactly does it depend on? **It depends on “observation and experience”. It can also derive from the observations and experiences of others (“testimony”) that gives rise to more extensive knowledge. But the point Hume wants to make about “testimony” is that it becomes less trustworthy the further away it is from the source of the impression.**
22. What makes MEMORY a more reliable source of knowledge than any other? **Hume suggests that MEMORY PROVIDES A STRONGER BELIEF, especially than more fanciful ideas. The clearer the memory we have of something, the more we are inclined to ASSENT to that reality. In other words, EXPERIENCE is the most reliable source of knowledge. Anything that goes beyond experience, we should be skeptical about.**
23. Thus, the idea of cause and effect is something gained (in the sense of the “vulgar”) from experience. But what is the problem with experience for Hume? **Past experience is not “predictive” for the future. There is no ‘necessary’ reason that an event in the past will occur in the future. We can presume that the sun will rise in the East and Set in the West tomorrow, but it is still only a presumption.**
24. Obviously some kinds of causation have a stronger and more fixed effect on the imagination than others. We are more certain that the sun will rise tomorrow than other forms of knowledge. What’s Hume’s point about the varying degrees of reliability about cause and effect relationships. **That these are a matter of BELIEF. Belief is the ‘manner’ in which we form an idea that gives it more or less reliability. All BELIEF arises from, adds something new to, the association of ideas. BELIEF is a mystery. We feel “differently” about some kinds of information than others. Our belief in the repetitions of nature is quite different than our belief in fairies, castles or the castle building of literature.**
25. What is the “cause” (used advisedly by Hume) of strong belief? **EXPERIENCE, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE HABIT OR CUSTOM, WHICH IS EXPERIENCE REPEATED.**
26. Doesn’t this cause a problem for Hume? What about the various kinds of religious belief about which he is skeptical? How does he account for that? **Hume argues that custom and education can usurp experience. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church educates individuals in its “mummies”. But this can only be so effective. Most people fear death and have their doubts about**

heaven, for example, because there is nothing in their actual lived experience to conform to such an idealistic notion.

27. What word game does Hume play to connect experience and custom? **He cites the connection between 'custom' and 'being accustomed' (the latter of course suggests experience).**
28. Custom operating on the imagination in such a way as to reinforce a certain manner of belief is what Hume designates as the primary method of building knowledge. What does that make Hume and how does he compare with the French Enlightenment thinkers? **Hume is a CONSERVATIVE who believes that knowledge is constructed through experience or, its substitution, careful experiments whose conclusions are not pushed too far. He is a SCEPTIC who distrusts arguments based on ANALYTICAL REASONING alone because reason, rightly understood, is no more than a kind of projecting from experience that can end up being quite absurd. Moreover, the more you project from HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE, the more weak and potentially dangerous will be your assumptions. CUSTOM is the foundation for, and takes precedence over, REASONING. Once an ABSTRACT IDEA takes the place of experience, you are CONFUSING WORDS FOR THINGS and THINGS FOR IMPRESSIONS.**
29. Why is human knowledge such a problematic entity for Hume? **Ultimately it is based on fancy or imagination – cause and effect is an imagined relation based primarily on resemblance and contiguity. But human beings want to know much more than they can legitimately and push 'cause and effect' beyond its real life capacity, developing 'systems' and 'abstractions' that don't serve human nature.**
30. What is REALITY for Hume? **Reality is a world that MEMORY constructs from IMPRESSIONS. What is JUDGMENT for Hume? Judgment is the ability to distinguish between beliefs that are spurious and those that are constructed by cause and effect based on experience. Of course, even the cause and effect relationship has no absolute validity, but it does have validity as a way of making sense of 'reality' as long as it is not pushed too far. This thing called JUDGEMENT is based on two things, experience and testimony.**
31. What is a problem for JUDGEMENT in understanding REALITY and what professional capacity is important to solving that problem? **Humans do not only rely on their own experience but also the TESTIMONY of others to increase their knowledge. The HISTORIAN becomes an important figure because HISTORIANS can attempt to show whether certain kinds of testimony are grounded in experience or not. NO HISTORIAN WILL BE ABLE TO CAPTURE REALITY, AND EVERY AGE'S EXPERIENCE WILL BE DIFFERENT, BUT A GOOD HISTORIAN LIKE HUME CAN TRY TO**

‘GET AT’ the EXPERIENCE of the PAST. Since past experience is key for Hume, the function of the historian is much more important, say, than that of the social scientist.

32. What problem does Hume identify with history and what can help compensate for this problem? **Lived experience is obscured the farther one gets from the source. Written documents that are published accurately provides insights into past experience. The communication of knowledge allows for correction of errors.**
33. Given how human understandings are generated, what characteristic is totally unsuitable when speaking about what we know? **Dogmatism.** What position should a philosophy of human nature lead us toward? **Skepticism about anything that wanders too far from our perceptions.** What’s the problem with human reasoning? **It’s the only tool that you can use to get beyond human experience, but it’s a tool filled with pitfalls.** What kind of position does skepticism advise? **A preference for habit and custom over speculation?** Why is that not a very comfortable position? **Habits and customs also can be highly artificial and divorced from reality.** What force does Hume identify as being responsible for all sorts of falsified experiences? **Religion.**
34. History is certainly a more important subject than religion for Hume. But what function does Hume give to religious preaching and why? **Hume suggests that preachers can reinforce moral codes. He argues that humans like to be “terrified” or exposed to extreme emotions. Preachers should use this knowledge to reinforce practical morality, but NEVER to inculcate dogmatic beliefs. I might want to talk about Hume’s relationship with Scotland’s Moderate Presbyterian clergy here.**
35. Why does Hume think that many people will not accept his theory of human nature? **He argues that they have been EDUCATED in false philosophy. In their case, habit and custom will make Hume’s analysis decidedly unfamiliar. But Hume goes on to argue that his analysis of the force of habit and custom in common life provides a rationale for its more nonsensical operations in philosophy. Philosophers and dogmatic theologians have moved too far from the happy medium in which habit and custom were designed to operate. They have confused the *imaginative* construction of reality for reality and transformed words into things that can never be known. All that can be known with any certainty are impressions. But philosophers have not only identified ‘objects’ as the vulgar do, but imbued objects with all sorts of fanciful meanings.**
36. Belief runs into problems when it is dogmatic or takes extreme institutional forms. What other problem – this time psychological – does Hume identify with respect to belief? **Individuals will often BELIEVE AS TRUE ANYTHING THAT FITS NEATLY WITH THEIR ‘PREVAILING PASSION’. Thus,**

the individual can prostitute belief to serve his or her own excesses. ALL IN ALL, HUME WANTS BELIEF TO CONFORM TO AN EXPERIENTIAL MEDIUM RATHER THAN AN INSTITUTIONAL OR INDIVIDUAL EXTREME. 'MODERATION' IS HIS BYWORD.

37. How do we know that the human imagination is not simply always constructing poems or fables for itself? What is Hume's analysis of the fine arts? **He suggests that the arts are only effective to the extent that they include experiential knowledge, i.e. that they mirror experience to some extent. They need the "force" and "vivacity" of real experience to make them take on the human imagination. They must follow the "general rules" of knowledge formation. DOES HUME SEEM TO LIKE THE FINE ARTS? WHAT DOES HUME SAY ABOUT CREATIVITY?**
38. Why don't people see the connection between experiential "probability" and so-called scientific "proof" according to Hume? **He argues that the "gradation" from probability to proof is so imperceptible that people fail to see that even scientific proofs are only probabilities.**
39. How does Hume describe knowledge that is well-grounded and taken for granted? **He calls it a "perfect habit". We can distinguish that from less well-grounded knowledge by the term "imperfect habit". But all knowledge is based on our habitual relationship with experience.**
40. Why is it important for Hume to tell us that our knowledge is, at best, a "perfect habit" based on probability? **Because our knowledge relates to the past more than to the future. If we are going to apply "imperfect habit" to the future, we have no guarantee of success. WE HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT SCHEMES TO CHANGE THE WORLD OR TO CONSTRUCT PERFECT UTOPIAS. We shouldn't draw too many conclusions beyond our limited experience.**
41. What kinds of "reasoning" are highly suspect for Hume? **Conjectural reasoning. Reasoning from analogy. Reasoning that "has too many intermediate causes". To the extent that you "weaken either the union or resemblances, you weaken the principle of transition, and of consequence that belief, which arises from it."**
42. Why must all ancient history be suspect? **Not only is the experiential data or context missing, but also the interpretations become more remote. What feature of the modern age does Hume approve of? The fact that written materials can be better trusted and convey more genuine knowledge because of the role played by "Printers and Copyists" in preserving the original.**
43. The tendency to form "general rules" is important for the development of human knowledge but also leads us into many errors. What error in particular does

Hume cite? **The tendency of people to stereotype other cultures based on one or two particulars. Also people tend to focus on characteristics that, while “numerous and remarkable” are “superfluous”. Good judgment, therefore, is always required to form general rules.**

44. What is the problem with general rules? **While we need them to get a handle on, and navigate, experience, they are no more than ‘rules of thumb’ based on that same experience.**
45. Why is Hume not unduly troubled by any or all of these defects in reasoning? **He thinks they all show the effects of custom and belief in forming judgments. Once you know that, not only do you know the limits of knowledge, but you also can mitigate against the worst effects of attributing “efficacious causes” from “accidental circumstances”.**
46. “General rules” have considerable appeal to the imagination. What is to stop the imagination from conceiving all sorts of nonsensical rules? **Hume thinks that he has already proven that those general rules that conform to experience will always have the most “vivacity” and “force”. Once better knowledge confronts weaker knowledge, the latter will be forced to retreat. THIS IS AN ARGUMENT FOR MODERATE ENLIGHTENMENT.**
47. What interesting example does Hume deploy to describe stronger and weaker force of knowledge claims? **People who indirectly insult others through the use of ‘signs’ do not have the same effect or reaction as those who insult directly. The weaker the connection, the less force it has on the imagination. DO YOU AGREE? What’s Hume’s analysis of the “SIGN” here? How does he differ from modern philosophers who have taken the “language turn”.**
48. Hume wants to destroy the “efficacy of causes” at least when not directly reinforced by experience. What argument does he return to in order to make this case? **He says that you can never discover the ‘necessary’ connection between a cause and effect. That would require an original idea that represented a sense impression. There is no sense impression that connects the cause to the effect and therefore we can have no rational idea of it. NOTE THE CIRCULAR REASONING HERE.**
49. What is the huge error of the Cartesians for Hume? **They assume that we have an innate idea of matter rather than simply perceptions that we ascribe to matter. In order to explain this, they require recourse to a perfect God who has put this idea into our heads.**
50. Some theorists attribute agency to the human will. What does Hume say and what is the significance of his argument? **Hume says that we cannot perceive anything like the agency required to make this notion sensible. The “empire of the will over our mind” and body is “unintelligible” in rationalistic terms.**

It can only be describe “experientially” and then only very imperfectly. Just as external forces lack agency, so do internal forces. Our only recourse is to experience which suggests a certain association of ideas.

51. Philosophers make a great deal out of abstract ideas. What does Hume say about these abstractions? **Hume says that they can only be combinations of particular ideas and to the extent that they wander from those particular ideas, their force will be weakened. It is only from resemblances, contiguity and constant conjunction that we make causal claims. Our minds “feel” a determination to move from so-called causes to so-called “effects”. THUS IT IS THE “INTERNAL IMPRESSION” OF THE MIND THAT PROVIDE US WITH KNOWLEDGE. THE CONCEPT OF “NECESSITY” IS SUBJECTIVE. HUME’S THEORY, ULTIMATELY IS THAT KNOWLEDGE IS SUBJECTIVE.*******
52. Necessity is something that “exists in the mind, not in objects”. Hume says that the “power of causes” does not come from anything external, and especially not a God that would be a perfect and impossible cause. The mind **“has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects, and to conjoin with them any internal impressions, which they occasion, and which always make their appearance at the same time that these objects discover themselves to the senses.”** The **“efficacy of causes lies in the determination of the mind!”******
53. What does this mean for the concept of NATURE that was so important to Enlightenment thinkers? **Hume allows that there may be an external nature but you can’t attribute any power to it apart from the connections the mind makes. Any supposed distinction between “physical nature” and “moral nature” is spurious because even the physical nature cannot be constructed without subjective processes. But we don’t require full knowledge of objects for the purposes of human life; all that we need are ‘beliefs’ about it.**
54. Given such ideas as that cause and effect really only mean “constant conjunction” that we believe to be “necessary”, what is the implication for Hume’s philosophical approach? **Hume is constructing a “common sense” or better, a philosophy of common life that makes reason derivative to habit, custom and belief. He wants to say, especially, that we have to be CAREFUL IN TINKERING WITH MORAL CAUSALITY (non-science) BECAUSE THE LINKAGES (CONSTANT CONJUNCTIONS) ARE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE (“obscure” and “unaccountable”).**
55. How are humans like animals for Hume? **We operate on HABIT, which resembles the INSTINCT of animals. We are not so much separated from the animal kingdom by REASON but by our ability to construct “connections” between objects based on custom.**

56. Animals and humans are very similar for Hume, and he debunks the typical enlightenment worship of rational man. If you were going to discover a difference between instinct in animals and a more sophisticated instinct in humans, what could it be? **IMAGINATION**. What does human imagination lead to? **BELIEF**. What sort of belief is much more developed in humans than in animals that is most useful if not pushed too far? **BELIEF IN CAUSE AND EFFECT**. What other belief is characteristic of humans and allows them to position themselves strategically with respect to perceived *objects*. **A BELIEF IN THE AUTONOMOUS SELF**. But, speaking accurately in a Humean sense, what is this self. **A bundle of ever changing perceptions**.
57. Since all knowledge is at best ‘probably’ what is the most sensible philosophical stance? **Doubt, skepticism or an understanding of the continual possibility of error. While we don’t need to be overly skeptical of our knowledge for the purposes of common life, we really do need to be thus when we move beyond the realities of common experience into other realms. “THE ATTENTION IS ON THE STRETCH” towards abstraction or more “subtle reasoning”**.
58. What does Hume say is ironic about his approach? **He makes “use of rational arguments to prove the fallaciousness and imbecility of reason”**.
59. Earlier in the *Treatise*, Hume allowed the existence of an external nature, but in his discussion of *skepticism* he makes a much more radical claim. What does he say? **He says that our “perceptions” can “never give us the least intimation of anything beyond.” As a skeptic, he denies the “double existence” of perceptions and objects**.
60. In addition to being skeptical about “objects”, Hume is skeptical about the very theatre on which “perceptions” play out. Why does he think is very difficult to justify? **The concept of the self. He thinks that the concept of the “person” is just a way of giving a “succession of perceptions” a certain sense of unity or intelligibility. We don’t perceive a “body” says Hume; we only perceive “impressions” and impressions (as in the case of the soldier who has lost his leg but still “feels” it as being there) can even be present when the body part is not. THERE ARE NO ‘OBJECTS’, STRICTLY SPEAKING, “INDEPENDENT OF THE MIND”. And the mind, equally strictly speaking, is unknowable apart from its operations**.
61. What is the faculty par excellence that allows us to imbue objects with existence for Hume? **The IMAGINATION. Hume legitimately could be called a “philosopher of imagination” as well as a “philosopher of common life”. The role of the imagination in making objects “coherent” and “constant” is crucial. It continually constructs our world and “preserves its existence”. It alone frees us from the constant “annihilation” of changing perceptions**.

62. What astonishing thing does Hume say about IDENTITY? **That it is a “medium” between “unity and number”. That it is but the “invariableness and uninterruptedness of any object, thro’ a supposed variation of time, by which the mind can trace it in the different periods of its existence, without any break of the view, and without being oblig’d to form the idea of multiplicity or number.”**
63. What operation of the mind is the key to IDENTITY? **RESEMBLANCE – because there is little alteration between the various modes of the object under consideration, it “appears” to be a continuation of the same object.**
64. What, ultimately, must the notion of IDENTITY be? **Hume calls it a “FICTION”. And so we see the role of imagination is not so different with respect to MEMORY as to FANTASY. In both modes, fiction is called for. It makes no sense to speak of the “real” as far as the mind is concerned.**
65. Then what exactly does Hume define the MIND as? **“We may observe,” he says, “that what we call a *mind* is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and suppos’d, tho’ falsely, to be endow’d with a perfect simplicity and identity.” THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THIS “IDENTITY” CANNOT BE DERIVED FROM “REASON” BUT ARISES FROM THE “IMAGINATION”.***** IT “DEPENDS ON THE FANCY”.*******
66. Why is the philosophical assumption of the “double existence” of “perceptions” and “objects” as MONSTROUS OFFSPRING? **It contradicts everything we know about perceptions. Even the most cursory reflection shows us that our perceptions are interrupted and different from one another, but our nature persists in “FEIGNING A DOUBLE EXISTENCE” where “each may find something that has all the conditions it requires”. It is “happy” and useful for us, but makes no philosophical sense. Its best quality is that it is also the “vulgar” interpretation of reality.**
67. Why is Hume not worried too much about the implications of his skeptical philosophy in terms of human action? **One might think that the destruction of identity and external reality would be cause for despair. But Hume says not. He says that we are programmed to think in terms of a real world and can only sustain our skepticism for brief and highly artificial moments.**
68. Why is Hume very critical of ancient philosophy? **He thinks that the ancients were highly “superstitious” to the extent that they invested matter or substance with “agency” or “essence”.**
69. But Hume is also critical of modern philosophy from Descartes. Why? **He argues that Descartes “pretends” to derive reality from the firmer ground of the human mind or “imagination”. But this more mathematical and**

scientific approach still falls into a monumental error. It constructs a false dichotomy between the physical and intellectual world that gives rise to senseless questions about where one begins and the other ends. All the arguments about body and soul, for example, Hume finds unintelligible. Those who debate the essence of reality as spiritual or material are both equally misguided, and dangerous in their dogmatism. Those who would try to make experience conform to their spiritual ideals or materialist utopias completely mistake the nature of reality and its foundation in experience. Hume, as you might expect, is very hard on dogmatic religious types who try to affirm the “soul” and partly because he thinks that their worse arguments give an “advantage to the materialists”.

70. Hume moves to end the *Treatise* by returning to the notions of the *self* and *personal identity*. We need to ask why he is so interested in countering those notions. **On the one hand, Hume’s philosophy of perception makes the self a problematic entity philosophically and a fictitious construct socially. But why does he want to take it apart again? Could it be that, as an eighteenth-century writer, Hume is worried about the rise of individualism and undue attention to the self as agent. All of his emphasis is upon common life, but even more, on COMMUNAL MEMORY. All the UTILITY OF THE SELF lies in the way it connects experience. But experience is not only individual (even in its problematic self) but HISTORICAL. HUME’S ANATOMY OF HUMAN NATURE DOES NOT PRIVILEGE THE INDIVIDUAL EXCEPT AS A MEMBER OF AN EXPERIENTIAL COMMUNITY. HABIT AND CUSTOM, RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL REASON, ARE THE GUIDING HUMEAN PRINCIPLES. DESCARTES’ COGITO IS DANGEROUS BECAUSE IT TAKES THE INDIVIDUAL OUT OF THE REALM OF HABIT AND CUSTOM AND PROPELS HER ON THE DANGEROUS TRAJECTORY OF REASON. ANY UNDUE EMPHASIS ON THE ‘SELF’ IS AS ‘SUPERSTITIOUS’ AS THE BELIEF IN A PERFECT DEITY. SAFETY SUGGESTS THAT WE SHOULD NOT CONDONE ANY “DOGMATIC SPIRIT” ESPECIALLY THAT OF THE AUTHORITARIAN SELF.**

The following is a fourth year lecture on Hume that I delivered to Atkinson student many years ago. You might find it interesting:

THE LIMITS OF HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

Introduction

“To hold up the lamp of nature to man himself.” That was the way that one Enlightenment *philosophe* described the use of the scientific method in order to understand the most complex machine – a human being. David Hume wanted to make a

name for himself by using the scientific method to understand the mind. More than anything else, he wanted to discover how the mind acquired and processed information. Only then, he argued, could we ever hope to find out what it was possible for the mind to know.

Hume was the greatest ever explorer of the human mind. He invented modern philosophy by showing us that there are strict limits to human understanding. After Hume, many philosophers gave up trying to develop intellectual systems that explained the universe and the place of mankind within it. He accomplished his goal in a work entitled *A Treatise of Human Understanding* (1739) that was little read in his own time, but became one of the greatest works in the philosophical canon.

Hume took scientific and philosophic inquiry into a very dark and narrow place by suggesting that humans were mistaken if they thought that they could create systems to explain either the world or themselves in it. He claimed that the mind was a trickster that grouped scattered phenomena by custom and habit. The natural propensity of the mind was to pretend to explain things that it patently could not. Over the last two thousand years, humans had been occupied devising imaginative explanations for things they could never hope to understand.

Hume's Common Sense Approach

We will never be able to discover the *essence* of the mind, said Hume, just as we cannot hope to discover the essence of material objects. We shouldn't waste our time on tasks that we know are fruitless. What we can hope to do, however, is to observe the way the mind works "from a cautious observation of human life as it operates in the common course of the world." We should be guided by our common sense and beware of believing that we can ever hope to discover absolute truths or eternal axioms in the Cartesian sense. It is merely sufficient that we gain a better idea of what is going on. We want to be able to describe the operations of the mind common sensically rather than take any risk of getting lost in logical quibbles.

How is it that we know anything at all?, asks Hume, starting from first principles. He answers the question in typical empiricist fashion. The only way we know anything is through the senses. The perceptions that we have of the sense data take two forms. The first kind is impressions that strike the mind directly and forcefully. These include the impression that we have when we look at the colour red or when we taste a banana. The second kind of impressions that we have is ideas that are thought rather than felt. They are similar to sense impressions except that they are weaker. A simple idea might be that of the sweetness of a banana that has a close resemblance to the sensation that we get when we bite into one.

Hume's point is that ideas must always follow the impressions we receive through the senses. We can never have an idea without a corresponding impression. We can never know whether anything exists outside of those impressions. Unlike Descartes, we cannot even surmise that something called matter exists or that a God, who supposedly created

matter, exists. All that we can ever know are our impressions and our ideas of those impressions.

Innate Ideas Cannot Exist

Impressions are prior to ideas in every case that we can think of, says Hume. It's ludicrous to try to conceive an idea without reference to a corresponding impression. Thus, there can be no innate or *a priori* ideas.

There are two kinds of ideas, however, and this is what inevitably leads thinkers into error. In addition to the simple ideas that correspond directly to our impressions, there are more complex ideas for which the correspondence is difficult to detect. But, if we look at these complex ideas closely, take them apart so to speak, we will find that they are composed of a series of simple ideas that are all connected to the impressions derived from our senses.

To the rationalists who believe that there exist *clear and distinct* ideas that are self-referential, Hume says prove it. He argues that he cannot conceive of any idea that exists independent of the senses. A close look at the way the human mind works suggests that we link together simple ideas into more complex ideas. There is a certain logic to the process that intrigues Hume. There's really no reason why these ideas couldn't be lumped together in a totally disorganized and haphazard fashion. But simple ideas clearly get linked to other simple ideas in an orderly way. Hume says that one "idea naturally introduces another" and human thought proceeds in a consistent way. Without this consistency, we humans would be incapable of communicating with one another and engaging in united action. Apart from registering and sharing simple ideas, human society would be the Tower of Babel.

Hume is fascinated by the way the mind creates complex ideas. Certain ideas, he says, appear to be brought together by a "gentle force." This association of ideas has three basic structures. They are *resemblance*, *contiguity in time and place*, and *cause and effect*. When something resembles something else, we tend to associate them together. When people look very much alike, we suspect, for example, that they come from the same family. Contiguity refers to the fact that two things are in the same place at the same time. If you see me and a woman together in the same place at the same and different times, you are entitled to suspect that we are connected somehow. The final structure, cause and effect, is the most important in the case of scientific and philosophical systems. Resemblance and contiguity really can't supply us with reliable information unless we can also assume the necessary connection of causation. Thus, two people might look alike and appear in similar places at similar times, but unless we know that they are the offspring of the same cause or that there is a close relationship between them, we don't really have an iron clad guarantee that they are connected.

Dismantling Cause and Effect

Resemblance, contiguity and cause and effect are the guiding principles of the mind. They serve a similar function for the mind that gravity does in the physical world. They are absolutely indispensable to having any knowledge at all. All of our complex ideas rely on these three principles, two of which are rather weak and possibly spurious. Only cause and effect really allows us to establish a clear relationship between objects and ideas. Cause and effect is the mortar that allows us to build structures out of the brick like impressions that strike the mind. Cause and effect is the only principle that clearly goes beyond our senses and provides us with information about those things that we cannot see or feel. Cause and effect is the only principle that allows us to make predictions about the future.

What is this *cause and effect* thing?, asks Hume. Obviously, it denotes a relationship of some kind. That relationship involves two objects being in proximity to one another at the same time or contiguity. It also implies that one object is prior to another, in other words, a cause comes before an effect. Any cause that was contemporary or simultaneous with its effect would be destroyed. So the cause and effect relationship always involves both contiguity and succession.

Where does that leave us? In a rigorous analytical sense, it leaves us nowhere. We still cannot discover anything like a *necessary connection* between a cause and an effect. If causation really exists, we ought to be able to explain it, but that's not as easy to do as it might first appear. For example, you might argue that cause and effect is a maxim that simply cannot be doubted. Everything must have a beginning or a cause; something can never come out of nothing. Hume would reply that you are simply repeating the concept of cause and effect in different words. You haven't proven anything. Why should anyone believe that everything that exists has a cause? Do you believe in God? Did he have a cause? We are no closer to the *necessary connection* between cause and effect.

In order to get to the bottom of the cause and effect principle, Hume suggests that we perform some simple case studies. Experience tells us that every time we put our fingers in the flame of a candle, we feel the heat. Stick your finger in the flame for too long and you will get burnt. Even the smallest child, after one or two bad experiences, makes the causal connection. Because of the *constant conjunction* of flame and heat or pain, we conclude that there must be a cause and effect relationship between the flame and the sensation of pain. In other words, our practical experience leads us to believe in a necessary connection.

This experience, however, does not really explain the relationship between a cause and effect. There needs to be an impression that comes between the flame and the pain to explain the phenomenon, since our only trustworthy information comes from impressions. For example, how do we know that the next time we put our finger in the flame that we will feel pain? No *necessary connection* guarantees that the flame will burn us the next time, or even that the sun will rise tomorrow. Just because the sun has risen every day in our lives, that does not mean it will rise tomorrow. Just because the only impressions we've had so far is of white swans, that doesn't mean that all swans are white. In fact, some swans are black.

Hume wants us to stop and think about this. Apart from the information that we get from our senses, cause and effect is the only relationship that can lead us to new knowledge. But cause and effect is far from being airtight. It is neither intuitively nor demonstrably certain. It is based overwhelmingly on past experience.

For those who might try to evade Hume's argument by substituting words like *power* or *efficacy* in place of *cause* and *effect*, Hume adopts a different logical approach. Let's assume that, in a particular instance, a power relationship implies an effect. That still doesn't mean that similar power relationships will occur in the future. No one can ever form conclusive predictions about future events on the basis of past events. Whatever words you use to describe it, cause and effect boils down to an expectation informed by *constant conjunction*.

Thus far, what we call cause and effect appears to be founded in a future prediction based on constant conjunctions in the past. **In other words, we believe that what happened in the past will happen in the future.** Cause and effect is based on *belief* rather than logical or experiential certainty. We do not *know* that cause and effect is true; we *believe* that it is true.

Belief

Hume's philosophy argues that most significant human knowledge is based on belief rather than certainty. This belief, in turn, is the product of experience or, as Hume puts it, the product of *custom and habit*. Because something happened in the past, human beings think it will happen in the future.

Hume's Philosophy of Belief

If belief rather than certainty is the key to human understanding, it is important to get a better handle on what exactly belief is. In order to explain belief, Hume appeals to the common sense of his readers. He suggests that belief is not something that exists in ideas themselves. If someone believes a newspaper article, but another doesn't, that does not necessarily mean that we have a different understanding of the ideas presented in the article. We could have identical understandings. But *someone* will *feel* differently about the article than *another*. Someone will feel what Hume calls a certain *firmness* or *vivacity* (conviction) about the information that *another* would not. Someone will *enter into* the ideas presented more strongly than another will.

It's the human mind that makes all the difference here, not the ideas themselves. The difference lies not in the ideas themselves or even the impressions that those ideas create. Belief is something that is *felt* by the mind. Belief is something that is generated when the natural association of ideas combines with our customs and habits. Custom and habit are the past experiences that lead us to believe in the existence of a necessary

relationship. In other words, cause and effect is not a relationship between the objects themselves (the flame and the pain) but a *psychological principle* of the mind.

Cause and Effect

Hume revolutionized science and philosophy by showing us that cause and effect is a psychological character of the mind. We cannot prove that it exists in nature or logically. It is simply the way that the human mind sifts and organizes impressions and ideas.

“Don’t get lazy, dear readers,” says Hume. “Don’t say, ‘Oh yes, I see; that makes sense, and then go back to sleep’.” Consider the implications of this discovery. Consider that

I have just now examined one of the most sublime questions in philosophy, viz., ‘that concerning the power and efficacy of causes’; where all the sciences seem so much interested.

Wake up, readers and students, says Hume and smell reality. Everyone who believes in the existence of scientific laws now faces a dilemma. Cause and effect, the basis of all science, doesn’t exist in human nature; it only resides in the mind. Science is at best a paradigm for organizing information. It isn’t and never will be truth.

The great philosophers of the past come in for even more criticism from Hume. Most of their ideas Hume finds ridiculous. For example, how can Plato possibly invent such rubbish as *ideal forms*? All that we can know with any certainty comes from the senses. The structures of reason and logic are not based on eternal truth; they are merely the tendency of the mind to believe certain things. While this information might prove useful when it comes to avoiding burning our fingers in a flame, it is not nearly a strong enough foundation for metaphysics. As for Descartes, all of his *clear and distinct* ideas are based on cause and effect. How can Descartes build such complex intellectual structures on such a weak and flimsy principle as the belief in a cause and effect relationship?

Hume goes much further by suggesting that *vulgar intelligence*, or ordinary common sense, is superior to the most refined academic understanding. Academics and philosophers are adept at building *castles in the air* that have no real substance. Most of this information is irrelevant to ordinary social life. At best, it is a playful distraction. But, if we take philosophical or scientific *systems* too seriously, they can be dangerous. Those who want to transform social life to fit their rationalist systems should be listened to with the greatest caution.

Hume on Imagination

Having demolished the foundation of abstract reasoning about the natural world, Hume went on to challenge the existence of external objects. In the well-established empirical tradition, Hume claimed that we could never know if there was an objective existence apart from our sense expressions. It made no sense to ask this question, much less to try

to prove it as Descartes attempted. A far more interesting question to ask, said Hume, was why we have this notion of external bodies in the first place.

We *believe* two interrelated things when we think that there are external objects, Hume suggested. First, we believe that objects have a *continued* existence even after we stop experiencing them with our senses. Second, we believe that this existence is *distinct* from our mind and our senses.

Why should we assume that objects continue to have existence after we cease to perceive them? The senses do not provide us with sufficient information to support this belief. All the senses can ever tell us is about the impressions that strike them. The senses have no power to guarantee a distinct reality out there. At best, the senses inform us of the representation of a supposed reality – in other words *images* rather than *objects*. Clearly the notion of distinct and continuous objects is a mental fiction.

This mental fiction, however, should be of interest to every student of the human mind. Why do we persist in a belief for which there is no logical grounds? Hume is fascinated by what seems *natural* rather than *logical* for the human mind. For this reason, he distinguished between the understanding of the *vulgar* (ordinary people) and the *learned* (academics, philosophers, scientists). Both the learned and the vulgar, for example, believe in motion and extension in space. But the learned do not have the same trust in such secondary qualities as tastes and colours. And yet both primary and secondary qualities are equally dependent on the senses and equally suspect.

Without ever consulting axioms or principles, the average Joe and Judy believe in the real and continuous existence of both primary and secondary qualities. Therefore, it is *natural* for human beings to believe in them. Even the philosophers who deny the existence of secondary qualities, such as Descartes, act in their everyday lives as if they believe in them. In their everyday lives in society, they act the same as children who think that philosophical abstractions are silly. Why is this, says Hume? Why is it that people routinely and naturally practice faulty reasoning? This has nothing to do with their understanding. Rather, it is because they have something called *imagination*.

Bear with me while we conduct a little experiment to help use figure out how the *imagination* works. If I look at my daughter Lara and then turn away for a moment in order to do something else, I assume that, when I turn back, I will receive an impression of Lara that is remarkably similar to the one I had before I turned away. Now, that does not mean that Lara will not have changed during that brief moment in time. I am not simply referring to a change of position or expression here, since, as we all know, Lara is one of those fascinating individuals who changes from moment to moment. Despite that, there is a certain coherence in my impression of Lara. The impression that I have now will still strongly resemble the one I had before I turned away. And, what is more important, I have a distinct feeling of a certain constancy about the admittedly changing Lara as I have about all the objects that I perceive as external to me. This feeling of constancy is quite different than the feeling that I have about impressions that refer to no external objects. There is no such constancy, for example, that can be applied to my

impressions or feelings of happiness or sadness. These feelings are up and down or all around, what Hume would call wayward. The feelings that have with regard to Lara as an object have a particular kind of constancy.

What I am doing in the case of Lara and other objects is this: I am making a *leap of imagination* in order to connect my past impressions with my present impression. By this time, you should realize that there is no logical basis for this belief; rather, it is a way of preventing what might otherwise appear to be a contradiction. Experience causes us to realize that later impressions resemble earlier ones. Unless we want to feel that our first impression has been totally annihilated, and that the second impression is a totally new one, we are led to use our imagination to fill the gap. We imagine the continued existence of a supposed object that created the impression. This means, in effect, that we have to posit a cause of the impression outside of our own perceptions. Our imagination, rather than our reason, gives external objects their existence.

Because this use of our imagination is so habitual, and indeed happens thousands of times a day, we pay very little attention to it. Hume wants us to pay very close attention to the interruption in impressions that causes us to ascribe a perfectly distinct identity to some object. He wants us to appreciate that this action has absolutely no rational basis but, rather, is a trick of the imagination. **The imagination is a wonderful magician.** You don't have to be the slightest bit rational to work this magical trick. Children do it very early on – from at least the age of 3 months as cognitive psychologists like Piaget tell us. If you take a toy away from a tiny baby, that toy will cease to exist for the baby. But, after just a few months, something called *object retention* occurs and the baby will look for the object that you have taken away from its line of vision. This activity, Hume says, is *natural*. That doesn't make it any easier to explain and, in fact, it can't be explained in logico-rational terms at all.

Hume on the Self

Having destroyed the notion of external reality on philosophical grounds, while simultaneously justifying its naturalness in the context of human understanding, Hume goes on to attack the thorny problem of the *self*. Descartes invented the modern self by suggesting that the *cogito* was the one thing that we could be absolutely sure of. While we could not be certain of our existence as a body, at least not until God came into the picture, at least we could be sure of ourselves as thinking beings or as minds.

Hume's reply to Descartes is that he has uttered a load of rubbish. All that we can ever be sure of is the sense impressions we receive. Moreover, there is absolutely no impression that could ever give rise to such a complex idea as that of a unique and individual self. On the contrary, our impressions are so variable; so many different impressions strike us at the same time; and this shifting information is all we will ever know. In order to take the concept of *myself* seriously, says Hume, I would need to be able to relate it to some perception. The self cannot exist apart from perception. But show me anyone who really knows himself or herself as something other than a complex bundle of impressions, says Hume, and I'll show you an idiot or a liar. There is nothing

in our experience that is simple and continues enough on which to build a *self*. “I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind,” says Hume, “that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement.” “Our eyes,” he continues tersely, “cannot turn in their sockets without varying our perceptions.”

Having demolished the concept of the *self*, Hume moves on to discuss the significance of the concept. Hume is not simply destructive, as many modern philosophers like to suggest. What he wants to discover, as in the case of external objects, is how exactly we come to have a *belief in ourselves*. Even before we are rationally aware of it, we create an identity for ourselves that we surrender with considerable reluctance and usually then only for short periods of time.

The underpinning of our belief in ourselves, once again, is *imagination*. We imagine the existence of objects apart from our impressions in order to bridge the gap between past and present impressions. In this way, Hume says, we *confound* relation with identity. It will now take a considerable amount of change in our impressions to believe that either ourselves or other beings have been transformed into something different. This phenomenon has been explored by cognitive psychologists who perform experiments with visualization. They show subjects drawings of a dog that gradually changes into a cat. Subjects prove to be highly resistant to *seeing* the cat as it develops. Similarly, says Hume, a ship will have to sustain a considerable amount of damage before we regard it as a shipwreck rather than a ship. Even when it is no more than a few floating planks, we still tend to think of those planks as part of a former ship. I may change dramatically over the years, but I will still think of I as me.

The mind is no more than a series of impressions. However, it is natural for us to untie those impressions according to three basic principles: resemblance, contiguity and causation. But, when it comes to understanding our own minds, the place where impressions tend to succeed one another rather than come together in place and time, we are primarily concerned with resemblance and causation. Resemblance causes us to link together all past impressions in a kind of chain, thereby making the whole seem like the continuation of one object. Causation causes us to connect simple ideas into more complex structures. The entire process results in a form of government, as Hume puts it, in the mind, in which we order things in terms of subordination and superordination. The whole, willy nilly, becomes much more meaningful than the sum of its parts. The parts can be altered, but we will still attribute a continued existence to the whole, just as we did in the case of the drastically altered ship, and just as we do in the case of our *selves*.

Memory, of course, is the chief tool that allows us to *discover* our personal identities. It does not, however, create it. We have a notion of our identity far past the place our memory extends. I have no recollection of what I did or how I felt when I was six, but I have a clear notion that John Dwyer existed over 44 years ago. That idea I have because of my belief in the relation of cause and effect among my different perceptions. While memory does not create my personal identity, however, it does allow me to discover it.

Without the memory of some of the impressions from the past that we relate in terms of cause and effect, we could never have a distinct notion of ourselves.

So, the concept of the *self* is a neat little fiction. We can alter significantly, but we will still think of ourselves as the same person. And yet, I am a very different character both in appearance and nature, from when I went to university as a naïve young student and failed most of my courses. What is even more fascinating, I still think of myself as the same person as well. All that I have to go by is my perceptions, my particular perceptions. Or rather, perceptions are all that I have to go by if I try to understand myself rationally. It is only the faith I have in my ability to create imaginary fictions that allows me to have a feeling of *myself* and an *external world* outside of my senses.

In the process of playing these imaginary tricks, however, I've subverted human understanding. Haven't I, in Hume's words, "cut off entirely all science and philosophy" as a way of understanding my world and myself? Pushing the principle even further, haven't I rejected reason altogether? In an important sense yes I have.

The Humean Irony

If you have been following Hume's argument so far, you might be wondering whether or not he is involved in a logically fallacy. Hasn't Hume used a considerable amount of reason and logic to prove that reason is unable to explain our world or us? Isn't Hume's argument a model of rationality and close logic? You can imagine 'le Bon David' chuckling at this point. He's well aware that the snake has swallowed its own tail. Reason destroys itself. What Hume leaves us is a choice between a reason that is patently false or no reason at all. Ultimately, what Hume wants his readers to understand is that they wander into error whenever they move very far from the *natural operations* of the human mind and imagination.

Hume on Religion

Hume's attack on religion cost him a professorship at Edinburgh University, a position that he dearly desired. Even the more enlightened members of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, who supported their friend Hume in most things and kept trying to get him to soften his views, threw up their hands when Hume published his famous attack on religion. But Hume's writings on religion were entirely consistent with his analysis of human understanding. If we cannot prove that the self or the external world exists, says Hume, it is absurd to talk about the existence of God. There is no sense impression whatsoever that could ever lead us to a conception of god. And, since there are no innate ideas, we cannot look for God internally. All our knowledge derives from the senses, and when we die, our reality is annihilated. Don't expect life after death, Hume argued.

The position is logically consistent. The question for the intellectual historian is why Hume wouldn't avoid religious controversy? Why did he consider it necessary to discuss religious abstractions? Some writers have pointed to Hume's distaste for religious fanaticism, and especially the Roman Catholic Church, as sufficient reason for his anti-religious agenda. While it is certainly true that David Hume, his friend Adam Smith, and enlightened writers generally were highly critical of dogmatic religion, that fact still does not explain Hume's need to write extensively against all forms of religion.

In order to understand Hume's agenda, we need to look at the enlightened form of religion that was emerging in the eighteenth-century rather than the medieval religious beliefs that were under attack from all sides of the enlightenment. Hume focused his attack on the Deist conception of God, modern rational religion, because French writers used this rationalistic religion to support their mechanical and logical theories of society. For the Deist's, God was the creator of an orderly nature that contrasted sharply with an irrational society. God was also the First Cause, the ultimate principle that underpinned the cause and effect relationships that Hume was concerned to demolish. Hume equally disliked rational religious, political, and social *systems* because they were used to justify radical change. Ironically, it was Hume's conservatism that led him to attack modern forms of religion.

Hume demonstrated that cause and effect was something that originated in our imagination. Causality did not exist in nature or in reason. If nature was not characterized by law and order, Hume argued that it was ridiculous to deduce a supreme being that created a clockwork universe. Even if one were foolish enough to believe in a clockwork universe, argued Hume, the Deist argument would still be absurd. Complex machines were usually created by more than one man; why couldn't a number of gods come together to create a supposedly clockwork universe.

Hume's attack on the Deists was vicious and totally out of line with the general tenor of the Enlightenment. It made him a lot of enemies, who he always treated in a good-natured way. Only once did he waver from his position, although it cannot be considered serious. One night after a little too much claret (smuggled from France), he fell into a mud hole off an Edinburgh street – Edinburgh being a very mucky place before the New Town was built. A little old lady came by and Hume asked her to help him out. "Aren't you David Hume, the atheist," she asked. "Yes," replied Hume honestly. "Then I shall not help you out," said the old lady. Upon this, Hume quickly replied, "I believe, I believe," after which the old lady kindly pulled him out of the muck. When Hume was dying, a fellow Edinburgh writer asked Hume why he took the risk of refusing to believe in God when he couldn't prove or disprove God's existence. Hume took a piece of paper, crunched it up, and threw it into the fireplace next to his sickbed. He said, "I can't disprove that this paper will burn up, but I'll bet you that it does." Hume's death was well described by his friend Adam Smith, and he kept his sense of humour and his rejection of religion right up to its painful end.

Of course, Hume had no time for religion of any kind. He ridiculed the notion of revealed religion and, especially, the possibility of miracles. Nothing in human

experience, he argued, furnished any indication that miracles ever occurred. The belief in miracles was as ludicrous as the belief in superstition. The testimony of a few *nuts* as to the supposed working of some supposed God could not compare to the entire weight of human experience on the way that nature operated. Like philosophical abstractions, revealed religion led nowhere.

While they respected Humean skepticism, and many of them may have been closet agnostics, Hume's contemporaries were reluctant to join in his attack on religion. Some, like Adam Smith, appear to have feared the social consequences of a godless society. Hume's attack on religion certainly was one of the main reasons that his philosophy was shunned much more in his own time than our own.

Hume's Philosophy: Implications and Context

How can we sum up Hume's philosophy? Ironically, despite his deconstruction of science, philosophy and theology, Hume's writings were an affirmation of community and everyday life. The attack on the *self* should not mislead us into thinking that Hume's philosophy was personally destructive. In fact, Hume's purpose was to reinforce an appreciation of ordinary life and the pleasure of society. Humean philosophy was an argument for a certain kind of *indolence* with respect to the subtleties and sophistries of philosophy. Having proven that reason was faulty, Hume could stop worry about trying to discover the meaning of human life and could begin to appreciate it in a natural way. Hume's brilliant destruction of the 'goddess of Reason' and the 'Deist god' allowed him to be what he called a "natural and agreeable fool" instead of a "dreary philosopher." And he could play this role in good conscience, since he had proven that philosophy leads us nowhere.

Hume's arguments were much more than an apology for his good-humoured life. One of the primary purposes of Humean philosophy was to challenge the French *philosophes* that sought to create a rational and orderly society. While he sympathized with their frustration with superstition, injustice, and economic backwardness, Hume believed that French philosophers were frightening people. What French writers failed to appreciate was that human societies were based on custom and habit; they could not be changed overnight. The best one could hope for was gradual progress. The reason that England had made the progress that it did was that it changed slowly under the guidance of the aristocracy, gentry and social institutions. To think that one could turn France into a mirror of England overnight, either through enlightened despotism or social revolution, was to completely misunderstand the way the human mind and human societies evolved.

Hume's philosophy may have been radical, but its message was socially conservative without being naively traditionalist. He was one of the first to point to the socially irresponsible characteristics of modern science and philosophy. He believed in moderate progress but he attacked ideas of social reconstruction. His touchstone was the community, which, whenever in doubt, favoured a conservative approach. Thus, Hume can be called the father of modern conservatism.

A Treatise of Human Nature, in Hume's own words, "fell stillborn from the press." It is one of those unusual works that has become much more important in our own age than when it was published in the eighteenth-century. Hume's contemporary influence stemmed jointly from his *History of England* and the many essays that he composed on practical morality and polite manners. Hume did not refocus his energies towards these areas because he was disappointed in the reaction to his philosophy. Quite the contrary, Hume believed that he had demonstrated the limits of human understanding in these areas. Much more important, he believed, was to increase our appreciation for the past and for the human customs and habits on which all lasting progress would depend. Hume, in effect, practiced what he preached. Philosophy and science were as overrated as they were undependable. History, however, if carefully studied without dogmatism, could teach us much more about what it meant to be human.

Deleuze: Empiricism and Subjectivity

General

1. Why does Deleuze want to incorporate Hume in his own philosophy? **He finds Hume's emphasis on the active power of the imagination, as opposed to reason, creatively liberating. He believes that Hume has conclusively demonstrated the superiority of passion over reason in the construction of the human city. He thinks that moral general rules and beliefs are the only legitimate guide to life and interrogates all and every 'scientific' attempt to direct or limit human potential. He views human subjectivity primarily in terms of moral invention. Finally, he sees possibilities for the entertaining and exploitation of 'difference' in Hume's analysis of the development of culture and institutions. All of these emphases, Deleuze suggests, come from an "empirical" approach to a subjective human nature because it alone escapes the traps set by a philosophy that worships at the altar of certainty.**
2. Deleuze wants to use Hume to pinpoint a philosophical problem and to generate an alternate trajectory for discussions of the *subject*. Why is specifically Humean *empiricism* a legitimate philosophical breakthrough for Deleuze? **Most *transcendent* examinations of the subject fail to come to grips with the phenomenon of *subjectivity* itself. Hume shows us how human consciousness is 1) both constructed within the realm of the 'given', and 2) actively reprocesses the 'given' in order to activate itself.**
3. Why is the 'textbook' definition of empiricism not particularly useful in appreciating Hume or Deleuze's agenda? **Empiricism is typically thought of as a philosophy that relates all human knowledge to sensory experience. Sensory experiences are too discrete and many to account for Human knowledge. It is necessary to discover the *principles* by which *ideas* are associated to form this thing called knowledge.**
4. What do we discover about *knowledge* when we look at the *principles* according to which it is constructed? **Knowledge is a set of *beliefs*, including a belief in the self, in time and space, which allows us not merely to *process* our experience, but in fact also to create it by processing it.**
5. What does Humean empiricism have to say about the *status* of that knowledge? **A great deal. In the first place, since it is based on resemblances, contiguities and causalities that are, at best, provisional or probable, it is always subject to correction in the light of experience. Thus, there is no such a thing as *objective knowledge* apart from these inexplicable *tendencies*. Second, knowledge is constructed within the *imagination*. Thus, there is no such thing as truth only better or worse *fictions*. Third, a fundamental characteristic of better knowledge is its basis in habit or custom. Thus, all knowledge is contingent upon particular circumstances and has its**

- appropriate locus in *culture*. Fourth, better knowledge is affirmed by the vividness of belief as reinforced by habit. This, of course, raises the inescapable problem of culturally generated beliefs that are oppressive, reactionary or impractical -- in effect, worse *fictions*.
6. What is another related problem with knowledge that goes to the heart of what is at stake in Hume or Deleuze? **Knowledge is not the only or even the most important activating set of principles in human consciousness. Affectivity or the *passions* are more significant agents. In effect, knowledge or the *association of ideas* serves the passions. Affectivity or the passions are what chooses the ideas that are to be combined in human consciousness, pointing them to desirable ends.**
 7. Human consciousness therefore is a *system* or a set of *processes* that combine means and ends in the light of what is eventually given as human *experience*. What is the fundamental foundation of this system for Hume? **The human experience of *pain* and *pleasure*. Hume is a *utilitarian* but he should not be classified as a Benthamite utilitarian who measures pain and pleasure in terms of an individual ego. Some pains and pleasures, to be sure, we associate with the body (another mental construction), but most, and certainly the most important, are associated with affectivity towards others and inscribed culturally in terms of particular collectivities of habit.**
 8. Although we didn't read much about the passions or morality in our readings from Hume's *Treatise*, it is useful to know that his theory ultimately puts knowledge at the service of the moral sentiments. What does Deleuze have to say about the ethical problem or essential question that Hume is dealing with? **Hume wants to theoretically separate knowledge from the passions, although in practice they are clearly one, in order to show how the mental agenda of morality differs from the mental agenda of knowledge formation. With respect to knowledge (association of ideas) the mental process is always to *extend* causality, with respect to the passions it is to *intensify* affectivity.**
 9. Why is it necessary to *intensify* and modify affectivity for Hume the utilitarian? **For the simple reason that without an admittedly *artificial* bond to the collectivity, humans would not be able to safely pursue the sympathy or obtain the social and sympathetic status they desire. Property rights and attachment to justice are necessary for the individual consciousness to find a home in the collective *world*. But the resulting historical association and laws, while in a sense artificial, end up being fundamental to identity. They can never be the result of a *contract* between detached egos.**
 10. What does Deleuze think is Hume's most important contribution to empiricism and philosophy? **He conclusively demonstrates that there are principles that constitute the mind that are *external and synthetic relations*. You can't talk about the mind as an object or subject apart from those relationships.**

11. What excites Deleuze about this particular analysis of *subjectivity*? **It means the mind is a set of *processes* rather than an independent subject that *processes sensation*. It means that the mind is *what the mind does*. For Deleuze, it means that the mind is “being-multiple” rather than something fixed. It is able to *transcend* experience, not because it is objectively transcendent, but because its mechanisms allow it to situate itself creatively within the given.**
12. In what sense is Deleuze not particularly Humean? **Deleuze want to use Humean insights to explore and exploit *differential possibilities*. He stresses the fictive nature of imagination within the given and the potential for belief as moral agency. Hume arguably would interpret his philosophical agenda in a much more conservative way, in terms of a philosophy of common sense that continually corrects belief whenever it wanders too far away from the historical experience that it has itself generated. Hume is careful about how to manage the disparate sensations of the mind; Deleuze sees opportunities for extrapolating from those differences.**
13. What do both Deleuze and Hume agree upon? **That “particular relations and actual subjects require concrete and different circumstances as their sufficient conditions” (Introduction by Boundas). Both want us to pay attention to lived experience rather than to theorize in a vacuum. But whereas Deleuze is willing to exploit the fictionalizing function of the imagination even to the point of reinforcing God as a *cause* (rather than *effect*), Hume wants to keep it under control. Deleuze wants to emphasize the possibilities of *purposeful action*. Hume wants to underline the passive and safe character of habit and custom. Note how there is a lot about culture in Deleuze but not a lot about custom.**
14. How does Deleuze describe the inherent *tension* in Humean analysis **As a “radical critique of interiority and a simultaneous quest for an inside deeper than any internal world”. One thing is for clear, the external world disappears completely in this analysis of sensation except as a useful construct for guiding purposeful action.**
15. How does Boundras describe what Deleuze is attempting to do? **“Opening up a new space for a new Subject”. Is Boundras skeptical of Deleuze’s success in this enterprise? He seems to hint at reservations because of the way that this kind of empiricist approach remains “homocentric”. What does Boundras suggest is the real insight of the approach that Deleuze cobbles together from Hume? The attention to “concrete circumstances” within which human consciousness operates and the insight into the “anticipating” and “inventing” capacity of human nature.**
16. Can you sum up the nature of Deleuze’s philosophy? **It might be called a “philosophy of practice as transcendence” that finds speculative philosophy**

limiting. It emphasizes “passionate intensity” over “cognitive understanding”. It affirms “the World, the Self and God” as *beliefs* that nevertheless provide a context or frame for action.

Specific (Page by Page)

1. Why is Hume’s analysis improperly described as *psychological*? **Not only does *psychological* imply a subject that is not given, only constituted within given processes, but also he is a moralist a sociologist and a historian before being a psychologist. The mind is not nature and does not have a nature of its own; it *becomes* human nature.**
2. What is the key to the mind *becoming human nature*? **The association of ideas in the IMAGINATION or FANCY. The imagination is the theatre in which the subject is constructed. Moreover, the imagination is a quintessentially *social* theatre. The “bond of ideas” is suggested to us by habit.**
3. What is the nature of the “association of ideas”? **Always to go “beyond” what is given in sensation, always to ‘transcend’. There is no “mind” that does this; the “mind” or human nature is constructed “by” the doing of this.**
4. What is the problem with “fancy” or the imaginative process? **It can display “its own fancies”. In other words, it can combine sensations to construct pretty much whatever it pleases. In order to “consolidate knowledge”, therefore, individuals apply “corrective rules” that allow knowledge to be more practical.**
5. For Hume, the mind is “activated” rather than “activates”. What’s another way of saying this? **Deleuze says that the mind “becomes a subject”.**
6. To what *limited* extent is Hume an “atomist” for Deleuze? **Hume does believe that the starting point for any analysis of “mind” or human nature are individual “sensations”. But we could never get useful knowledge from that. Hume’s real contribution is in showing how we “associate” ideas that are reflections of sensations. That is anything but an “atomistic psychology” since the processes of association are “external relations”.**
7. In what way, and what way *only*, can the mind be described as *transcendent*? **As a “practice” not as an entity in itself; there is no “pre-existing subject” that discovers only the act of discovery. The “reflection” that we associate with the concept of mind is really its “qualification” and the “effect of principles within it”.**
8. What are “things” and the “integration of things” therefore in this “system” of processing? **They are ways of “affirming an identity” that allows “impressions” to be integrated within the “associating” processes. There are**

no such things as “things”; things are “qualifications of the mind”. Ideas really are all reflections of sensations and there is no objective existence that we can be certain of. Our desire to give objective existence is a “positivism of feeling” rather than a truth.

9. What is the SELF for Hume? A “synthesis” that pretends to be an “origin”. The self is a “belief”.
10. Why is SUBJECTIVITY a PHYSICS OF HUMANITY for Hume? Ultimately, it is all about feelings and passions. Even causality is a passion or something felt rather than something that we can know cognitively.
11. Why is Hume a certain kind of POLITICAL thinker for Deleuze? What we call “reason” depends more on certain kinds of feelings and beliefs than anything else. Any rationalist beliefs that define and extend our knowledge invariably arise in a “pre-existing world” and reflect our desire to adjust the most effective means to human ends. The notion of knowledge outside of society and its politics would make no sense to Hume says Deleuze. You might consider that for Hume historical institutions and political life generally were the practical working out of reason in history. You might also consider that Hume was opposed to any definition of reason that subjected political institutions to its own supposedly “objective” critique. Reason is a socio-political construct within particular sets of circumstances.
12. Why should we be skeptical about reason according to Hume? Because human society and institutions are based more on beliefs and feelings than reason. Not only is reason itself ultimately based on belief but human societies are based on sympathy. Beliefs and sympathies cannot be combined in cognitive theories but only as “the theory of HUMAN practice”. Deleuze calls this the Humean “positivism of the passions”.
13. What two kinds of practice are distinct and need to be kept distinct for Hume? The practice of science or the study of nature and the practice of morality. The first is based on a division of “parts” in a totality where anything can conceivably be a cause of anything else. The second is grounded in a human nature that is “partial”. In the case of any conflict, which practice should and must dominate the other. Science needs to be dominated by the science of human nature, because scientific reason could lead to the destruction of mankind without any contradiction.
14. Hume’s analysis of human nature is cultural. How and why do human cultures evolve? Culture evolves to deal with the highly partial nature of a sympathy that cannot achieve its ends without an artificial intensification of sympathy. Culture is a response to a ‘human’ problem that ‘redefines’ what it is to be human. Hume objects to the notion that humans are egoistic and that culture is a way of controlling selfishness. For him, humans are affective actors. But that affectivity is too limited to be socially useful and so laws,

politics etc were necessary. The problem is not egotism but the nature of sympathy itself. Once created, however, these cultural modifications become not merely legitimate institutions but catalysts for intensifying and, thereby, changing the affections.

15. When does the cultural or “moral world” affirm its “reality”? When it succeeds at some level to replace “violence” with “conversation”. Deleuze simply describes this feature of socio-political formation as a consequence of Hume’s analysis. However, you might want to note that this notion of “substitution” is a quintessentially eighteenth-century one. Polite converse between improving property owners was not merely a logical Humean outcome but also the *raison d’etre* of the Scottish Enlightenment – a highly specific socio-historical environment.
16. How does Deleuze describe the relationship between morality and politics in Hume? He says that, for Hume, “true morality is politics”. But to cite the specific context again, one of the problems Hume and other Enlightened Scots faced was the fact that they ‘lost’ their political institutions and had to make ‘morality’ carry the communal load formerly managed by political institutions.
17. How does morality perform this cultural function? Its operations parallel the *association of ideas*. It moves from inefficient (non-utilitarian) particulars to more *general rules*. General rules, in both cases, are simultaneously *extensive* and *corrective*. That is why they must always end up looking like casuistry.
18. How does his understanding of general rules affect Hume’s concept of “justice”? Justice is “artificial” and “topological”. Its basis is sympathy and it cannot be reduced to rationalistic principles. It has a historical context. But once invented or legitimately “constituted”, it does create a “natural obligation”. It becomes a cultural habit and a magnet for feeling.
19. What general and anti-intuitive conclusion does Deleuze derive from Hume’s discussion of the development of morality? **That history is a part of human nature.*******
20. Why are “institutions” more important than “laws” for Hume according to Deleuze? **Laws are typically negative statements, designed to remedy problems, but institutions are positive “models of action”.**
21. What is society for Hume? A “set of conventions” based on utility? Why utility and not some other principle like rights? **Utility measures the interests that people have in forming unions whereas rights are simply abstractions. Without society there would be no rights. Note that this definition of utility is very different from Bentham’s and it is measured from within rather than from without a society.**

22. What does any theory of *utility* have to take into account? **It has to take into account the fact that human interests are constructed by the IMAGINATION and in particular HISTORICAL CONTEXTS.**
23. What does Deleuze *personally* like about Hume's analysis? **It allows for lots of HISTORICAL DIFFERENCES and HUMAN INVENTIVENESS. Deleuze wants to read Hume as someone who allows for different kinds of societies and institutions. He does not want to be saddled by the conservative implications of Hume's contextual approach.**
24. How far is Deleuze willing to go to define Hume in terms of human institutional inventiveness? **Deleuze tends to exaggerate Hume's emphasis on political institutions to the point of saying that the vividness of partial relations is replaced by "loyalty to the state". Hume and other Scots tended to be skeptical about the influence of institutions and to discover 'culture' in manners. Deleuze himself talks about the importance of "conversation between proprietors" for Hume's discussion of morality. If the institutions were of crucial importance, then polite converse might not be so critical.**
25. Deleuze has a lot to say about Hume's contribution to political economy based on his analysis of capitalist property owners. Leaving aside the issue of domination and class politics, why does Deleuze suggest that it would be a mistake to lump Hume in with the tradition of classical economics? **For Hume, as for Adam Smith by the way, property is a "qualitative" and not merely a quantitative issue. He is all about creating "harmony" in society by adjusting the flow of capital in the most efficient way, not just to help property owners, but to provide the state with the necessary funds to provide services. Obviously, Hume (for Deleuze) did not consider the state to be the political arm of the emerging bourgeoisie.**
26. Can you sum up Deleuze's interpretation of Hume's analysis of culture and politics? **Culture becomes an essential part of human nature because of the moral project based on sympathy. [Deleuze highlights the role of institutions and, particularly, the state in adjusting partial interests and maintaining intensity (loyalty) while extending sympathy. Deleuze tends to make culture the province of the state, whereas I'm not sure that was Hume's intention at all.]**
27. We know that in Hume's account, the imagination likes to associate ideas in ways that generate general rules. Why does he want to talk about "two" different sets of rules? **The first set of rules created by the imagination is freer and "spontaneous" like the way we tend to stereotype ethnic groups. The second set is more "reflective" and acts as a correction of the inadequacies of the first set.**
28. Why are rules possible in the first place? What activates them? **Deleuze wants to argue that it is the passions that direct us; we never 'associate' in a**

vacuum. The imaginative process is always “passionate”. Deleuze want to emphasize the “play” of the passions because he thinks that this is the proper function of the imagination – creative discovery in the service of creating the human. Deleuze of course also constantly wants the imagination to be an active and practical “power” rather than something “fanciful”. **FOR DELEUZE, HUME HAS DEFINED THE IMAGINATION RATHER THAN REASON AS THE POWER TO ACTIVATE HUMAN NATURE AND TRANSCEND HUMAN LIFE. IMAGINATION IN THE SERVICE OF ‘DIFFERENCE’ SEEMS TO BE HIS AGENDA. IT IS A CURIOUS BUT PLAUSIBLE READING OF HUME. DELEUZE, OF COURSE, UNDERSTANDS THAT CORRECTIVE RULES NEED TO BE CONSTANTLY GENERATED WITH RESPECT TO PRACTICE, BUT HE PERHAPS UNDERSTIMATES HUME’S RELUCTANCE CONTINUALLY TO “EXTEND THE PASSIONS” IN THE IMAGINATION AND TO “PLAY WITH LIMITS”. HUME LOOKS AT LEAST AS MUCH TO THE PAST AS TO THE FUTURE WHEN IT COMES TO THE APPLICATION OF THE IMAGINATION.**

29. How does Deleuze define “culture” with respect to the “imagination” in Hume, and what can this tell you about Deleuze’s agenda? **Deleuze describes culture as a “false experience” but a “true experiment”. Deleuze wants to be able to *experiment* with human nature by affirming and exploiting differences. But that seems to me to be a somewhat illegitimate way of expropriating Hume.**
30. Earlier we described the SELF as an unintelligible belief. How is the concept of the self rehabilitated by Hume’s analysis of the passions? **In the culture that the passions necessitate, the self finds its “understanding’ in a “moral and political SOLUTION”. “Affection” and “reflection” lead to a synthesis that is rich with meaning. The “habit” of identifying oneself as part of a particular culture is formed by degrees from childhood.**
31. Why was Hume able to affirm such “habits” over “reason” in an eighteenth-century world where reason was so triumphant? **Hume pointed out that what we call “reason” is, at its most important point, simply a belief reinforced by habit. Therefore, to oppose reason to habit or custom was illogical. At best, one could merely invoke better and worse habitual beliefs.**
32. Deleuze argues that Hume’s analysis of causality is not really about *experience* or *probability* as many commentators argue but about something else. What is it really about? **It is really about HABIT. Without the principle of forming habits, experience would be meaningless. Causality also presupposes the principle of forming habits that become stronger or weaker beliefs. Reason is an “effect” of habit.**
33. What is a problem with “habits” that Hume needed to contend with? **Habits can generate “false experiences”, not in the sense that there is a “real” experience to be found, but in the sense that some things that we mentally**

process as true, have too many contraries, are too abstract, or too removed from what we commonly identify as “experiential”. Thus, education and superstition can generate useless, or even dangerous, knowledge. Hence, the constant need for correction of rules by new rules.

34. Why is language a problem in terms of creating “fictions of the imagination”? **Hume argues that there is a tendency to attribute “secret meanings” to words that can be discovered by “reflection”. Spoken “repetition” can generate false “beliefs” or what Hume calls “phantoms of belief”. Since all belief is in a sense counterfeit and “exceeding”, this possibility can always occur. The object of “philosophical probability” or philosophy in its true sense is to “maintain belief within the limits of the understanding and to ensure conformity between habit and experience”. It necessarily involves a “critique of rules by rules”.**
35. What are most “religious rules” for Hume? **They are an “overstride of the imagination, a fiction and a simulacrum of belief”. All “cosmologies” are fictions and inherently “fanciful”. Why are religions based on miracles particularly problematic? They should be subjected to experiential probability.**
36. Why does Deleuze object to Hume’s analysis of religion? **Hume seems to think that most cultural concepts, even the most problematic, have a positive core that can be discovered by correcting for error. But in the case of religion, so dominant a part of culture, nothing seems to be left when Hume gets through with it. Religion, in effect, becomes the only totally “fanciful” product of the association of ideas.**
37. How does Deleuze try to rehabilitate religion within the Humean system? **He suggests that there is a “place for God” in saying what “causes” the principles that activate the mind and gives them their power. We can think of God “negatively” as the cause of principles. Thus, theism becomes valid.**
38. That’s not very convincing. What else does Deleuze have to offer about God? **As mentioned earlier, God can become something of a limiting principle right at the “horizon of belief”**
39. Why does Deleuze bring Hume’s discussion of the “self” and the “body” into the argument about God do you think? **Deleuze appears to want to suggest that the concept of “body” allows us to organize the world around us, despite the fact that the “attribution of identity” is a patent falsehood. So too the idea of God allows us to construct and helps us to believe in that world around us by giving it an “origin”. The usage of terms like “body” and “God” become organizing *principles*.**
40. Strictly speaking, however, our notion of the world is something of a philosophical “monstrosity”. What does Deleuze make of Hume’s philosophical

insight? While the world is, strictly speaking philosophically, “delerium and madness” that’s precisely the world that we live in. The problem with most philosophies is that they attempt to make the world CONFORM TO REASON and to separate its “permanent principles” from “irregular variables”. IT SEEKS TO ELEVATE REASON OVER THE IMAGINATION, WHICH IS AN “ERROR”. THE ONLY PRACTICAL SOLUTION IS ENGAGED PRACTICE, AND CORRECTIVE PRACTICE. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING FOR DELEUZE THAT THIS ‘PRACTICE’ IS “MORAL PRACTICE”.

41. Science has a big impact on our lives and seeks more. What does Deleuze argue via Hume about the appropriate science? **Deleuze suggests that the only real science of “life” should be morally grounded “general rules and beliefs”.**
42. Why does Deleuze believe Hume’s treatment of *subjectivity* to be so sophisticated? **For Deleuze, Hume’s discussion of human subjectivity has two moments: 1) the way the subject mediates and *transcends* experience and, 2) the way the subject *reflects* upon itself. In addition, HUME’S ENTIRE ARGUMENT SHOWS THAT WHAT REALLY MAKES US HUMAN IS “BELIEVING AND INVENTING”. Finally, believing and inventing, based as it is on sympathy but going beyond sympathy, is MORAL. What we truly are is our moral beliefs.**
43. How do Human beings ‘invent’ knowledge and morality for Hume? **By creating general rules or norms.**
44. What is or, rather, should be the *essence* of empiricism for Deleuze? **To situate the human “in a purely immanent point of view” or to view the subject as “constituted in the given” rather than separate. The only way to do this is to position ourselves in the “flux of the sensible” where everything begins as “difference”. NOTE HOW DELEUZE IS ATTEMPTING TO SUGGEST THE INVENTIVENESS OF HUMAN NATURE WITHIN A FIELD THAT IS, WHILE TECHNICALLY NOT INFINITE, EXTREMELY BROAD. THE MIND HAS NO ESTABLISHED FORM THAT TRANSCENDS THE GIVEN. ITS TRANSCENDENCE OF THE GIVEN OCCURS BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENS WITHIN THE GIVEN.**
45. Why is psychology a crock for Deleuze and Hume? **Psychological models presuppose a psyche, a certain organization of the brain, or a human nature. What they fail to recognize is that their particular “collection” of characteristics is arbitrary, since the mind has no separate quality. If there is a starting point it can only be the quantity of impressions or separate units of sensation that are associated in certain ways to form this thing that we call the mind. NOTE AGAIN HOW DELEUZE IS TRYING TO MAKE EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE AND TO RENDER ‘DIFFERENCE’ MATERIAL FOR THE ‘IMAGINATION’.**

46. Is Hume claiming that the imagination is a separate faculty then? **Not at all. It begins as a COLLECTION of units. Through the association of ideas, the collection becomes a SYNTHESIS AND A SYSTEM. Human nature is constructed through BELIEF and, notably, INVENTION.**
47. What word describes the *dynamism* that the human subject brings to this association of ideas? It is also the word that links the past and present with the future. **The word is ANTICIPATION. Deleuze thinks that HUME'S REAL ORIGINALITY IS THAT HE MAKES HUMAN NATURE DYNAMIC IN SO FAR AS IT COMBINES HABIT AND ANTICIPATION TO MOVE TOWARDS THE FUTURE.**
48. Those who have worked on Hume often refer to his conservatism, his argument that the past must be the *rule* for the future and that collective memory (subject to correction) should be the fundamental guide for human life. It should be obvious that Deleuze has a different agenda and doesn't want us to be chained to the past. Thus, he has to play a certain 'game' with Hume. What's he say? **He points out that the 'past' is not really the past. Technically speaking in terms of subjectivity, it is the "old present". As such, memory is not really an authoritative given but a cluster of "beliefs" and part of the synthesis that "reflects time as a determined future filled with anticipation".**
49. Why does Deleuze want to revisit the human body as not only the subject that links repeated sensations but also something that is "reflected" upon? **Because the body re-envisioned becomes something free or a "SPONTANEITY OF DISPOSITION". DELEUZE IS ATTEMPTING TO PICTURE THE BODY (NOT AS A GIVEN BUT AS CONSTITUTED WITHIN A GIVEN) AS THE BIOLOGICAL SOURCE OF SPONTANEITY THAT CAN ORGANIZE MEANS IN TERMS OF A VIEW OF AN END THAT IT THEN ANTICIPATES. THIS IS, FOR DELEUZE, AN ARGUMENT THAT IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF FREE WILL OR THE HUMAN CREATIVE POTENTIAL BUT ONE THAT AVOIDS THE LOGICAL PROBLEMS OF A BODY THAT IS SIMULTANEOUSLY PART OF, AND APART FROM, NATURE. IF YOUR STARTING POINT IS THE IMAGINATIVE SYNTHESIS, THE HUMAN SUBJECT BECOMES A CREATIVE AGENT. WE NATURALLY CONSTRUCT "COMPLEXES OF IDEAS"; IN FACT, COMPLEXES OF IDEAS ARE WHAT WE ARE.**
50. What is the driving force of these complexes of ideas? **Human affectivity or the passions. The process of associating ideas is natural but it is human desire that makes us associate particular ideas in particular contexts. Associations provide our passions with "singular content". SO NOT ONLY IS HUMAN NATURE AND IMAGINATION IN A SENSE "FREE", BUT ALSO IT IS OUR NATURE TO CONSTRUCT OUR WORLD TO FIT OUR "BELIEFS".**

51. What does Deleuze mean when he says that there is no “theoretical subjectivity”? **He means that human subjectivity is “PRACTICAL”; it is constituted within the given to relate to the given. It cannot and should never be “separated” from the “singular content which is strictly essential to it”. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU CAN’T HAVE A SEPARATION OF SELF FROM CONTEXT OR AN ISOLATED INDIVIDUAL. HUMAN NATURE IS INSTRUMENTAL. IT IS A MEANS-END, MOTIVE-ACTION DYNAMIC.**
52. Deleuze is very impatient with approaches to Hume that focus on his particular psychology or social context. How does he suggest that we interrogate a philosophical theory? **He suggests that we look at it as “an elaborately developed question” with its own “necessary implications”. When we look at philosophical theories in this way, we realize that it is the quality of the question that great philosophers ask and the rigour with which they pursue it that is the real issue.**
53. Why are most philosophical summaries of Hume useless for Deleuze? **It is common, for example, to say that Hume “pulverized and atomized the given” and to then say that philosophy was reduced to more rigorously defining the internal and logical consistency of our statements. But Deleuze wants to point out that Hume’s real question about the subject was to situate it “within the given” and to show that “relations are external to ideas”. Hume’s question was not to prove empiricism but to show that all knowledge is related to the subject and is a means to “some practical activity”.**
54. What for Deleuze is a stupid way of defining empiricism if one takes Hume seriously? **It is to describe it as “a theory according to which knowledge derives from experience”. Empiricism is a theory that knowledge is created within the ‘given’ and has two meanings: 1) that the collection of ideas and experience are given, and 2) that in this collection a subject that transcends experience and operates through relations that do not depend on ideas is also given. It is a “dualism” between causes of perception and causes of relation.**
55. What must a school that calls itself “empiricist” do if it is to be legitimate? **It must develop some form of this duality.**
56. Why must serious empiricism have a metaphysics and what is that metaphysics for Deleuze? **It must deal with the problem of “purposiveness” and define that problem at the level of the “imagination”.**
57. How did Kant reverse Hume’s question? **He argued that we must ‘relate’ the given to the subject in terms of the nature of reasonable human beings’. The important synthesis for him does not take place in the imagination but *a priori*.**

58. How is critical theory different from empiricism (correctly understood)? **It must always posit an *a priori* transcendental activity. Something within thought transcends the imagination, without being able to do without it. That something, or those principles, are not derived from experience or within the flux of the given. They ‘give’ shape to the ‘given’.**
59. Why does Hume need the ‘passions’ and ‘purposefulness’ to make the ‘system’ that is ‘human nature’ cohere? **Because only the passions, based on pleasure and pain (in a context), can explain the choices made in the imagination. Associating ideas is a “tendency, custom, freedom, or disposition”; the desire to organize within general rules is natural, but the rules themselves must have practical utility with respect to “affectivity and circumstance”.**
60. One of the hardest parts of Deleuze’s discussion is the way he discusses Hume’s passions. On page 117 he clears this up. How? **There are two kinds of passions, indirect and direct, both giving rise to ‘belief’. The indirect passions are those that we cannot help but chose and give us a belief in causation and an external objective world. But there are direct passions as well that relate to and in fact produce the concept of the self: pride and humility depending on our affective passions and ideas of pain and pleasure. These give rise to morality, which must be understood as a system of practical utility. Another way to describe these passions are the beliefs related to understanding and the beliefs related to sympathy and the affections. WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR HUME IS THAT IT IS THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PASSIONS THAT ARE “PRIMARY”. All beliefs, including the association of ideas is *for the sake* of sympathy.**
61. Morality does not stem from reason or the “relations that are external to impressions”. Human beings are constructed in a way to be active but relations are only tendencies that do not make action possible. What is it that gives agency or direction for Hume? **It is the “principles of affectivity”. We have a tendency not only to understand what is “good” in terms of a cause, but a desire to “promote” it. This is a means-end, motive-action argument from “utility”.**
62. Why is Benthamite utilitarianism not good empiricism for Deleuze? **It fails to appreciate that Humean utility must be “as much an evaluation of historical acts as it is a theory of instrumental action.” WHAT IS USEFUL TO US ARE NOT MERELY THINGS OR CERTAIN SENSATIONS BUT ALSO “PASSIONS, FEELINGS, AND CHARACTERS”. THE “UTILITY OF CHARACTERS” IS FAR MORE SIGNIFICANT AND IN FACT DIRECTS THE “UTILITY OF THINGS”.**
63. How does Deleuze want to define “transcendence” in terms of Humean empiricism? How does this fit in with his agenda? **He wants to define it as “always to move from the known to the unknown” or as a mixture of caution and enterprise. Deleuze wants to insist on the anticipation of the unknown**

and the enterprising side of this equation. Hume likely wanted to insist on the habitually known and the caution side.

64. What other dualism does Deleuze want to discuss and define? **The dualism or “polemic” between the established principles of knowledge and the “vividness of the imagination”. Deleuze wants to insist upon the role of the imagination in propelling our affections. He understands that these must relate to a “set of circumstances” but he wants to insist upon “invention”.**
65. What particular “invention” or “artifice” of human culture does Deleuze want to promote? **The notion of the “general interest” or a “feeling for humanity”.**
66. What if you said to Deleuze that this notion of the general interest is “utopian” or a “fiction” of the imagination? **He would respond that what the imagination does with respect to passions is precisely to “integrate into a whole all those passions that excluded each other because they represented particular interests.”**
67. What ultimately is the general interest? **A utilitarian “harmony” “established between fiction and the principles of the passions. All knowledge, and all life, is *for the sake of* the affective passions and so all politics, morality and law are instruments for this harmonization. When the general interest is achieved through practice and institutions that are functional, all the particular parts *resonate*.**
68. What, for Deleuze, is the essence of subjectification? **The “vividness” felt in “producing” something new. NOTE HOW DELEUZE WANTS ALWAYS TO INCLUDE BELIEF BUT TO STRESS “INVENTION”. HE ALSO WANTS TO STRESS THAT THE INVENTION COMES FROM DOING. FOR HIM, AS INTERESTINGLY FOR MARX, TRUE PHILOSOPHY IS AN ACTION RATHER THAN AN ABSTRACTION.**

Kant I: Critique of Pure Reason

Introduction to Transcendental Logic

General

1. What is Kant's *Copernican revolution*? **He decenters human consciousness by showing that it does not relate directly to, and cannot know, *objects*. We can no longer view ourselves as the center of our own universe.**
2. In what sense is Kant's philosophy *dialectic*? **Kant often uses the term *dialectic* to expose a fallacious *organon* or application of metaphysics to a supposedly material universe. But his own approach is dialectic in so far as it attempts to explore the complex relationship between transcendental understanding and empirical sensation. In a sense, Kant blends elements of rationalism and empiricism.**
3. Why is Hume such an important challenge for Kant? **Before Hume, Kant was in many ways a traditional metaphysician. Hume's account of the operations of human subjectivity made traditional metaphysics suspect, since it grounded knowledge in "habits" derived from sensation. Kant was forced to agree with Hume that "all knowledge begins with sensations".**
4. Where did Kant disagree with Hume's account of human nature? **Hume believed that all knowledge and human nature was situated in the "given" or what Kant calls the "manifold". The human subject was constructed within the given and was himself/herself a fiction of the imaginative association of ideas. Kant believed that certain aspects of the human subject were separate from experience and, indeed, were *a priori* prerequisites for ordering that experience. There are intuitive and cognitive *universals* of human nature that are *transcendent* to experience.**
5. How did Kant demolish all metaphysical *dualisms* between transcendent and corporeal realities? What was the price that we have to pay for this demolition job? **Kant put human knowledge on a limited or provisional status by arguing that the transcendental and corporeal (empirical) depended on one another. There was no getting at either a transcendental reality or an empirical one. All that was remained was a subjectively and empirically informed consciousness.**
6. Why was Kant not disturbed by the human inability either to transcend corporeal experience or to comprehend it? **Kant believed: 1) that human knowledge operating within strict limits could not only make positive progress but eliminate many negative dogmas and superstitions that got in the way of that progress, and 2) that his analysis of the transcendental *characteristics* of the**

human mind were better evidence of free will than rationalistic theories that depended on God.

7. What is Kant's position on God? **He argues that this is a kind of metaphysical question that is meaningless. Nevertheless, he suggests that to choose to believe in God is not silly since the transcendental characteristics of our nature point to something beyond.**
8. How do Kant and Hume's position on God differ? **For Hume, the only possibility, and not a realistic one, for God is at the horizon of a subjectively constructed experience. At best, he could be a limiting factor for possible belief. For Kant, there is a real potential for hope in something beyond. However, it would be stupid to try to construct a theology on such a basis, and even stupider to be dogmatic about it.**
9. Where is the axis of the difference between Kant and Hume? **It lies in their very different discussion of the IMAGINATION. For Hume, the imagination is where everything happens and the imagination "produces" knowledge at the behest of the "passions". The only correction for the fictions of the imagination are corrective imaginative fictions based on habit. For Kant, the role of the imagination is much more passive. The imagination is not capable of thinking to or for itself. The imagination is only a faculty for intuiting data. But the ORGANIZATION and JUDGING of that data is undertaken by the CATEGORIES of the UNDERSTANDING.**
10. Can you now think of why it is that Deleuze prefers Hume to Kant? **Deleuze wants to give maximum freedom to the creative imagination unencumbered by pseudo-scientific or categorical rules. The imagination in a flux of diverse data allows for maximum possibilities, whereas Kant is all about limitation.**
11. Why do you think Kant is regarded by many as the philosopher *par excellence* who gives humanity its dignity? **By showing that there are intuitions and categories that are universal and transcendental in human nature, Kant makes every "individual" something more than nature and, in a limited way, a god to nature. What ethical language derives from this emphasis on the free, independent and categorizing subject? The language of individual rights. Kant believed that individuals should never be treated as "means" to ends but as ends in themselves. This kind of morality, by the way, is called *deontological* and focuses on *duties and rights*.**
12. To what kind of ethics is Kant's language of *categorical imperatives* opposed? **The language of *utilitarianism* (also called *consequentialism*). Who was a utilitarian, although certainly not a Benthamite utilitarian? Hume. Hume's philosophy leads to utility, since there can be no basis in selves that are not only fictions per se but culturally constructed fictions.**

Specific

1. Kant begins his Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason* by affirming the blend of empiricism and rationalism that he is endeavouring to construct. What does he say? **He says that although “knowledge begins with experience” and is impossible without experience, not all knowledge “arises out of experience”. Intuitions and cognitions may also be involved as “independent” if not “separate”.**
2. What do *a priori* and *a posteriori* signify for Kant and how does he describe them? **A priori knowledge has independence from sensation and can either be “pure” or “impure” depending on its relation to sensation. Pure intuition such as “time” is completely independent. Impure intuition or reason such as “space” or “change”, while transcendent, is always associated with what we call matter.**
3. What word does Kant use to signify and qualify *objects* as perceived by human subjects? **He calls them *phenomena*. Phenomena are not objects that can be known in and of themselves. They are the perceptions or sensations that we have and that we ascribe to ultimately unknowable things that we call *objects*.**
4. What has Hume conclusively shown us according to Kant? **That we can never know objects or their existence directly.**
5. What does Kant want to do that is very different from Hume and how is he going to do it? **He wants to show that there are filters or categories of *cognition* that are independent from the sensations that they organize. In order to do that, he is going to show that they have two characteristics that cannot be associated with sensation, namely that they are *universal* and *necessary*. Empirical universality would always, in the Humean sense, allow for the possibility of exceptions at least in the future. The categories or intuitions that Kant is going to discover allow of no exceptions.**
6. How does Kant critique Hume’s account of causality? **Instead of inferring a “necessary connection” derived from habit and experience, Kant argues that the conception of a necessary connection must precede the attribution of a cause. In other words, the very “notion of a cause” disappears if we claim that it is the result of frequent association. This is the methodology that Kant will deploy throughout, showing that Hume’s associationism cannot escape a priori intuitions and categories.**
7. Kant is a philosopher who is interested in subjects and predicates and how one moves from one to the other in constructions of language. This leads him into an important philosophical operation. What is it? **How we move from ‘sensations’**

- to ‘synthetic judgments’. In other words, what is the “relationship” of the “subject” to the “object” if all we really have are “representations” of “phenomena”. The answer for him is that we as subjects have “transcendent knowledge” built in. We couldn’t organize or understand anything without those transcendent concepts.
8. Kant is going to articulate two sets of *a priori* principles, one being the focus of this reading in particular. What are they? **Transcendental Aesthetic (not refereeing to art but to ‘sensation’ after the Greeks) principles, and Transcendental Logical principles (referring to categories of thought). In this reading we are talking about the Transcendental Aesthetic primarily or the shape the mind gives to sensation.**
 9. The concept of SPACE is an EMPIRICAL INTUITION rather than a PURE INTUITION because it is always connected to PHENOMENA. At the same time is still TRANSCENDENT and METAPHYSICAL in an important sense for Kant. What does he mean by “metaphysics”? **Kant suggests that the concept of space has no determinate “content” even though it always relates to that content. If you subtract content, if you eliminate all sensation, you can’t get rid of the “concept” of space. Therefore, the concept of “space” cannot be derived from external experience. It is a “necessary” concept for understanding phenomena and therefore *a priori* and “transcendental”. It comes before and it organizes. Without it, phenomena would not have a “form”.**
 10. What does Kant say to punctuate the transcendent character of space? **He says that the concept of space does not exist in some empirical reality but in fact “TEACHES REALITY”. As a concept it is clearly an “ideality” but without it there would be no sensation of “objective reality”.**
 11. How is space different from other concepts signifying “sensations”? **Unlike colour, sound and heat, which we know are “only sensations”, differ among different men, and cannot be stated as “ideality”, space is an “intuition” which is inescapable.**
 12. How does the concept of TIME differ from that of SPACE? **It is not an empirical intuition but a concept that has no relation to any empirical reality. Hume would have us believe that time is simply an issue of succession or duration like separate points on a line. But Kant will not allow that understanding of time as a “habit”. He notes that the very term “succession” or “duration” ALREADY PRESUPPOSES A CONCEPT OF TIME THAT IS INDISPENSIBLE.**
 13. Why is time absolutely a crucial *a priori* non-empirical concept for Kant? **Without the concept of time, many empirically related concepts would be inconceivable. “Motion” and “change” depend upon the concept of time.**

- Moreover, the concept of a “SELF”, IDENTITY or the “EGO” is only conceivable with in relation to the concept of time.
14. What can the concept of TIME do that no other concept can? **It can combine two distinct and therefore contradictory “determinates” under one concept. It is the only concept that can simultaneously “affirm” and “deny” the same “thing”. Therefore it is absolutely crucial for most of our synthetic judgments.**
 15. Kant wants to make sure that no reader takes the Humean or any other road with respect to time and so he develops 3 arguments about the *a priori* nature of time. What are they? **First, time does not exist in itself but is a necessary “nothing”. Second, time is necessary for the formation, not simply of an internal self, but any internal state whatsoever. Third, time is a “formal condition” of EVERY AND ALL PHENOMENA or sensation whatsoever. Otherwise, all is random and nothing can be repetition.**
 16. Kant also wants to underline the pure or absolutely non-empirical nature of time. How does he do that? **He systematically subtracts everything that could be considered empirical from the concept and says that “time” still exists. Time is nothing or “no thing”. While we may not be able to ever understand “objects”, however, time is “necessarily objective”.**
 17. Why do the concepts of time and space render “empirical knowledge” **unshaken? What we call objects are only conceivable in terms of these a priori transcendental concepts. THEREFORE, WHAT WE CALL EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE IS ‘SOLID’ IN TERMS OF THOSE SAME CONCEPTS. JUST AS LONG AS WE DON’T TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE ‘OBJECTS IN THEMSELVES’, LIMIT OUR CLAIMS TO WHAT WE REALLY KNOW, AND CORRECT ERRORS ABOUT EMPIRICAL REALITY WITH ‘JUDGEMENTS’, WE CAN HAVE REAL SYNTHETIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ‘PHENOMENA’ (REMEMBERING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PHENOMENA AND SUBSTANCE, ABOUT WHICH WE CAN HAVE NO IDEA).**
 18. In what way are “motion” and “change” **real** for Kant? **They are “real” in the sense that the mind or the subject makes them real or “intuits them” as real.**
 19. So, while time and space may be “non-entities”, without these *a priori*s nothing would be real. What is the status for Kant of knowledge that is a *posteriori*? **Most *a posteriori* knowledge claims are unfounded and are either 1) misapplications of transcendental concepts or 2) fictions of the imagination. Since the latter are abstractions based on an experience that we cannot really understand, they lack validity.**

20. Kant's philosophy is all about *relations* and *representations* and is, in a certain sense pointing to **postmodern** concerns? All that we can ever know are representations that have the potential for being added and subtracted ad infinitum. But what is absolutely indispensable to knowledge? **The "subject". "Phenomena" only have their existence "in us". The "us" refers to more than the "ego" obviously because Kant thinks that every rational human being has this same equipment.**
21. What question is useless to pursue if we take Kant seriously? **Any question relating to what objects are or substance is "in itself". ANY CONFUSION THAT WE MIGHT HAVE ABOUT 'THINGS' IS REALLY NOT ABOUT "CONTENT" BUT ONLY ABOUT "LOGICAL" INFERENCE.**
22. What interesting/telling/significant illustration does Kant use to punctuate his point about the primacy of the mind and its categories? **He mentions the concept of "RIGHT" that has nothing to do with "phenomena" but is clearly a very important construction of the "subject".**
23. Kant punctuates this primacy by telling us what sensations can never tell us about the nature of objects. How? **He says that it is not simply a question of the sensations providing blurred or confused information about objects, but that THEY CAN TELL US ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ABOUT THOSE OBJECTS. ALL THAT WE KNOW IS "PHENOMENA".**
24. We normally and naturally distinguish between reality and phenomena by saying, for example, that rain is real but the rainbow is a phenomena. What does Kant say? **He has no problem with saying that something is "real" as long as we understand that the real for human beings is phenomenal. Rain is a "real phenomena".**
25. Thus, space and time are transcendental "necessary conditions" and Kant keeps repeating this lest we be inclined to forget it or lapse into conventional thinking. They are also, as he says, "subjective conditions" of all other intuitions. Why is this interesting? **Because space and time are really nothing more than "relations". MAKING RELATIONS R' US. In this sense, Kant is like Hume. But he is far less arbitrary about the relations involved.**
26. How is Platonic idealism metamorphosed by Kant? **Instead of "ideal forms" that are separated from sensation, Kant constructs "formal conditions" for processing sensation.**
27. Why is the mind "free" for Kant? **Because the mind is, in part, "affected by its own activity" and not simply by sensations.**
28. Does Kant think that we can ever really know the mind? **Kant thinks that we can know what the mind "does". In this sense, we can call it a "soul" or a**

- “mind” and discover its intuitions and categories. As far as understanding the mind, or its precise relationship to the body, these would be worthless and in fact ignorant undertakings. It assumes a duality rather than a dialectic.**
29. What’s another meaningless question that we would do best not to wrestle with? **The nature of God. To the extent that we talk about a God, it is something that is beyond time and space. But all that we can ever know must be within time and space. Time and space are what MAKE SYNTHETIC JUDGEMENTS POSSIBLE, BUT THEY CAN ONLY RELATE TO POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE. WHEN THEY TRY TO REACH FURTHER, I.E. IN TERMS OF DISCUSSING ‘GOD’, THEY HAVE NO VALIDITY WHATSOEVER.**
30. Of course, Kant is not simply about how synthetic judgments concerning phenomena are possible, he’s also about the criteria for making those judgments. To that end, his theory is a theory of the legitimate categories of the understanding. **Kant’s theory is all about the rules for “thinking” about phenomena that are revealed in time and space.**
31. What would intuitions about phenomena be without categorical conceptions? **They would be “blind”. Kant wants to show us how to derive legitimate conceptions, not from phenomena, but from the mind itself.**
32. What is the “law of understanding”? **Logic.** What two kinds of logic are there and what are their characteristics? **General or “elemental” logic refers to the “absolutely necessary laws of thought” or the rules without which thought would be inconceivable. Particular logical laws or the “organons of particular sciences” are those that have been developed for certain fields or sciences and have been found, after long discovery and experience, to be useful.**
33. What two divisions of general logic exist for Kant? **Pure and applied. The former discovers absolutely necessary *a priori* principles. It is the “canon” of understanding. The second refers to the actual “use” of the understanding in a particular science or enterprise.**
34. Kant does much the same exercise with respect to “pure logic” that he did with respect to “time”. What 3 procedures does he use to get to logic as a “transcendental” activity of the mind? **First, he abstracts to get at the pure “form” of understanding divorced from phenomena. Second, he makes sure that there is nothing derived from empirical data and that every criteria for purity is *a priori*. Third, he clearly distinguishes these two procedures from those that are “applied” to certain concrete problems.**

35. Kant is getting at the pure categories of thinking. He makes an interesting comparison that shows you that his analysis of human nature, like that of Hume, is not simply intellectual gymnastics. What parallel to pure thinking does he make? **He compares it to “pure morality” or the “moral laws of a free will” that need to be distinguished from but related to “practical ethics”.**
36. What is the nature of human cognition when assessed in its purity? **It is not only a “process of representation” but also a determination of “transcendental representation”.**
37. What does Kant suggest that he is already “anticipating”? **He is anticipating THE “IDEA OF A SCIENCE OF PURE UNDERSTANDING” that he calls a “TRANSCENDENTAL LOGIC”.**
38. Why will this General Logic eventually need to apply the tools of criticism to itself? **General logic cannot go beyond itself and its own categories. Any attempt to apply it beyond its natural confines must end up in “illusion”. Most attempts at applying general logic to the phenomenal world are illusory and falsely dialectical (i.e. mind and body) – they depend on concepts like “presence” and “absence” rather than understanding that what are really necessary for knowledge are “relationships”. They need to be deconstructed or “CRITIQUED”. Hence, the “critique of pure reason”.**
39. If all metaphysics is dialectical, then Kant’s must be as well. How is he going to get around the problem? **First, by carefully defining the cognitive (hence transcendent and metaphysical) categories of “understanding”. Second, by understanding the fallacies that lead us away from genuine knowledge. Third, by freeing our “reasonings” and “imaginings” from these fallacies by submitting them to the judgment of the understanding. Through the critique, the problems associated with understanding are eliminated, and the transcendental or metaphysical nature of the understanding is maintained.**
40. What’s the bottom line? **Human reasoning has to constantly submit itself to critique. Understanding ultimately is not about “knowing” but about making correct “judgments” about “limits”. GENUINE PHILOSOPHY IS MORE ABOUT GUARDING AGAINST ERROR THAN DISCOVERING OBJECTIVE TRUTH.**

Kant II: Transcendental Doctrine of Method

1. Kant begins this section by reminding us of the *problem* of pure speculative reasoning (as distinct from applied). What is the nature of this problem? **Reason constantly wants to construct an *edifice* or a *unity* of all knowledge. Reason does not want to limit itself to its *pure* understanding but wants to build a world and heavens according to its own design. It wants to go beyond “possible experience”. This, of course, is a problem because there is so much that we can’t possibly know – about either the supernatural or the empirical – that we run into absurdities and dialectical *antimonies* when we pretend to that kind of knowledge.**
2. What does Kant suggest that we need to practice in order to force reason to play its intended role? **We need DISCIPLINE in order to prevent illusion and error. This discipline is going to end up being primarily CORRECTIVE, NEGATIVE or a CRITIQUE of knowledge that is unfounded. Hence, the CRITICAL METHOD.**
3. Philosophy, rightly understood, is a corrective to fallacious reasoning? Who should get this *corrective philosophical training*? **Kant is a big believer that everyone who goes to school should be exposed to the philosophical mode of reasoning. This is in line with his belief that anyone capable of entering public life should be able to reason freely. This also tells you why Kant is opposed to anything that could be called *dogmatic* teaching.**
4. Where and ONLY where is dogmatical teaching education? **It is permitted in MATHEMATICS, which is an entirely different “mode of cognition” than METAPHYSICS.**
5. What is the difference? Why is mathematics not exposed to the same danger of excess than metaphysics/philosophy? **Metaphysics is about USING CONCEPTIONS to reason. Mathematics is about CREATING CONCEPTIONS. Mathematical conceptions cannot easily go wrong and if they do they can be corrected easily. This is because they are all based on *a priori intuitions* with respect to particular phenomena and relations between those phenomena. Since they can never go beyond those phenomena, they cannot err. Mathematics does not try to understand the object of experience in itself, only in terms of intuitions.**
6. What’s another important difference that shows us why philosophy will NEVER be able to perform the extensive function of mathematics? **Philosophy regards the particular within the general, while mathematics regards the general in the particular. Kant also likes to say that philosophy is a “discursive” method.**

7. What is a wrongheaded way to talk about the difference between philosophy and math? **To say that one is about *quality* while the other is about *quantity*. Both will sometimes do either. The important difference is that these are very different *modes of reasoning*.**
8. What are the only *a priories* given to a philosophical understanding? **Time and space are the only *a priories*. Matter we can never understand, only phenomena. There are two ways to understand phenomena: 1) mathematically through the construction of concepts, and 2) empirically, through hypothesis, experiment and observation.**
9. Why are many mathematicians not particularly thoughtful for Kant? **Most mathematicians haven't thought 'philosophically' about their favorite science. Some believe that their method can be applied to all areas of thought. All they have to worry about is deploying their concepts correctly, and any errors that they might make are easy to discover and fix.**
10. Kant can sometimes write wonderfully. What does he have to say about conceited mathematicians that attempt to wander beyond their science (of sensory phenomena) into transcendental areas? **"They can neither stand nor swim, and where the tracks of their footsteps are obliterated by time". The "march of mathematics", however, progresses well enough without them.**
11. Who is the top dog in this intellectual division of labour for Kant? **It might seem that the mathematician is, but that would be very wrong. For the mathematician cannot correct the philosopher, but the philosopher can correct the mathematician or any other scientist whenever she wanders outside of her cognitive domain. To the extent that human reason always wants to wander and know more than it can, only the critical philosopher can apply the corrective method.**
12. In what other way is the philosopher 'higher' on the cognitive charts than the mathematician? **The philosopher can discourse about *possible experience* and can speculate about *unities in knowledge* that can be hoped for, while the mathematician must confine himself to intuitively valid relationships between phenomena. [Note that this is different from speculating illegitimately about things like the supernatural; it must reflect a disciplined methodology that eliminates all false or unwarranted assumptions; it cannot deploy *arbitrary* concepts.]**
13. What "fallacious anchor" or "fantastic hope" do we need to cut away if we are going to practice the philosophical or critical method effectively? **We need to get rid of the wish to rise above the "empirical" sphere into the "intellectual" domain. That's precisely why mathematicians to try to apply their methodology to philosophical issues will only be building "card-castles" in the air.**

14. Why is the term “definition” a problem for Kant and something that usually misleads rather than informs? **We can never know “objects” or all of their “properties”. To define something is not to capture it. But there is a tendency to think that we really “know” something when we have only “defined” it. Kant prefers the term “exposition”. Philosophical “definitions” are only *expositions* “of “given conceptions”.**
15. What’s the difference between the act of “defining” in philosophy and mathematics for Kant? **In mathematical definitions concepts are formed; in philosophical definitions concepts are explained. The two methods, clearly, are totally distinct from one another. Philosophy cannot tell you anything about a triangle; mathematics cannot tell you anything about pure non-empirical reason.**
16. How does this difference in *defining* impact upon the *process* of correct philosophical and mathematical exposition? **In philosophy, the definition should only come at the conclusion of “our efforts”. In mathematics, you need definitions to proceed. This, of course, is the difference between axiomatic and axiological understanding. Philosophy has no “axioms”.**
17. What is the difference between *demonstration* and *proof* in philosophical and mathematical exposition? **Only mathematical demonstrations are capable of “apodictic” (certain, incontrovertible) proofs. Technically, there are no “demonstrations” in philosophical or discursive reasoning. Philosophical proofs are “acroamatic” (end point of reasoning). [Don’t you just love having to wade through all of these Greek terms? Don’t worry, we are now coming to the bottom line.]**
18. What’s the bottom line of all this cogitating on the difference between math and philosophy for Kant? **Only mathematics can be “dogmatic” in its narrow domain. Philosophy can never be true and assume the air of “dogmatism”. No exposition based on conceptions, as opposed to the creation of conceptions, can ever have the kind of demonstration that would allow of DOGMATISM.**
19. If dogmatism is out for philosophy, how would you characterize its methodology? **Philosophy should be systematic “according to the principle of unity” but never dogmatic or a system.**
20. People, especially scholars, argue all the time. They engage in **polemics** where they bump systems against one another. What does Kant have to say about the use of **pure reason** in these polemics? And why is he always careful to put the adjective “pure” before reason? **Kant suggests that the only legitimate function of pure reason in polemical arguments is to show dogmatists that they don’t know what they are talking about. He goes so far as to argue that**

- antithetical reasoning is permissible just as long as its function is to put the dogmatist on the defensive and to show that the opposite point of view is just as possible. Kant is the Enlightenment's foremost anti-dogmatist; he's not willing to just ignore or scorn dogmatics; he wants to put it always on the defensive. Kant wants to use the term "pure" in these discussions because he wants to distinguish this use of reason, which is largely critical or negative from a practical reason that is much more positive.**
21. What does Kant find "melancholy" about his reflections on pure reason (but see point 31)? **He is telling his readers that there are strict limits to what we can know and that the "highest exertion" of reasoning (pure) is as an "antithetic".**
 22. What can't you ever prove through "pure reason"? **You can't prove that there is a "supreme Being" or that the "soul is immortal". The only thing that you can legitimately argue is that these concepts are possible, since neither the possibility nor the impossibility of these hopes is derivable from knowledge that is bound up with experience.**
 23. What is the logical consequence of realizing that pure knowledge of a dogmatical nature is impossible? **People should be free to investigate these issues and to "believe" what they want. But they can't impose those beliefs on others. The search for a "truth" that is pure ultimately becomes an individual agenda of personal belief. Kant is constructing a modern world where the intellect is separated from religion, but in an important sense, a postmodern world of fragmented values.**
 24. What does Kant have to say about the dialectical battles or antimonies of reason that this rise of freedom will generate? **Clearly, we see some of the influence that Kant had on Hegel and, through Hegel, Marx in his suggestion that the "dialectical use of nature" is perfectly natural to its use. Reason has got to exercise itself. For Kant, however, the exercise of pure reason will never get at some absolute truth. The search for truth is natural; discovering truth would be entirely impossible and quite unnatural.**
 25. What is the one strict rule that Kant wants to establish for the "free expression of thought" in the dialectical realm? **There can be no "deceit, misrepresentation, and falsehood". Strict "laws of honesty" must be observed. One of the jobs of the philosopher as scholar as more "tranquil spectator" is to discover and expose these attempts to fight unfairly.**
 26. How does Kant describe the past history of dogmatic ideas lacking philosophical criticism? **He describes it as a "state of nature". Civilization for Kant depends on the implementation of the critical method. How does Kant describe the situation after the implementation of the critical method? As an peaceful intellectual world governed by "law" and order. All of this, of**

- course, is only possible with FREEDOM. Kant is the champion of intellectual freedom *par excellence*.
27. What does Kant reply to those who suggest that this freedom should not be given to the “young” who must, therefore, be dogmatically instructed? **He says that you are making a big mistake. If you give the young the proper modes of reasoning they will be able to avoid dogmatic excesses when they get older. But, if you don’t, they will simply rebel against the dogma that you have instilled in them by choosing its dogmatic opposite. KANT’S CRITIQUE IS IMPLICITLY AND EXPLICITLY A THEORY OF EDUCATION.**
28. Kant is impressed by Hume, but thinks him wrong. What is Kant’s analysis of **skepticism** in general? **For Kant, skepticism plays a useful role in exposing the inadequacies and contradictions of dogmatism. It “awakens reason from its dogmatic dreams” but does not provide a resting place. Although we cannot have “perfect knowledge” we can have a very accurate knowledge of the “limits of reason”. And this knowledge is “pure” in the sense that it is “necessary” and “eternal”. We can know where and when we are “ignorant”. NOTE THAT THERE IS A HISTORICAL THEORY OF INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS IMPLICIT HERE, FROM DOGMATISM, THROUGH SKEPTICISM, TO CRITICISM. Hegel would make something of this pattern in Kant’s thought.**
29. So, why exactly is Hume wrong for Kant? **Because we do have “a priori synthetical cognitions”. We are not the passive pawns of experience, but we have “principles of understanding, which anticipate experience”. We can construct a “sound philosophy” once the way has been prepared by “criticism”. We can “extend” knowledge synthetically, and in fact we do so “spontaneously”. But the sound philosophy we construct will have to be “practical”. We cannot attribute a “spurious necessity” or “universality” to our rational investigations.**
30. Why is the principle of causality safe from Hume’s demolition job? **As Kant tried to show in his discussion of the Transcendental Logic, causality itself is a “necessary connection” that allows us to move legitimately from one experience to “possible experience” even though we cannot attribute a particular effect to a particular cause. Causality itself is “objectively true” because it is a principle of human nature. If causality were derived from experience, of course, it would have only a ‘subjective’ and ‘dubious’ character. Once we are confident about causality we can proceed to investigate phenomena on the grounds that causality is not in the phenomena but in our minds. If it is in our minds, we can trust it, although when we apply it we have to be careful about error.**
31. What is meant exactly by being “careful about error”? **The mind uses causality to anticipate and has good grounds for ‘belief’ when used in practical**

- reasoning. **But it cannot claim to any absolute standard and MUST ALWAYS BE OPEN TO CORRECTION FROM OBSERVATION.**
32. Kant's critique of pure reason makes us eschew dogmatism and provides a "limited field of action". Why does Kant think that this is not as "melancholy" a reflection as he hinted at earlier? **He still thinks that there is ample scope for the "exercise" of reason's power, particularly in terms of constructing "hypotheses" and eliminating erroneous judgments that have, historically, gotten in the way of the production of useful knowledge.**
33. What is the relationship of reason to imagination in the creation of hypotheses? **Reason keeps the imagination in check and forces it to frame its questions solely with respect to "real phenomena" or "possible experience". Thus, millions of fruitless hypotheses are exploded.**
34. What does Kant's analysis of pure or transcendent reason show us? **Transcendent reason only provides us with a form or structure, not the content, of knowledge. Those forms or structures have no 'content' per se. Thus, ALL TRANSCENDENT HYPOTHESES ARE "INADMISSABLE" IN THE COURT OF CONTENT.**
35. What about those traditional scholastic arguments that try to discover transcendent truths based on something called "sufficient cause"? **Kant thinks that this is pure nonsense. The minute you make causes dependent on other causes you completely lose the notion of causality, which must be simple rather than multiple. The idea has some merit as a heuristic device with respect to non-transcendental phenomena – AS A PRACTICAL EXERCISE -- where relations are difficult to discover, but absolutely no merit for getting at transcendental *a priories*.**
36. When and only when are "transcendental hypotheses" permissible? **Again, they are permissible in polemics where their sole purpose is to show that other transcendental hypotheses cannot be dogmatically accepted or imposed.**
37. What are the only *proofs* that transcendental hypotheses can produce? **All that they can show is that a given "cause" is possible. We can "arrive at" an understanding of phenomena that is not simply in our "conception of those things". Any other attempt to understand phenomena exposes us to Hume's "tortuous road of mere subjective associationism".**
38. Kant has the following 3 rules for the legitimate use of "proofs" in the operations of pure reason: **1) only apply transcendental proofs to the understanding not to reason, 2) since the principles of reason are merely regulative with respect to phenomena do not ever attempt to make them transcendent, 3) understand that, in order for a rational proof to be transcendent (impossible), it would need to be 'direct'. No indirect proof would ever be acceptable.**

39. Where are **apodictic** (uncontestable) proofs allowed? **In mathematics. They are also admissible, says Kant, in other sciences, as a heuristic device, since these conclusions could easily be corrected by observation. Kant does not consider this methodology very important in SCIENCE in any case, since experiment and observation are key. Do you agree? What about the nature of scientific paradigms as accounts of reality? Isn't one of the problems with modern science that it has taken on some of the dogmatic features of religion that Kant decried?**
40. Kant wants to move from the **discipline** of pure reason to the **canon** for its proper use. What's he say about this *canon*? **First, the canon is not about extension but rather about limitation, in other words keeping knowledge within legitimate bounds. Second, the use of this canon is practical. It is not designed for speculation but for practical use.**
41. Whereas in purely transcendental terms, the three big speculative questions that obsess human beings are meaningless, in practical terms they have genuine functions. What are these three questions? **Freedom of the will; immortality of the soul, and a supreme being. Kant suggests that these three questions or problems have been incorrectly approached as speculative ideas whereas they are really issues that relate to practice in real life. THIS IS A MAJOR SHIFT OF FOCUS TOWARDS THE PRACTICAL FUNCTION OF IDEAS IN TERMS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF LIFE.*******
42. Where do all of these practical functions find their proper domain if not in speculative philosophy? **In a MORAL PHILSOPHY that is practical, that relates to our nature as ethical beings. This moral code alone admits of CANONICITY.**
43. What is the fundamental PRACTICAL question to which all of these three speculative questions about free will, the soul and God relate? **The question is what ought we to do?**
44. What is Kant assuming here that he will need to elucidate elsewhere? **He is assuming that man is a moral creature. He is further assuming that morality is not, ultimately, a social construction but something that relates to the *individual* and his/her conceptual apparatus.**
45. If morality is to exist, and in a practical sense it clearly does, what is necessary? **People must have a choice about how to act and how to think about their actions. In other words, THE WILL MUST BE FREE. In a practical sense, we naturally think of the will as free.**
46. The question of whether or not reason is determined by other forces is what kind of a question? **It is a speculative question that we can never answer, and**

- certainly not with respect to theories like materialism or behaviourism. It is only in a practical sense that the question is meaningful. In the practical sense, we clearly act *as if* the will is free.
47. The question of *what ought I to do* if the will is free is a more complex kind of question for Kant. In what way? **On the one hand, the question is entirely practical and, as the ancients suggested, has to do with ‘happiness’. But it is not a simple utilitarian view of happiness since the notion of the *ought* implies DUTY. So Kant reformulates the question in order to connect happiness with duty and it reads something like this: “What ought I to do to merit or be worthy of happiness?”**
48. Once Kant has reformulated the moral imperative in this way (admittedly he will have to do this much more rigorously in the next major work *Critique of Practical Reason*) he is able to assess the *practical* purpose of the questions about God and the soul. What’s his claim? **If we are really going investigate the relationship between happiness and duty in this lifetime, we discover no correlation whatsoever. Doing the right thing is more often painful than pleasurable. Human beings, seeing a unity between happiness and duty, need to HOPE for this UNITY to be POSSIBLE. They need to be able to hope for an immortality where means and ends will be adjusted in concordance with THE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN NATURE.**
49. Since reason (operating ethically) confirms these relations, we must be able to think that these relations are possible at least as **an intelligible idea**. What can’t or shouldn’t we do, however? **We shouldn’t conceive of the immortality of the soul as anything other than a “possible idea” that conforms to our “hopes”. We can’t discuss the nature of the soul or the nature of immortality since we have absolutely no experiential basis whatsoever for those discussions.**
50. Morality is a **unified and self-regulating system of rewards and punishments**. As such, it is an intelligible system. But it does not conform to what we can know about phenomena. Even with respect to what we know about human nature, there is a problem insofar as 1) individual wills conflict on questions of morality, 2) evil often usurps good. In a practical sense, what do human beings posit as a way of getting rid of these inconsistencies and inadequacies? **They posit the notion of an IDEAL or SUPREME GOOD that is directing an ideal or moral world to which this empirical reality is merely partial or derivative. THE SYSTEM OF HAPPINESS IS ONLY INTELLIGIBLE WITH REFERENCE TO THIS SUPREME GOOD. Moral laws only have validity as COMMANDS if there is something doing or generating the COMMANDING.**
51. Kant adopts Leibnitz’s notion of a “realm of grace” to navigate this problem. Moral maxims require a moral law and a moral law requires an ideal legislator that stands apart from this limited realm of phenomena. But what does Kant want to say about this legislator or supreme good? **Apart from the fact that it serves**

- a very practical function with respect to human nature, we can know NOTHING about this supreme good. It is totally “off” our radar screens except as a facilitating idea that we must naturally hope for (or at least be afraid of).
52. So, we are allowed the practical concept or **hypothesis** of a supreme original good. What are we absolutely not allowed? **We are not allowed most of the constructs of “speculative theology” including the notion of a *sole, perfect, and rational* First Cause”. There is nothing that provides any compelling evidence for this. NOTE THAT KANT IS HERE NOT ONLY ATTACKING SCHOLASTIC RELIGION BUT ALSO ENLIGHTENED DEISM. The notion of a God of Nature or a First Cause implies that we can get beyond nature or imply causes beyond human reason. Those transcendental claims are simply not permissible.**
53. On the other hand, what must the world have originated from in order for our human understanding and rationalizing to make sense? **It must have originated from an idea in order to reconcile us with being “worthy” of having ideas. This understanding, says Kant, gives rise to a “transcendental theology” centering on “ontological perfection as a principle of systematic unity.” THIS UNITY HOWEVER IS FOUNDED ENTIRELY ON THE NOTION OF AN “INDIVIDUAL WILL” THAT APPLIES THIS UNITY *IN CONCRETO*. IT ALSO IMPLIES A “HISTORY OF HUMAN REASON” THAT IS SOMEHOW *PROGRESSIVE*. The notions of the individual and progress play important and interrelated roles in Kant’s thinking and helped give a certain flavour to the Enlightenment Project. Of course later writers would decentre or problematize the subject and progress in a variety of ways.**
54. What is the only thing that led us to any of these constructs of freedom, the soul and the supreme good? **Their *internal* practical necessity. The ideas of freedom, the soul and God are not external truths but internal necessities. Soooo, if you assume that these are not practically or internally ‘necessary’, they kind of evaporate don’t they? Kant is a little shifty on this. On the one hand, he suggests that we can ‘hope’ for these things, but he quickly moves to them being ‘necessary’. Hard to know where he comes down ultimately, but my guess is that it would be on the side of ‘hopes’ rather than ‘necessity’. But see #57.**
55. What is the only utility of moral theology? **Its immanent use; it teaches us to fulfill our moral “destiny here in the world, by placing ourselves in harmony with the general system of ends”.**
56. What else should a genuine moral theology do? **It should warn against “fanaticism”; it should give reason its rightful “legislative authority”.**

57. Hume's philosophy was an empirical philosophy of **belief**, so logically Kant's philosophy must be summed up differently as a rational philosophy of **limits**. How does Kant describe *belief*? **Kant has a much more complex analysis of 'belief' and separates its functions within the realm of practice. In terms of our knowledge of the physical world, belief relates to degrees of success in judging relationships between phenomena. In terms of the moral world, belief is not partial but necessary. But it can only be necessary to the extent that it does not go beyond the bounds of reason. Still, Kant admits that this kind of belief is "doctrinal". What is totally illegitimate for Kant are dogmatic beliefs. These typically have no or only a vague reference to practical morality. DOCTRINAL BELIEFS MUST BE CONTINGENT ON SUPPORTING THE FULFILMENT OF PRACTICAL ENDS. In terms of belief, practice informs theory rather than the other way around.**
58. It is clear to me that Kant's discussion of *belief* gets pretty convoluted at times, and it is not always clear whether he wants to underscore the need for doctrinal beliefs or not. The issue is partly cleared up in the distinction that Kant makes between belief as an **objective or subjective necessity**. What does he say? **He suggests that *belief* must be "modest" from an objective point of view but "of firm confidence" from a subjective point of view. This conviction is not "logical" but morally based. It would have been easy for Kant to say "can be of firmer confidence" from the subjective point of view, but he seems to want to give the notion of a Supreme Good more authority than a "hope" or a "wish". Is this to placate possible censors of his writing; I suspect that it is, but that is just my "opinion" and, as Kant says, opinions are "consciously insufficient judgments, subjectively as well as objectively".**
59. Why does Kant want to end his *Critique* with an assertion of the *architectonic* character of pure reason? **He wants to distinguish the *system* he is constructing from anything purely empirical. Empirical knowledge and historical empiricism progress only by *addition* whereas the *science of pure reason* progresses not only by determining limits (although that is crucial) but also by relating parts to the whole by the attribution of causes. In order to investigate particular causes, it is necessary to assume causal unity and to look upon knowledge as more of a functional organism.**
60. Why is philosophy as **learning to philosophize** rather than a **body of philosophical knowledge** crucial to progress? **Because it limits us to what we can know and provides tools for detecting error. These are far more important to human progress than simply basing knowledge on experience. Hume was a conservative who wanted to legitimize experience (while subjecting it to corrective experience) but Kant is a much more bold thinker in terms of providing a method for getting rid of the obstacles to progress. Hume sought safety in the wisdom of the community, but Kant wanted to teach individuals from their youth to be independent judges.**

61. Kant is, of course, positing the individual mind as the repository of judgment. That puts him on the path towards a psychology of the human mind and subjectivity, arguably more directly than Hume, who can only deduce the association of ideas from experience generally (notwithstanding Hume's focus on *imagination*). Thus, it's interesting to see what Kant has to say about this new field. What's he say? **He says that psychology can't tread on the domain of philosophy in terms of transcendental ideas and categories. But while philosophy cannot be "confounded" with "psychology", Kant says that it is "connected". Psychology is allowed a place in Kant's metaphysical/philosophical realm, therefore, but as an "appendix" to metaphysics and part of a future "anthropology" of human nature.**
62. Finally, and sorry for any repetition here, what is the status of critical philosophy as metaphysics in the production of human knowledge? **It occupies the "supreme office of censor". Philosophy controls science and directs it to its "highest possible aim – the happiness of all mankind". BE CAREFUL, OF COURSE, TO PAY DUE ATTENTION TO THE MORAL DIMENSION OF KNOWLEDGE IMPLIED IN HAPPINESS.**

Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action

General

1. Habermas's theory is about language, or more precisely *speech acts*. This *discourse* theory privileges a particular kind of speech. What is it and how is it different from a lot of other accounts of speech? **Many analyses of speech focus on the *instrumental* function of communication. Habermas wants to focus on the *communicative* function of language or discourse because it is in communication prior to instrumentality that we discover what it means to be human.**
2. To what extent is Habermas a Kantian? **Habermas is Kantian to the extent that he believes that communication implies *rational* and *transcendent* elements that are intrinsically *moral*. Moreover, these elements are *universal* and *foundational* for communication.**
3. To what extent does Habermas depart from Kant? **1) Habermas does not locate morality in some *categorical imperative* but in the imperatives of discourse, specifically in argument and persuasion; 2) Habermas argues that *universals* cannot and should not refer to the *content* of moral decisions but, rather, to the *procedure* for arriving at those decisions; 3) Habermas views moral formation as a quintessentially *social* activity that is located in communal conversation, thus he does not view the solitary *individual* as the moral arbitrator.**
4. So, if Habermas believes that morality is a social construction, what makes him different from, say, a *virtue ethicist* like MacIntyre? Note before answering that he disagrees fundamentally with virtue ethics. **Whereas the virtue ethicist make morality *relative* or *contingent upon community*, discourse ethics argues that 1) morality is always already imbedded in the process of communication, 2) morality has a distinctive character that *develops dialectically* as the individual engages in communication with social others, 3) ontologically, moral development precedes according to the principle of *distancing* from oneself and empirical others, and 4) the highest stage of morality is one that provides a *critique* of existing communal values in terms of abstract considerations of *justice*.**
5. Habermas tends to use the terms *ethics* and *morality* in a particular way that reinforces his meaning. How does he use them? **Ethics are the values of the community or what Habermas prefers to call the *lifeworld*. They ground the individual in his/her society and concretize values in ways that are very important. But ethics operates on a lower developmental plane than morality which allows for *independence* from concrete situations and the ability to judge the *validity* or *non-validity* of the values of the lifeworld.**

6. Habermas's approach to *morality* is often described as *procedural*? What does that mean? **Habermas does not believe that, in complex modern societies, we can ever dictate moral content or prescribe universals. These are simply particular *arguments* that need to be debated. What we can do is to establish rules or *procedures* for conducting the social conversation. These procedures do lend themselves to being defined as *universals* because they are implicit in all argumentation and *necessary* if a valid social consensus is ever going to be reached.**
7. Can you provide an example of a universal procedural rule that is simultaneously a moral injunction? **You must give everyone with rational competence the opportunity to speak on any issue. You must allow anyone to introduce or question any assertion. You can't try to control anyone and you need to effect mechanisms to ensure that people are not controlled. Everyone needs to be involved in the formation of the *general communal will*.**
8. How might Habermas respond to the criticism that his view of morality is unrealistic and that there will never be anything like a perfect communal will but only continual readjustments of power relationships (i.e. Foucault)? **Habermas might suggest that *in practice* the communal will might imbed many *compromises*, but that doesn't mean that compromises necessarily reflect unequal power relations. We have the capacity to create a *just* society if not a *perfect* community. WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR HABERMAS'S DISCOURSE ETHICS TO WORK IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF PERFECT CONSENSUS (Rousseau) BUT ONLY AN AGREEMENT THAT SOCIAL CONSENSUS IS THEORETICALLY *POSSIBLE*. IN FACT, WE OPERATE ON SOMETHING LIKE THAT *PRINCIPLE* WHENEVER WE ENGAGE IN NON-DOGMATIC ARGUMENT.**
9. Why is Habermas's approach considered by many to be a 'breakthrough'? **Habermas has established the conditions for a democratic society striving to become an ideal moral community. He is considered important to modern thought because his analysis is one that allows the western consciousness to put scientific and instrumental kinds of thinking – that have become so second nature – in secondary place. He has pointed the way to a solution. But that does not mean his will be an easy solution to implement.**
10. What is the main set of problems that Habermas *himself* identifies with respect to his neo-Kantian program? **Habermas suggests that, in the current discursive environment, moral formation abstracts from the lifeworld or the community in ways that make it difficult for people to concretize morality and to *engage* in moral action. It is necessary to implement morality and engage in communicative *action*. Unless moral abstractions can be applied and reinforced, moral development will run into dead ends. Morality (i.e. deontological ethics) needs to be reinforced communally if it is to be effective.**

11. Why can we not escape this difficult dialectical dilemma by going back into traditional and more conservative value systems according to Habermas? **The developmental genie is already out of the bottle. More and more people think at least partly in *deontological* terms (i.e. abstract rights and justice) since the Enlightenment. We can't go back in history, especially since the historical process parallels what we know about the development of moral consciousness. It moves inexorably towards detachment unless blocked. It is built into the speech acts of everyday life.**
12. Are there other areas that you can think of in which this process of rational abstraction has already taken place and even become dangerous to the *lifeworld*? **Capitalist economics is an abstraction that, arguably, was originally intended to serve the *lifeworld* by improving the instrumental conditions of life. But now, again arguably, economic constructions threaten the *lifeworld* by making humanity conform to *markets*.**
13. What would be necessary to restore vitality and validity to the *lifeworld* for Habermas? **To reinject the notions of community and consensus and non-instrumental interaction into everyday life. But for Habermas this cannot be done simply by affirming something like dignified Kantian individuals; it involves establishing communicative processes and procedures.**
14. How could/might a society designed to effect communicative discourse help to check the negative encroachments of *sciences* like economics or politics into the lifeworld? **A society dedicated to maximizing conversation from all sources would provide a much broader perspective on the appropriate *goals* of communities. Moreover, it would force economic and political *agents* to genuinely communicate with all sectors of society, in other words to treat them as discursive *ends* rather than *means* to narrow and instrumentally conceived goals.**

Specifics

Introduction

1. What does Thomas McCarthy view as the primary contribution of Habermas to the discussion of morality? **Habermas has developed a moral-philosophical agenda for a pluralist and fragmented moral society wherein notions of the *good life* have been exploded by *difference*.**
2. What kind of philosophy does McCarthy say Habermas is **not** resurrecting? Do you agree? **McCarthy believes that Habermas is not returning to *transcendental philosophy* but it would still be accurate to say that Habermas does discover *transcendental* values in human discourse. Moreover, Habermas views these transcendental values as operating in a developmental fashion leading towards, not universals exactly, but *universal perspective***

- taking*. Thus, if you really wanted to view Habermas as affirming transcendental values, you would be justified in doing so, as the followers of Foucault have suggested.
3. Why is communication an intrinsically *moral* act for Habermas according to McCarthy? What's its dynamic? **It involves *reciprocal perspective taking* with the goal of *mutual agreement*. This kind of reflective argumentation process is quintessentially *intersubjective* and the core of morality or the essence of the moral point of view.**
 4. What is quite revolutionary about Habermas's discussion of intersubjective communication processes according to McCarthy? **It makes the "ego" derivative. People are not born with a sense of autonomy, except in the crudest instrumental sense, but autonomy develops as part of the process of detachment in communication. Thus, the egocentric perspective is a late and transitional development and this development DERIVES FROM A COMMUNICATIVE PROCESS THAT SEEKS THE COMMON GOOD.*******
 5. What is the end point of Habermas's discourse ethics? **Reconnecting the abstract sense of justice that has developed from social position taking to the "solidarity" of community. When will this be accomplished? When communal solidarity has been transformed in light of "a general discursive formation of will".**

Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification

1. What philosophical conclusion does Habermas want to debunk? **The claim that REASON IS NEUTRAL and that it can only speak to *means* but never to *ends*.**
2. How is Habermas ultimately a *cognitivist* theorist like Kant? **He does believe that there are cognitive capacities that give rise to moral conceptions. Reason is moral in some very important aspects, a phenomenon that we can understand if we look at the parameters and dynamics of communication.**
3. What fact does Habermas believe should undo any skepticism that morality has real *content*? **Resentment. We resent wrong done by one (not just ourselves) by another. This *resentment* is an irreducible moral condemnation. (I might want to talk about Adam Smith and David Hume here, since Smith's argument about resentment is very close to that of Habermas.)**
4. When we morally condemn an action of one person towards another, what is involved for Habermas? **Taking a third person perspective – the objectivising attitude of a non-participant observer – that goes beyond the "I and Thou".**

5. What do ethical theories need to make them cogent for Habermas? **A foundation in the interactions and *intuitions* of everyday life. These are the things that make us human. THE COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE MUST BE THE LOCUS FOR ANY MORAL THEORIES.**
6. Swenson, who Habermas likes, thinks that interpersonal communication has a “moral core”? What is this moral core as Habermas develops it? **When people make normative claims – including their indignation/resentment at immoral behaviour – they also make a claim to “impartiality” in their judgment. Their judgments imply a willingness to “back up” their claim to others, say by showing how a certain behaviour was unfair, cruel, disrespectful etc.**
7. Why is it inappropriate to reduce these moral judgments to considerations of *utility*? **Social utility *leaves out* something absolutely vital in these judgments, namely the “web of attitudes and feelings” that are “imbedded in the communicative actions of everyday life”. Human beings constantly develop “suprapersonal standards” for judging, and they do this AUTOMATICALLY and without considering UTILITY.**
8. Some positivist philosophers of language statements have attempted to reduce moral statements to something like empirical statements of fact, or descriptive statements that can either be true or false. Why does Habermas consider the attempt to transform an *ought* into an *is* ill advised and even ridiculous? **To say something is “right” is very different from saying that something is “yellow”. Specific to moral or normative claims is something that cannot be tested in the same way as descriptive sentences. They cannot be verified or falsified.**
9. The Philosopher R.H. Hare takes a different tack in arguing that moral statements are “combinations of imperatives and evaluations” that ultimately refer to the *individual's* lifestyle choice. That’s a fairly common perspective. Why does Habermas consider this non-cognitivist point of view misguided? **While Hare allows that people give reasons for their choice, he fails to understand that such a metaethical theory deprives everyday communication of significance. When people communicate with one another THEY ACT AS IF THEIR MORAL CLAIMS ARE REDEEMABLE. THEY ADOPT A DISCURSIVE STRATEGY THAT SUGGESTS THAT MORAL CONSENSUS IS POSSIBLE.**
10. What is the nature of normative communication according to Habermas? **Normative discussion consists of two things that empirical or intuitionist accounts cannot come to grips with. FIRST, IT DOESN’T MATTER IF AGREEMENT DOESN’T TAKE PLACE AS LONG AS THE PARTICIPANTS BELIEVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE. SECOND, DISCUSSIONS/ARGUMENTS ABOUT HIGHER ORDER NORMS MAKE PERFECT SENSE IN TERMS OF *PROVISIONAL TRUTH*. This of course**

is something very different from notions of a more objective and falsifiable truth.

11. What do we have to understand about “moral truth claims” according to Habermas? **Moral truth claims are not the same as descriptive or empirical claims, the use of truth is not the same, it is merely *analogous* to other truth claims. IN ANY CASE, IT IS NOT THE CONTENT OF THE ARGUMENT AS MUCH AS THE FORM OF THE DISCOURSE THAT GROUNDS NORMATIVE CLAIMS.**
12. Habermas suggests that “claims to validity” in normative discourse must be grounded in the “context of communication” prior to reflection. What does he mean? **He means that there must be something irreducibly moral in character about communication itself, before we reflect upon or analyze communicative statements.**
13. How does a social actor ground the *truth* and *truthfulness* of normative statements? **Communicators ground the truth in the willingness to provide ‘reasons’ why the normative claim is ‘true’ (only provisionally of course) and grounds truthfulness in his/her consistent behaviour according to the norms stipulated. These are ‘contracts’ or ‘guarantees’, but they are not like most contracts or guarantees that are ‘asymmetrical’. In fact, they are reciprocal or ‘symmetrical’ – discourse could not take place unless these criteria were binding for everyone engaged in communication.**
14. Why do you think does Habermas want to make a distinction between communicative action in general and strategic action in particular? **Strategic action implies wanting to get someone to do something that they might not want to do; communicative action is a discussion aimed at arriving at a consensus. To the extent that language can be a disguise or an instrumental tool, it is not going to have a moral character for Habermas. BUT EVEN A LANGUAGE THAT IS DECEITFUL (Rousseau) IMPLIES A PRIOR FOUNDATION THAT IS GENUINELY COMMUNICATIVE. WITHOUT A PRESUMPTION OF COMMUNICATION, IN OTHER WORDS, THE CONCEPT OF DECEPTION WOULD BE INCONCEIVABLE.**
15. What’s a simple way of saying this? **Communication is aimed at “reaching understanding”. What is taken for granted? Speaker and hearer base their claims to “normative rightness” or propositional truth on 1) a willingness to redeem their claims, 2) non-contradiction of propositions, 3) not changing the meaning of the words that they use. What is the conclusion? Normative statements or “propositions” DO NOT REFER TO SOME OBJECTIVE REALITY BUT ALWAYS TO SOCIAL REALITY. THEY ARE RELATED TO ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SPEECH ACTS. NORMATIVE CLAIMS INHABIT A “UNIVERSE OF NORMS”.**

16. What are norms dependent upon? **They are dependent upon the continual reassertion of intersubjective relations that are perceived as legitimate. Normative claims “mediate a mutual dependence” of language and the *lifeworld* or social world. This mutual dependence allows a theory based on discourse to meet the *lifeworld* “half way”. See #45.**
17. What does Habermas mean when he says that norms are “true” not only in an analogous sense but also an *ambiguous* sense? **There is always a tension between norms that are “recognized” and norms that are “worthy to be recognized”. All norms are provisional in that sense, however much they may be accepted at any given time or by any given culture. Just because a norm is “redeemable” doesn’t mean that it will be “redeemed”. NORMS ALWAYS NEED TO BE LEGITIMIZED.**
18. Why is this a really important issue for MODERN SOCIETY? **Whereas in the past, norms could be legitimized with reference to an elite (itself regarded as legitimate), MODERN NORMS NECESSARILY NEED THE SUPPORT OF THE MASSES TO HAVE *LEGITIMACY*.**
19. According to Habermas, Kant’s notion of legitimacy in terms of universalizable laws has no relevance to a complex modern society. What’s the Habermasian solution? **Focussing on the grammatical form rather than the content of normative statements, Habermas suggests the following procedural and non-monologic framework for legitimizing norms: (U) All norms need to be regarded by *everyone* as in *everyone’s best interest* [in terms of consequences and side effects] and (D) The only norms that have any validity are those that meet with the approval of all affected *in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse*.**
20. What’s Habermas trying to do with U=universalizable and D=discourse? **He’s trying to say that everyone has got to agree that this is legitimate and they’ve got to come to this agreement by actively discussing it, not passively agreeing to it. EVERYBODY HAS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION OR THE RESULTS WILL BE PARTIAL AND NOT IN EVERYONE’S BEST INTEREST.**
21. What’s wrong with John Rawls’s discussion of justice (original position/vail of ignorance) for Habermas? **It is a position that is monologic (Rawls’s himself) and that advocates a monologic process (individuals imagining themselves to be in a certain state). There has to be genuine communal discourse for legitimacy to occur. Rawls’s analysis would simply be one of many positions that people would argue about. MOREOVER, ETHICAL REFLECTION CAN’T SIMPLY BE A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT. IT IS A ‘PERFORMATIVE ACTION’ IN AND THROUGH COMMUNICATION.**

22. What kind of consensus is looked for as the end point of U and D? **Agreement that expresses a *common will***. Why is voting on norms a no go for Habermas? **Only the intersubjective process of reaching understanding can produce the kind of agreement that is REFLEXIVE. Only a reflexive understanding convinces one of LEGITMACY.**
23. How does all of this STAND KANT ON HIS HEAD? **Instead of willing a universal law to be valid, you have to submit your maxims to everyone else FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCURSIVELY TESTING ITS CLAIM TO UNIVERSALITY. This is for Habermas a “collaborative process of argumentation”.**
24. Habermas talks about Ernst Tugendhat who also views normative justification as *essentially* a communicative endeavour. What error does Tugendhat make so that Habermas has to reject his account? **Tugendhat views the discussion of norms not as a truly intersubjective process but primarily as a means of ensuring the freedom of individual wills from relations of power. Thus, Tugendhat’s real starting point is the individual will and argumentation is nothing more than a way of coordinating individual intentions. TUGENDHAT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THAT NORMATIVE FORMATION IS A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS AND THAT THE GENERAL WILL IS MUCH MORE THAN SIMPLY AN ‘EQUALIZATION OF POWER’.**
25. Why does Habermas prefer Durkheim to Tugendhat, despite the fact that Durkheim could be viewed as a defender/legitimiser of unequal power relations in society? **Durkheim at least understood that society itself had a normative character and that the normative realm was, in an important sense, autonomous.**
26. Many Metaethicists try to explain how social actors arrive at norms that are IMPARTIAL. What does Habermas suggest that they fail to understand? **IMPARTIALITY IS IMBEDDED IN THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION ITSELF. THIS IS A MORAL NORM THAT IS “ALWAYS ALREADY” THERE IN COMMUNICATION.**
27. Moral skeptics and moral relativists could argue that the cognitive normative process that Habermas argues for is itself a CULTURAL variable, specifically a product of Western culture’s attempt to promote and defend COGNITION. How does Habermas reply? **He reiterates the point not only that the basis of morality is rooted in a cognition that develops in an intersubjective context but that its characteristics can be found in ANY SUBSTANTIVE FORM OF COMMUNICATION IN ANY CULTURE. WE ABSTRACT TO THIRD PERSON OBSERVER STATUS – I.E. IMPARTIALITY – AND MAKE CLAIMS THAT WE INTEND TO REDEEM AS LEGITIMATE WITHIN THE RULES OF ARGUMENTATION.**

28. What concession to cultural pluralism does Habermas make? **He says that it is true that Kant's position reflects the particulars of Western culture and is, therefore, just one position among many (but clearly a privileged one for him). He suggests, however, that discourse ethics is more firmly grounded in human cognition and establishes processes that clearly avoid privileging any particular cultural manifestation. IN ADDITION, HABERMAS ARGUES THAT NORMATIVE ARGUMENTATION WILL NECESSARILY TAKE PLACE WITHIN SPECIFIC CULTURAL CONTEXTS AND WILL REFER BACK TO THEM.**
29. Why is Karl Popper's PRINCIPLE OF FALSIFIABILITY not applicable to the universalizing agenda Habermas? **Normative statements are not falsifiable in the same way that other "truth" statements are. They have a different kind of logic and a status that is "provisional". In terms of discourse theory, they are "universal" only to the extent that everyone agrees, through participation in discourse, that they "universally agree".**
30. Why is Karl-Otto Apel's analysis of FALLIBLISM such an illuminating critique of guys like Popper for Habermas? **He argues that anyone who denies the existence of moral argumentation must make a PERFORMATIVE CONTRADICTION. Just to engage in rational scholarly argumentation means constantly implying such criteria a FAIRNESS, IMPARTIALITY AND ABSENCE OF DECEIT. THERE ARE "UNIVERSAL" AND "NECESSARY" PRESUPPOSITIONS IMBEDDED IN ARGUMENTATION.**
31. How does a moral skeptic perform a "performative contradiction"? **She/He uses arguments that depend on universal presuppositions to deny the existence of universal presuppositions.**
32. What for Apel and Habermas is an important presupposition of rational argumentation that also has a moral character? **The presupposition is that any 'public' discussion of any matter must include allowing "any rational being to contribute". This fact of argumentation implies a nascent presupposition of "FREEDOM OF OPINION".**
33. What is the problem with respect to operationalizing this principle more widely, as in terms of discourse ethics? **It does not necessarily follow that a principle that applies to a specific forum – a public debate – should or could be applied to society generally. But what does Habermas suggest about his particular brand of *transcendental pragmatics*? Habermas argues that a philosopher can isolate the universalizing principle in argumentation to derive "procedural rules" that could allow for the legitimization of morality in modern life.**

34. Habermas differentiates between “products”, “processes” and “procedures” related to normative formation. What is he getting at? **An ethicist cannot dictate specific moral norms or normative ‘products’; that is a fool’s game. But an ethicist can set out the ‘forms’ or procedures for the discussion of a morality that will be arrived at collaboratively. Habermas doesn’t talk much about ‘processes’ in this book, but what he means is specialized methods for making sure that everyone is part of the discussion. This is not a job for the philosopher as ethicist but more one for the political scientist or the communications expert who can use sophisticated methodologies/technologies/strategies to make sure all opinions are on the table in the public debate.**
35. What are some of the rules that Habermas and others have formulated or derived from an account of argumentation proper? **For a fuller answer to this, see the attached lecture. Here he itemizes: 1) speakers can only assert what they believe, 2) speakers must provide reasons (not just assertions) to dispute propositions or norms, 3) every competent person should be allowed to take part in the discussion, 4) everyone should be allowed to introduce or question propositions, 5) everyone should be allowed to express her attitudes, desires and needs. THESE ARE NOT SIMPLY CONVENTIONS OF ARGUMENT; THEY ARE PRESUPPOSITIONS; AND UNLIKE MERELY LOGICAL RULES OF ARGUMENT (no contradiction), THESE RULES DO HAVE A NORMATIVE CHARACTER AND PURPOSE.**
36. How rigid is Habermas about the application of these rules? **Habermas understands that to apply rules rigidly in every case would not be efficient or necessary to normative formation. In real life, you try to get the best “approximations” that you can. But these approximations should not refer to something like “utility”; they should refer to the rules of normative discussion. To the extent that they break with those rules, normative formation toward universal agreement is impossible. Those CRITICAL CONDITIONS MUST BE APPROXIMATELY REALIZED.**
37. How does Habermas contrast his intersubjective conversations with Kant’s prototypical moral man? **He contrasts “Kant’s intelligible characters” engaged in a communal search for the truth with “real human beings” driven by complex motives.**
38. This procedural-discursive approach uncovers a weak (in Kantian terms) notion of normative justification – one that does not prejudge the outcome. What is this transcendental pragmatic very different from? **It is very different from stating substantive norms; it cannot include any moral theoretical frameworks other than ones that stem from argumentation. IN OTHER WORDS THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO WAY OF BY-PASSING AN INCLUSIVE DEBATE IN HABERMAS’S DISCOURSE ETHICS. EVERYTHING MORAL IS ALWAYS UP FOR DISCUSSION EXCEPT THE FORMAL RULES.**

39. Here is the best quote in the book: “As we have seen, in reaching an understanding about something in the world, subjects engaged in communicative action orient themselves to validity claims, including assertoric and normative validity claims. This is why there is no form of sociocultural life that is not at least implicitly geared to maintaining communicative action by means of argument, be the actual form of argumentation ever so rudimentary and the institutionalization of discursive consensus building ever so inchoate. Once argumentation is conceived as a special form of rule-governed interaction, it reveals itself to be a reflective form of action oriented toward reaching an understanding.”

40. It may seem that Habermas’s transcendental-pragmatics is a method for deriving valid norms, but that would be a misleading assumption. How does Habermas say that he wants this approach to be construed? **He says that it is a way of “testing” the “validity of norms that are being proposed and hypothetically considered for adoption”.**
41. This is a *formal* procedure, says Habermas, but he wants you to understand that it is not formal in the sense of being empty of content. What two types of content does the procedure work with? **It works with the content (i.e. cultural) of the lifeworld that is given. But it also encourages and works with content taken from outside that lifeworld of the given, since it problematizes the received wisdom and demands a reflexivity that is transformative. It does not “abstract from content” but provides a guarantee that the content will be as rich and inclusive as possible.**
42. Why is discourse ethics a “knife that makes razor sharp cuts”? **It separates the good life from what is just; it separates evaluations from normative judgments. Thus, IT ALLOWS YOU TO CRITIQUE YOUR OWN SOCIETY FROM THE OUTSIDE WHILE USING THE MATERIALS FROM THE INSIDE. HABERMAS OBJECTS STRENUOUSLY TO VIRTUE ETHICS PRECISELY ON THESE GROUNDS – THAT IT DOESN’T LET YOU CRITIQUE YOUR OWN ASSUMPTIONS. HENCE, HABERMAS VIEWS HIMSELF AS A *CRITICAL THEORIST*.**
43. Why are the values of PRUDENCE and the lessons of HERMENEUTICS incomplete? **They don’t appreciate the fundamental importance of adopting the “third person perspective”. You can’t avoid this in any argumentation. Hence you shouldn’t avoid it when discussing the values of your own society. THERE IS A CRITICAL LEARNING PROCESS THAT SHOULD GO ON WITH RESPECT TO YOUR OWN CULTURE.**

44. Isn't there a problem in idealizing practical discourse (no matter how pragmatic) of communicative action in a less than ideal world? **Habermas accepts this point and argues that there are historical limits at any given time and that strategic thinking is necessary. But HABERMAS WANTS TO STRESS THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF THE 'MORAL FRAMEWORK' THAT HE HAS DEVELOPED. HE CLAIMS THAT IT FREES PEOPLE NOT ONLY FROM THE BLINDERS OF THEIR OWN CULTURE BUT FROM THE 'INSTITUTIONS' LIKE MARKETS AND BUREAUCRATIC RELATIONS THAT LIMIT THE VITALITY AND POTENTIAL OF THE LIFEWORLD. THE MORAL POINT OF VIEW, AS OPPOSED THE MERELY 'ETHICAL', CAN LIBERATE YOU FROM 'CONCRETE HABITUAL BEHAVIOUR' IN ORDER TO ENVISION NEW POSSIBILITIES. THE CONCEPT OF JUSTICE HAS FAR GREATER POTENTIAL THAN IN ITS LIMITED NOTION OF BALANCED JUDGMENT WITHIN THE POLIS. THE MINDLESS SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE THAT KEEPS A DEFORMED LIFEWORLD GOING IS OBLITERATED. HABERMAS, CLEARLY, VIEWS DISCOURSE THEORY AS THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM, AND ONE THAT IS PHILOSOPHICALLY GROUNDED.**
45. What forms of life does Habermas hope will emerge from an acceptance of the principles of discourse? **He envisions a world that "meets universalist moralities halfway", in other words a lifeworld that makes sufficient use of the transcendental pragmatic to get beyond the demotivated existence in which we now live.**
46. Clearly, somewhat obscured behind his normative procedures is a THEORY OF PROGRESS. What does he point to as evidence that developmental progress is possible? **He cites Kohlberg's psychological-cognitive theory of moral development to a postconventional stage of moral consciousness. This development, that Kohlberg views as cognitive and a natural dialectic forming autonomous individuals within society, needs historical/contextual/lifeworld support in order to be realized extensively. Clearly, Habermas is hoping for such a society, one that is worthy of the cognitive potential of human beings. [You will see how this argument plays itself out if you read the chapter on Kohlberg's stages and Selman's account of social perspective taking. The argument gets intricate because of some of the criticisms of Kohlberg's model by other psychologists, but Habermas wants to buttress its general features because his own model is similarly cognitivist and normative.]**

Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel's Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics

1. In this chapter, Habermas want to explore some of Hegel's criticisms of Kant, particularly Kant's affirmation of the freely acting moral individual in order to

illuminate the differences between himself and big, bad Immanuel. What are Hegel's 4 main criticisms? **1. Kant artificially detaches the cognitive categories from the concrete lifeworld. 2. Kant's proposed universals are ahistorical abstractions. 3. Kant's moral norms are impotent precisely because they ignore historical reality. 4. Kant's emphasis on the individual will or conviction is a dangerous even *terrifying* concept that forces a cold blooded and artificial *reason* on living-breathing societies.**

2. Habermas neatly summarizes *discourse ethics*. So what does he say it is when he is being succinct. **It is a deontological approach that confirms a moral truth that is analogous but not identical to other truth claims. It is a cognitivist ethics, but one that focuses on grammatical statements that reveal the normative hard wiring of the mind. It has some parallels to Kantian philosophy but scales it down to a "principle of universalization" that satisfies all parties (U) that derives all of its legitimacy from engaged argumentation or discourse (D). Finally, its normative basis resides in formal or procedural rules for argumentation that are not separated from real life contexts but that can always be used to critique those same contexts. The overriding emphasis of this "moral point of view" is "impartiality", but a very human impartiality effected by the imperative of discourse itself rather than any monologic methodology.*******
3. What does Habermas speculate as the source for all moral "intuitions"? **He suggests that they stem from our common "fragility" but does not offer any strong reasons why we should believe him about this. It's not necessary to his main argument anyway, since we derive the basic moral principles that count from communication, more specifically argumentation about how we should live.**
4. What are the primary characteristics of moral development? **Moral development takes place in an intersubjective context and follows the pattern of increasing abstraction and *differentiation*. The development of the "ego" is part of this process; therefore the ego cannot be starting point of a discussion of norms. The ego develops within and because of a normative structure.**
5. Human beings are *individuated* through socialization. Thereafter, morality needs to accomplish two tasks at once. What are they? **Morality needs to defend the "dignity" of the individual and to "legitimize" the web of intersubjective life.**
6. What two principles conform to these two kinds of activities and involve the individual in a dialectical and developing relationship with his/her society? **The two principles are justice and solidarity. Since both principles have the same root, according to Habermas, morality cannot affirm one over the other. Any protection of the individual, for example, will equate with a protection of society.**

7. How did Hegel “understand” the problem of morality and why did he critique Kant’s moral philosophy? **Hegel understood that there was a danger of isolating moral principles and affirming justice to the individual, say, over compassion to others. He saw more clearly than anyone else that the “individualist approaches” of modernity were limiting. But he also suggested that Aristotelean virtue ethics were problematic in that one could never get outside of particular contexts or even begin to understand the “problem” of the individual. Hegel synthesized these dualisms in a brilliant historical account.**
8. Why does Habermas think that discourse ethics is not subject to Hegel’s critique of Kantian dualism? **Discourse ethics describes “individuation” as a socially mediated process and the social world and its normative structure as an intersubjective realm.**
9. Why is discourse ethics a “more promising” development than Kant’s categorical imperative? **To repeat, it doesn’t prescribe content but it does explain what is really the core or substance of a “universalistic morality”. It is able to go beyond a particular form of life or context without divorcing the individual from his or her lifeworld. Indeed, while the lifeworld is invested with new possibilities, most of its normative subject matter is *sui generis*.**
10. What does discourse ethics do that Hegel also wanted to do? **It reaffirms the link between “justice” and the “common good” which were divorced by Kant’s distinction between “duty” and “the good life”.**
11. Kant made a very sharp dichotomy between the normative/intelligible world and the world of *phenomena*. How does discourse ethics manage the same terrain? **Discourse ethics merely views these differences as “tensions” that are worked out in *everyday communication*. You don’t have to worry about the gulf between the real and the ideal in discourse ethics because everything is subordinated to a shared generalizability of interests. There are no isolated and potentially bereft structures apart from common language use. And the formalized public discourse ensures that results reflect the best outcome in terms of solidarity possible in this very human sphere of existence.**
12. How is Kant’s account of moral justification improved upon according to Habermas’s account of discourse ethics? **Kant is forced to assume that reason provides its own *mechanism* for justifying universals, pointing to an experience that is monologic. This only begs the problem, especially with respect to specifically Western universals. Discourse ethics effectively *solves* this problem by deriving (U) from the process of full and complete argumentation.**

13. Now come Hegel's 4 critiques of Kant. The first is the claim that cognition is formalist in isolating cognition from the real world. **Habermas responds that Hegel was wrong because both Kant and discourse ethics point to real world experience to defend the existence of the moral point of view. Both Kant and discourse ethics are deontological in defending the integrity or validity of the moral point of view. The fact that Kant's universals run into problems does not negate the fact that human beings think *normatively*. Discourse ethics improves on the weakness in Kantian ethics by distinguishing between the structure and content of moral decisions and by stressing universalizability (in terms of potentially generalizable interests) rather than valorizing specific universals.**
14. Hegel argued that Kantian ethics was a series of ahistorical abstractions that ignored particular contexts and conditions. **Habermas says that this is a misreading of Kant and would also be a misreading of discourse ethics. As societies develop and become more complex, they require more general rules and norms derived from a more distanced perspective. This is crucial if particular interests are to be managed without prejudice. If Hegel's critique is viewed more as a condemnation of moral rigorism that is not sensitive to practical questions, it certainly does apply to Kant. Kant's universals don't allow much room for maneuver or for managing the conflict between different sorts of oughts. But Habermas clearly doesn't think this applies to discourse ethics. He makes two points: 1) moral decisions need not be applied unilaterally but as best practices or approximations. In fact, *compromise* is often going to be the case, and 2) the procedural rules of discourse ethics absolutely insure awareness of "consequences". While discourse ethics focuses on rules rather than consequences, its application is totally sensitive to contexts, since the moral decisions have to be acceptable to everyone and are always provisional and, therefore, subject to change.**
15. Hegel argued that the 'ought' was impotent in the face of what historically and contextually "is". **Habermas agrees that Kant is susceptible to this criticism because he divorces "duty and inclination" and "reason and sense experience" by arguing that we can only be free when we act morally and not from interest. But discourse ethics is not susceptible to the same criticism because inclinations, interests and sense experience are all part of the lifeworld that people bring to the discussion of universalizables. Moreover, discourse ethics is very clear that human reason is not autonomous from lived experience and, in fact, that autonomy is a product of intersubjective exchange. He sums up his practical application by saying that discourse ethics meets the lifeworld *halfway* without surrendering the ability to critique some of its aspects when they don't meet the criteria of justice. Finally, Habermas rides along some distance with Hegel when he suggests that moral universalism is itself a "historical" event that developed within, and for the sake of, particular living historical communities. It is not**

something opposed to the vitality of those communities, at least not in the form of discourse ethics.

16. Hegel like some postmodern theorists pointed to Enlightenment *reason* as a tool of domination, control and even an instrument of terror, insofar as living breathing societies were now meant to conform to reason's dictates. Another way of saying this is that reason is a means or *techne* of power. **Habermas objects to this and defends Kant by reminding us that Kant's entire discussion of practical reason was aimed at treating humans as "ends" rather than "means". The entire spirit of moral universalism, says Habermas, breathes human freedom and dignity. Abuses of this spirit by Marxists and others should not be attributed to the message itself. To be sure, there is a difficulty between 'judgment' and 'action' that allows the message to be prostituted. Weber was one, for example, that said that sometimes using suspect means to achieve moral ends was inescapable. But Habermas claims that this problem is not one that discourse ethics ever faces, since there is absolutely no notion of imposing one's judgment on anyone else. Quite the contrary, the only rules that are imposed are ones derived from or supplementary to a full and impartial argumentation about the options. And that argumentation is not some abstracted reason but one that takes into account feelings, history, interests etc.**
17. Habermas ends, however, by revisiting an important Hegelian insight and investing it with importance. Hegel, he suggests, did point out an important fact when he claimed that a universalist ethics could be an abstraction unconnected to the lifeworld. How does Habermas deal with the problem? **He suggests that there is a danger of too great an abstraction of the issues of 'justice' or deontology from lived experience or notions of the 'good life'. Any abstract system runs the risk of developing a life of its own or simply being a critique without content. But, surely, suggests Habermas, discourse ethics squares the circle better than most other theories by referring argumentation back to and in and through that same lifeworld that it can sometimes challenge.**
18. Finally, Habermas adopts a modest tone about discourse ethics. What does he suggest? **He suggests that discourse ethics cannot address all human problems, at least not in its present formulation. He points out that it is based in an intersubjective world that is fairly anthropocentric and that all members of society, including philosophers, have responsibility to expand the discourse to helpless members of the animal kingdom and the ecosystems in which they live and which we are destroying. While abstracting justice clearly allows individuals to escape from the perspectives of their own limited lifeworld, we westerners have a real responsibility to tease out the voice of other communities in the globe and to make them a part of our own discourse. We need also to address the fact that we have exploited these countries. Habermas also demonstrates his roots in the Frankfurt School and concludes by saying that those engaged in debate have an additional**

responsibility to consider the material injustices in society generally. It is one thing to give everyone a voice, but without material resources some of those voices may not be empowered.

The following is a lecture that I gave to second year students in my *Business and Society* Class on Discourse Ethics that has a lot to say about Habermas. The sections on theories of cognitive and moral development will also prove useful as background for anyone who wants to dip into the chapter on “Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action” that I decided not to put you through.

Critical Theory and Discourse Ethics

Introduction

Today, we are going to be looking at new and trendier approaches, particularly **discourse ethics** and the **ethics of care**. Discourse Ethics has its origins in the **critical theory** that became a dominant mode of philosophy between the 1930s and 1960s. Among the names we associate with discourse ethics are Adorno and Habermas. About the latter, I’ll have a lot to say today. The ethics of care is not really an ethical theory *per se* but a new approach that has its roots in a certain kind of **feminism** that has forced us to look at ethics to see whether it has been overly dominated by a **detached and predominantly male way of looking at social life**. It also has a fairly close connection with modern psychology because it relates to the way that we develop our moral personalities.

Critical Theory

As the name suggests, critical theory is *critical*. Critical theorists engage in a *critique* of most modern approaches to understanding the world and the possibilities for a rational society. By *modern* here, we mean the kind of rationalistic thinking that was first championed on a wide-scale in the eighteenth-century *enlightenment*. In that period, between 1740 and 1789, a group of writers, loosely called the *philosophes* because most of them were French, argued that human society could be transformed and perfected by the use of *reason*. The particular brand of reason that they championed was a scientific blend of empirical and deductive reasoning. Their goal was to use this approach to create a rational, improving, humane, civilized and peaceful world. They believed in *progress*, although they didn’t think that progress was necessarily inevitable. That’s why you had to propagandize the rational approach and use it as a weapon to criticize tradition, superstition, and stupidity.

The Enlightenment movement can be said to have ended with the French Revolution of 1789 and particularly with the *Terror* that followed it. It was hard to be optimistic about progress when people were having their heads chopped off! But many of these ideas not only survived but gained new currency in the nineteenth-century. As capitalism and technology became established in the 1800s and contributed to economic and scientific improvement, the idea of progress returned in an even more scientific form. Now life could be improved by applying scientific and technocratic ideas for the advancement of the human species. This movement was called *positivism* and it was highly **instrumental**. It was all about the *application* of knowledge to control nature and even human nature. You see the results of positivism all around you, not only in the

worshippers of scientific progress and technology, but also in the use of medicines and drugs to lengthen life and correct problematic behaviours.

Some philosophers, particularly German philosophers at Frankfurt University (hence referred to as the *Frankfurt School*) began to challenge that dominant scientific paradigm between the First and Second World War. Essentially, they pointed out that the positivistic idea of progress failed to take into account two major problems with modern capitalistic and technological society. The first problem was identified by Marx. What Karl Marx pointed out was that modern society was a battleground for class warfare. Genuine progress and human liberation would only come, he suggested, when this conflict was resolved and the working class participated fully in the evolution of society. Until that happened, science and technology were tools that allowed the capitalist class to increase its dominance over society and define progress in its own terms rather than in terms of the liberation of the entire society. So, you see, the critical theorists were highly *critical* of positivism and especially technology because it could be an instrument of oppression.

But there was a second problem as well. This problem, ironically, was illuminated by someone who was a firm believer in the scientific approach. His name was Sigmund Freud. Mr. Freud pointed out that a modern scientific civilization was *unnatural* in an important sense. In order to live and get along in modern society, individuals had to **repress** some of their most basic instincts. For Freud, human beings are not merely rational members of *homo sapiens* but sexual animals. Scientific and rational society ignored our sexual natures at its peril. Social planners tried to turn us into something that we are not and *ethics* was an agenda of repression. All of modern society had become a program of repressing the primitive feelings of the individual and elevating the *super ego* or conscience over the *Id* or more primal subconscious. In a sense other than merely economic, therefore, modern society was anything but liberating.

Freud believed that total liberation was not possible or even desirable. In fact, a certain amount of suppression of sexual energy was absolutely crucial for the development of civilization. Most of what we call civilization, said Freud, is a product of the *sublimation of primitive energy*. We take the sexual energy that has been bottled up and channel it into science, literature, art and all the things that make civilization such a wonderful thing. Without sexual sublimation, we would still be back swinging by our tails in the trees. At the same time, modern society after the Enlightenment had taken on a highly repressive character that was epitomized in the prudish value system of Victorian society. Society really needed to ease up on this repression. We shouldn't have to feel guilty about primal sexual feelings that are part of our nature. Society didn't need to continue to inject us with guilt through a repressive ethics. The controls should be lifted, not to the extent that they resulted in sexual license or more primitive behaviours, but to the extent that human sexuality was considered natural. If not, modern society would produce way too many *neurotics* who acted out their sexual frustrations in self-destructive behaviours.

Freud gave the members of the Frankfurt School more ammunition to criticize modern society. Not only was its rationalism a cloak for class oppression, but also its ethical byproduct was the suppression of individual freedom. The Frankfurt School effectively used Marx and Freud together to highlight the problematic nature of modern society. But they found themselves in a dilemma. With Marx, there is hope for the future because the working class is supposed to usher in a freer and equal civilization. With Freud, the potential for liberation is strictly limited. Why? Because no matter what kind of technologically advanced society you have, its smooth operation will require individuals to conform and suppress their more primitive side. In fact, the more society progresses economically and scientifically, the more bureaucratic it will become. The more individuals will have to *fit in*. The prospect for a better society is hardly optimistic, as we saw when we looked at another German thinker, Mr. Max Weber.

After the 1960s, however, a second generation of critical theorists emerged in Europe that was much more optimistic. Some of them were much more critical of Freud than their predecessors, arguing that Mr. Freud was too eager to put a barrier around the human Id or primal subconscious. Instead, they began to look at the Id, not simply as a primitive state of consciousness or sub-consciousness, but as a source for individual and imaginative renewal. The emphasis in writers like Deleuze and Guattari is on the liberation of the imaginary without any of the fear that this will result in social upheaval. On the contrary, this exploration will open up alternative possibilities for civilization that are not linked to the Oedipal complex of needing to reproduce the repressive mommy, daddy, bad child, good child syndrome. These alternatives can be explored *inter-subjectively* through discussion or discourse or any kind of interaction (even playful) with others. Such ideas don't merely exist in theory, by the way, but are expressed in various forms in *avant garde* happenings like the *Burning Man* event that takes place every year in the Arizona desert, where there is a celebration of Dionysus combined with consciousness bending and participatory art.

Discourse Theory

But the kind of modern critical theory that is of more interest for us – because it has a clearer economic and socio-political agenda – is *discourse theory*. And the person who has developed discourse theory in ways that are most important for us is someone by the name of Jurgen Habermas. Habermas is a major representative of the “second generation” of the Frankfurt School. He's one of those multi-disciplinary thinkers that York likes, simultaneously a philosopher, a sociologist and a political economist. His major work is *The Theory of Communicative Action*, which has been highly influential because it charts a new way for human beings: 1) to understand ourselves, and 2) to engage in purposeful action.

The problem with the Enlightenment for Habermas was that it used the term *reason* in a problematic way. The Enlightenment was a movement that placed emphasis on empirical and deductive reasoning to understand and improve society. While the Enlightenment understood the difference between *instrumental or technological improvement* and the moral and communal development of civilization, its writings tended to blur those distinctions. By the time we get to the *positivism* of the nineteenth-century, many intelligent people are confusing all of rationality with a highly *instrumental* language designed expressly to control nature. The language of positivism encourages people to value only that discourse which allows you to act in instrumental ways. Think about it, isn't the scientific and technological language of the modern age primarily about manipulating matter or objects to create new and better objects? This way of looking at the world may be all very well and good when it comes to dealing with physical objects, but it is not a very useful way of talking about human society. When you apply positivistic language to human behaviour, you rarely get a complete understanding of what is going on. What you do basically is treat people like objects that you can manipulate to get more efficient results.

Let's chat about a problem with modern society for a moment – depression. An instrumental approach to depression suggests that you manipulate people somehow to make them less depressed. So you might, for example, use anti-depressant drugs to allow people to function without such a degree of unhappiness. But would that solve or only mask the problem? You wouldn't be getting to the heart of the matter because you wouldn't be examining what makes a community tick. In particular, you wouldn't be looking at how people actually interact with, or communicate with, one another.

Habermas suggests that you get a completely different understanding of human society if you understand that language can take two distinct forms. Language can be used in a scientific, technological or positivistic or *instrumental fashion*. Or it can be used as a way that people communicate with one another, exchange symbols, and define who they are as individuals and as a community. Habermas argues that the *communicative* use of language is not only important, but it is primary. The *instrumental use* of language, i.e. to control objects, came later in its development and it only has utility in a functional sense. It doesn't define who we are or how we should act. Its use is *pragmatic* or based on effectiveness. But it can't deal with the really big issues of what makes us human or social or moral. Nor should instrumental language intrude upon the sphere of communicative language or there will be serious problems in the building of a genuinely *human society*.

Instrumentalism is a special kind of language or **discourse**. Just because instrumental discourse is secondary and not fundamental does not make it unimportant. The Enlightenment gave rise to a way of thinking and talking that is highly **efficient** and extremely useful to human beings. Out of the enlightenment came **modern science, economics, social science, and political science**. Habermas certainly wouldn't want us to be without these specialized kinds of instrumental discourse. But the point that he wants to make is that **instrumental language can never decide what a human community should be; what it provides us with is knowledge about how to achieve our human goals**. When instrumental language, like market economics or political science, tries to impose the most efficient society upon us, it usurps power that it should never be allowed to have.

Communicative language is the discursive domain that defines what a community is and what it aspires to. This is the discourse of shared values in the community. It is how people define themselves and makes sense of shared values. It includes all of the shared assumptions that we make about our social and cultural environment. Habermas uses a word that has become part of the literature today to describe this sphere of communicative discourse. He calls it the **lifeworld**. It is sphere of shared presuppositions that makes us who we are. The problem with the *lifeworld*, of course, is that not everyone shares the same values or symbols. In a small-scale society, there is typically a closely shared consensus on what the community is and the same symbols are held by almost everyone. In a complex modern society, many of these symbols are **contested**. That creates a problematic environment because **consensus** is difficult to achieve. It also creates a problematic discursive environment because, in the absence of consensus, instrumental or scientific language too easily slips in and provides its own solution in its own terms.

The net result in the modern world is that instrumental languages, particularly the language of market economics, have intruded past their proper sphere of influence to the point where they dominate the lifeworld or the realm of communicative action that should be primary. To make it simple, we should decide what kind of communities we are and what kind of communities ideally we want to be. Then discourses like economics or political science should help us reinforce those values and get to those places. When economics or political science define what society is and what it should be, we have a serious problem. Instead of the cart following the horse, the horse is following the cart.

Pragmatic, Ethical and Moral Deployments of Practical Reason

Habermas does not shirk from this problem. He sets himself the task of showing how the different kinds of discourse need to work together to produce what he calls an *ideal discourse situation* where the lifeworld or realm of communicative action can restore itself to its proper position. We'll get to that in the next section. In this section, we'll look at the way Habermas deals with some of the major ethical theories.

Habermas argues that the question of what kind of society we are and want to be is fundamentally a normative question. There are 3 fundamental ways that western thinkers have discussed this normative issue:

1. Utilitarian or Pragmatic.
2. Virtue Ethics
3. Kantian Morality

Habermas thinks that utilitarianism is an example of instrumental thinking. What utilitarians have done is to design a highly rationalistic and instrumental system that shows us how best to achieve our personal preferences in a social context. Some of these questions can be quite complex. For example, all of you want a secure well-paying job. But you also want a job that interests you and fits with your personality. You are constantly asking the question *what should I do?* Utilitarianism answers: that you should pursue your goals as *rationally* as possible. You should decide what makes you personally happy and look for the most *efficient* means of getting there. If you want a lifestyle that allows you to travel around the world, for example, then you either need a job that sends you around the world or to make enough money that you can retire early and travel around the world.

Utilitarianism is a very low level normative theory because it is very egotistical. It helps you find the best way of getting what you want, and in that sense, it is highly instrumental, but it doesn't have a lot of the character that we associate with morality. You can see this if, instead of saying, what do I want out life?, you ask a qualitatively different question. *What sort of person do I want to be?* For many of you, you won't be happy unless you become that kind of person. Already, you are moving from the narrow confines of the ego to a broader understanding of your humanity.

When you engage in this kind of understanding of personality, character and way of life, you move into a superior normative domain. You are no longer in the world of utilitarianism, but in the world of virtue ethics. This is the place where you use the language of giving back or helping other people. You begin to take the feelings of others into account. Now your personal preferences do not revolve around yourself but others. There is still a strong element of self here, because you realize that, while you can no longer achieve happiness directly, you can achieve it *indirectly* by being a good person in your community. In this context, other people's lives and their life history become intertwined with your own. Your character is formed by interacting with these people and realizing that you share a common enterprise.

In this stage, you will not do something just for yourself because that will make you unhappy. You will not be *the person that you want to be* and the person that you would like other people to think of you as being. You will be honest, respect others, and try to live a life of *integrity*. For Habermas, this means living an *ethical life* but he wants to distinguish ethics from a kind of *morality* that he thinks is even higher. The problem with virtue ethics is that it never gets you outside of your community and the happiness that comes from the self by being a good member of the community. It doesn't address the much deeper question of *what is right?* The question of what is right isn't a question that can be answered with reference to a particular community. It is more than what is appropriate in your particular situation. It requires a "universally valid form of life." What is required is an adherence to maxims that "should be followed by everyone as a general law."

Let's make this a bit simpler. Being a good person of integrity in your community may be very satisfying but it doesn't include everything that we think of when we use the world morality. When we use terms like morals, we are saying that certain behaviours are right or wrong absolutely and universally. Until we are able to use this universal language, we are still locked up in the relationship between self and community and we have no possibility of going beyond. By considering the word *ought* or *should* in terms of more universal laws that should apply to all people at all times, we enter into a distinct realm where we are, for the first time, free of ego and particular contexts. This is the realm of moral freedom.

What we are talking about here is the **categorical imperative** of Immanuel Kant. Habermas is a Kantian to the extent that he thinks that Kant gives us a solution to the question: what is morality? For Kant, something can only be considered truly moral if it conforms to the rule of universality or general rules. Practical morality can't be confined to the personal or communal search for meaningfulness, it needs to be able to be more universal than that. A moral individual, for example, *should* disagree with the common values of his or her community whenever these cannot be universalized. A moral individual would also act out of a sense of duty rather than a concern for his or her direct or indirect happiness.

The concept of what is *just* and what is *right* (rights and justice) have their greatest precision in the writings of Kant and particularly in the concept of the categorical imperative. But, as much as Habermas admires Kant and believes that he has gone a long way towards solving the moral question, he has a problem with the way Kant applies his moral injunction. What Kant ends up doing is separating the moral individual from the ethical community in ways that Habermas can't approve. While virtue ethics is too community oriented, therefore, Kantian morality ignores several serious issues:

1. the pursuit of morality is a communal, not simply an individual, pursuit.
2. Kant's theory is too rigid to really allow for the fact that human beings are engaged in an *intersubjective collective will formation*; you can't simply say that that the collective will should be the individual will on a grander scale.

3. in a complex society, with different interests, it is not so easy to arrive at general laws.
4. it is even more difficult to arrive at moral consensus in situations where some social groups have much more power than others.
5. an important task for morality has to be striking the right balance between articulating a collective identity and leaving room for individuality and diversity.

What Habermas also points out is that Kant's theory is too idealistic and transcendental. Morality needs to be "rooted in something objective." It needs to be at once a part of real communities engaged in communication and yet able to go beyond. How is that to be done?

Ideal Communicative Situation

Habermas doesn't want to throw out the Kantian baby with the transcendental bathwater. He argues that Kant has a point in stressing the need for general rules. But, in a brilliant twist of Kant, Habermas suggests that **those rules should be *procedural rather than substantive***. Instead of trying to do the impossible, developing an absolute universal code that would apply to all people at all times, why not try to develop a set of absolute or minimum standards for moral communication – one that would allow for the possibility of consensus *between* rather than *within* individuals?

How would you get people to discuss and agree on collective norms in a non-coercive way (a way that respects human dignity and free will)? Habermas thought about this a long time and came up with the following general principles:

1. You have to allow everyone with the competence to speak and act to take part in the discourse.
2. You have to allow everyone to question any assertion whatsoever.
3. You have to allow everyone to introduce any assertion whatsoever into the discourse.
4. Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires and needs.
5. No one may be prevented, by external or internal coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in the preceding rules.

The communication that would result from an agreement on these matters would allow everyone to contribute to defining collective values or norms. It would allow for the expression of moral individuals and a moral society. If you look closely at what Habermas has said here, you can see that he has laid the foundation for a very different kind of political community than the one we live in.

If we established the highly democratic procedural principles outlined by Habermas, the instrumental values of efficiency would be nullified. Or, more accurately, it would be subsumed within communal values. It would be fundamentally a moral rather than a market economy. This would be a time-consuming process, but to Habermas a highly worthwhile one and totally indispensable if one wants to engage in communal decision-making. Since everyone has a voice that must be heard, the community would not be controlled by politicians, scientists, capitalists or economists. People would have a way to have their voices heard. Because everyone has a voice, one group could not dominate another and power relationships would be more equal.

But how would you ensure that every voice was heard in a complex society? This isn't like ancient Athens where you could get everyone into the public square to discuss issues. Habermas suggests that government would have to be run differently. Instead of relying on politicians and experts to set the agenda that everyone has to follow, these bodies could use their expertise in *instrumental* discourse to discover the most efficient and comprehensive ways to *discover* the opinion of the community. Instead of directing or controlling the community, politics, economics and social policy would *reflect* the values of the society. Those who represented the community would have to ensure that there were now sufficient avenues whereby opinion would be expressed. This would especially mean establishing instruments for including those who have typically been powerless in society and whose voice is seldom heard.

Habermas is describing a very different society from the one that we live in. In our society, many people don't even vote because they don't believe that their opinion counts for much. Political parties tend to represent the interests of the most powerful groups, be they corporations, civil servants or trade unions. Public relations, on the part of these powerful groups, is about shaping opinion rather than genuinely attempting to discover it. As a result, says Habermas, the lifeworld is no longer the source for the collective will or the moral community. The sciences of politics and economics have almost crushed the lifeworld and substituted their instrumental values for a truly collective discourse.

For Habermas, therefore, Kantian ethics or **deontology** is transformed into a moral discourse that establishes **universal procedural rules** rather than absolute moral commandments that don't make sense in a complex world where people need to learn to compromise. While his approach emphasizes the deontological problem of establishing universal rules, he retains the communal focus of **virtue ethics** while suggesting that we need to go beyond living the *good life* and move society towards living the *right life*. Pragmatic or **instrumental thinking** (i.e. utilitarianism) can help us by establishing the most efficient mechanisms for generating the discussion that will lead us to an increasingly ideal collective will, but it cannot be allowed to define or even to shape the nature of the moral community. That can only take place with the fullest and freest participation of all the members of the community.

The kind of rationality that will result from this discussion will be very different from scientific or utilitarian rationality. It would be the kind of rationality that makes sense of us as members of a symbolic community. Many of our symbols have a value for their own sake, because they define what we are as human beings. Scientific and utilitarian rationality cannot speak to our nature as symbolic participants and sharers. That's why a strictly scientific or utilitarian world, if it could be established, would be so unsatisfying. One thing is sure, it wouldn't have much to do with morality, at least not in the deep sense of what we consider to be moral. Habermas has made an argument for morality as a shared activity within the community. As a consequence, he has also made an argument for a certain kind of democracy that arrives at consensus (however slowly) through the most universal debate possible. The realm of the *possible* is not defined by what is scientifically appropriate, technologically efficient, or cost-effective. It is defined in terms of the active *inclusion* of everyone.

Habermas is popular precisely because he has established the conditions for a democratic society striving to become an ideal moral community. He is considered important to modern thought because his analysis is one that allows the western consciousness to put scientific and instrumental kinds of thinking – that have become so second nature – in their secondary place. He has pointed the way to a solution. But it will not be an easy solution to implement. It will be difficult to get people with instrumental, political or economic power to give it up. Habermas provides an excellent *positive analysis* of what has gone wrong. He offers a *normative analysis* of what should be done. He even provides a *strategy* in the form of procedures that, if implemented, could rectify a serious imbalance. But where he is at his weakest is in terms of showing us how to *implement* that strategy in a world where the few have the resources and power to control the many.

Habermas and Business

We all live in a capitalist society, but it should be obvious that capitalism empowers some groups more than others. The groups in power often have to work very hard to justify capitalism or the marketplace because of these inequalities. Nonetheless, the discourse of the market has become ever more powerful and, for Habermas, intruded on the lifeworld in ways that are not only dangerous but that marginalize some groups significantly. Often we talk about people like the homeless that are marginalized by capitalism, but the group that is marginalized the most is workers. Capitalists have much more power over the way society and the market will develop than workers.

Another group that is marginalized should be obvious. In the modern world, more and more people are concerned about the environment. In many citizen surveys, people put the quality of the environment at the top of their list. That so little is done to improve the environment by business and governments shows just how much market priorities dominate in modern society and push out other worthwhile lifeworld discussions.

Habermas allows you to think about capitalism in a very different way. The question he would ask is: on what basis could *everyone* agree to a capitalist economy. The answers might look like this. First, the market would need to be truly competitive with the ability of people to enter at any time. This, of course, is very different than the society we live in today, where some very large corporations dominate and regulate markets. Second, workers would need a greater say in the way capitalism develops. This could take the form of more *rights* for workers or even *participation* in the running of businesses. Third, those who hold shares in companies would need much better information and increased control over what businesses do in their names. Fourth, all those who are marginalized by the market – including women who have children and do a lot of work in the home – but are not rewarded because they are outside the market economy, would need to be involved and recognized. Finally, concerns like the environment would have to be included in any thinking about markets.

In terms of the big players in modern markets – the corporations – Habermas's approach would involve a radical rethinking. Corporations could no longer think of themselves as separate profit making centres apart from the larger society. They would need to consider themselves a human community (virtue ethics) and a part of a larger community. Now the corporation would have to be part of the *lifeworld* rather than an immensely powerful entity dictating to the lifeworld.

Habermas and Rawls

Whenever you explore modern thinkers, you can understand them better if you compare and contrast them. Two of the most influential thinkers of the modern era are Rawls and Habermas. Both Rawls and Habermas may seem similar in so far as they both advocate highly democratic forms of communication with the goal of achieving a moral consensus. But, arguably, Habermas is deeper and more comprehensive than Rawls because Habermas shows us how utilitarianism, virtue ethics and deontology *all* relate to the endeavour. Habermas retains a place for the achievements of utilitarianism and virtue ethics with their focus on instrumental reasoning and collective behaviour. In a sense, therefore, Habermas develops what we might call a *grand theory* that takes elements from all the major moral positions and glues them together in a new understanding. Rawls is locked into a justice based deontological approach that doesn't really show us what the other positions have to offer.

Rawls's theories support a blend of capitalism with the welfare state. Habermas, on the other hand, does not speculate as much about what the future society would look like, since it will be the product of free discourse. In fact, Habermas might suggest that Rawls has fallen into the trap of accepting capitalist or market discourse as a given, rather than as something that has encroached upon the lifeworld to a degree that is unhealthy. Habermas, therefore, is suggesting far more radical changes in the way we think than someone like Rawls requires. That doesn't mean that you can't take elements from each thinker. At the end of the day, both of these thinkers privilege deontological thinking and have something to offer that may be complementary.

Arguably, Habermas's approach lends itself to a *critique* of existing structures and a program for establishing structures that are morally *legitimate*. Rawls' theories act more as a defense of existing institutions, while perhaps calling for some modifications to make them more democratic.

Psychologically Based Theories of Morality

Those of you who have studied psychology will be aware that psychologists have added an additional dimension to moral discourse. People are not born with a highly developed *categorical imperative*, moral understanding is something that develops over time. Maslow, for example, elaborates a *hierarchy of needs* that puts moral consciousness high on the chart of what it means to be human. Since Piaget and Maslow, a number of psychological researchers have been exploring the **stages** of moral development. Among these is a man named Kohlberg who divided moral psychology into 3 distinct stages.

The first or **pre-conventional stage** is the stage of the two year old. In this stage, children don't have a real sense of morality. They have needs and demands. If you want to train them morally, you have to show them that some behaviours don't have a good payoff. Thus, if they throw a tantrum because they want a candy, and you are a parent, your function is to show them that they are more likely to get what they want if they behave appropriately. Good behaviours get good results. Bad behaviours don't. The child engages in good behaviour, not for its own sake, but to get what they want. At this stage the individual ego is very big.

The second or **conventional stage** involves a superficial internalization of social values. You now want to be a *good person* whose behaviour is approved of by others. Your moral orientation is towards social rules and authority. You tend to view morality in **black and white terms**. This viewpoint is typically the one that many students have when they enter university. What your parents and your peers do is what is right. You don't care to have to think about morality for yourself.

The final stage for Kohlberg is **post-conventional** and means going beyond authority figures and defining what is right in terms of universal standards. Now, you go beyond internalizing the morals of those around you, which tend to be inconsistent and imprecise, to look for values and systems that are more substantial. You now develop a conscience that is guided by ethical principles. Sometimes those principles will cause you to disagree with and depart from common standards. You are now an **independent moral actor** and you find good and rational reasons for your behaviour.

A good university education in the liberal arts tries to push you in this direction. Many students in first and second year university want to be *told* what is right or appropriate and they are not comfortable in a world of ambiguity where they have to decide what is right for themselves *with good reasons for their choice*. Of course, there is a problem here, isn't there? You might think you've discovered what the right thing is to do, but you might find it difficult to act on that knowledge. The individual can achieve a high degree of moral consciousness, but it is difficult to act on that consciousness when the world seems to be going in a different direction. One of the important things about Habermas is that he tries to create the foundation for a *community* to act morally rather than simply focusing on the individual and his or her duty in the way that Kant did. Unless we fix some existing structures and provide procedures for involving everyone, it might be difficult and even unusual for people to act in morally rational ways.

In the essay that you read for this course, Carol Gilligan has a different kind of criticism of Kohlberg – a feminist criticism. Feminism is an analysis of and concern about the subordinate position of women in society and there are several different kinds of feminism. Liberal feminists think that women's position is based on an outmoded culture that can be changed by changing people's consciousness. Radical feminists believe that women's subordination is the result of patriarchal arrangements that need to be attacked head on, because men won't give up positions of power unless they are forced to do so. You also have Marxist and socialist feminists, whose positions we may discuss later on in the course.

York University has many feminist scholars. You shouldn't assume that they agree on a great deal other than that fact that women have been subordinated unjustly. There is a great deal of debate, for example, between those who think that women need to enter the workforce and advance like men and those who think that the caring/nurturing function of women should be given more respect. Feminist ethics, as espoused by Carol Gilligan, focuses specifically on the way that women conceive *relationships*. She points out that most moral theories, including those based on utility, rights and justice, reflect a decidedly male perspective. Males focus on things like the individual, duty and abstract principles like justice, whereas women focus on developing and maintaining close relationships. **Women's morality is more about caring; males' morality is more about detachment.**

If you think about it, both moral paradigms are valid. But you can't use them both at the same time. It's hard to be detached when you care about something or someone. It's hard to be a caring person when you are trying to be detached. Men and women often get into problems because of the different paradigms or mental viewpoints they adopt. If you are a woman, you've probably been frustrated by men who practice detachment and try to solve your problem for you, when all you really want is for them to listen and show that they care. If you are a man, you probably think that you can give a woman a piece of advice that will solve whatever problem they are experiencing and that's all you need to do. Sorry, doesn't work that way. That's why some pop psychologists talk about men being from *Mars* and women being from *Venus*.

In terms of morality, says Gilligan, Kohlberg's approach towards the development of detached universal principles that are internalized in the individual is a **male approach to morality**. If women were tested on this approach, they would score badly because they have a more **relationship and caring** approach to moral behaviour. Because women are more concerned about nurturing close relationships, they would appear to be more **conventional** than post-conventional in their approach. In fact, women develop a very sophisticated approach to relationship building that is different from, and not inferior to, the perspective of males.

Now, this **feminist ethics of care** is not a developed ethical theory. It is still a very young approach and so its implications have not been articulated. It's also not clear whether this caring approach is something that is genetically wired into the female brain or more of a product of the way women are socialized in most societies. Caring makes the most sense when we talk about mothering or the caring professions. But what about other roles played by women?

Even though it is undeveloped, however, the *ethics of care* does highlight a fundamental problem with modern morality. It is more geared to explaining how males develop than how females do, and it privileges certain kinds of male behaviour. Caring and relationship building isn't discussed much in many ethics textbooks, whereas certainly something like justice is. Does the world need more caring and less justice? Is part of the problem with modern capitalism and the corporation the fact that powerful males take an abstract and detached approach to problem solving rather than understanding the complex web of social relationships in which they are involved?

How far can you push *caring*? By definition, we care more about people that are close to us than we do about *strangers*? Could the ethics of care be extended to deal with more universal or global issues? At present, it is difficult to say. What is important is that the ethics of care initiates discussion on a perspective that has too long been buried because women have not had the voice that males have had for the past few hundred years. Given the immaturity of the ethics of care, it is best to use it carefully and sparingly. When you deal with social and business issues, focus on the more established paradigms of utility, rights and justice in the first instance. But feel free to *add* an analysis drawn from the ethics of care if this seems appropriate.

Conclusion

In this lecture, we've focused on critical theory, particularly in the form of the *discourse theory* of Jurgen Habermas. The early critical theorists were good at pointing out the structural elements in modern society that oppressed individuals and groups, but not so good at developing solutions. Habermas is one of the new generation of critical thinkers who, while showing how certain discourses like politics and economics have encroached upon the lifeworld as the origin of moral language, shows us how to develop universal procedures to revitalize the lifeworld as the domain of moral symbolic exchange and self-understanding.

Habermas articulates a theoretical position that brings together utility, virtue ethics, and deontology in a new definition of practical reason and ethics. Utility deals with pragmatic issues and shows us how to get what we want sensibly and efficiently. Virtue ethics highlights the fact that we develop our moral understanding in communities. Deontology, especially as derived from Kant, pushes us to go further than wanting to be good members of given communities and to seek more general and universal values. These values will always be contested and evolving, but the procedures for arriving at them should be solid. This allows genuine discourse to take place.

In order for genuine discourse to take place, it is critical to put business into its place. The capitalist market is not something that should dictate to society and determine social needs. Instead, markets and corporations need to serve *social needs*. The market economy needs to be contextualized within the moral economy if it is to have any legitimacy. That would involve a radical restructuring of present arrangements.

Habermas is concerned to elevate the moral community. Moral behaviour is something that can be defined rationally and individually, but Habermas is very good at showing us how it also needs to be reinforced socially or communally if it is to be effective. Among those that focus on the individual development of moral consciousness are moral psychologists ranging from Piaget to Kohlberg. Traditionally, these psychologists have focused on the ways individuals move from ego centred ways of looking at the world, through conventional approaches gained from the community, towards greater abstraction, detachment and personal internalizations of rationally defensible norms. Carol Gilligan, however, has demonstrated that many of these approaches to moral development fit a predominantly *male* perspective that excludes an equally valid female viewpoint. That viewpoint forms the foundation for a new *ethics of care* that focuses more on nurturing caring relationships than achieving detachment. It will be interesting to see how this feminist ethics of care is developed in the future.

The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks

General

1. Why does Millar's book start off with a discussion of women, do you think? It is unusual isn't it? **Millar may start off with women because it allows him to claim that modern civilized society is at least in one very important way an "improvement" over societies in the past, where women were treated poorly. It also allows him to argue that we might not want to adhere to closely to the ethical writings of the ancients or the anti-civilization warnings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.**
2. Millar's title is somewhat misleading, indeed ironical. Why? **Millar is interested in illuminating the development of differential power relations in society. What he is trying to show is that distinctions arise in particular socio-economic and political contexts. Distinctions, such as feudal distinctions between classes, do not have a basis in innate distinctions between men or ideal political configurations. By understanding how and why they arose, we can see whether or not they have any rationale in our own society.**
3. What is Millar attempting to argue in terms of eighteenth-century society and culture? **He wants to suggest that power needs to be diffused to a greater part of society. Those below the level of the aristocracy are entitled to *liberty*, wives should be considered *friends* of their husbands and not subordinates, slavery should not be allowed to continue.**
4. Why should this book be considered a treatise in socio-political thought than a work of philosophy or that branch of philosophy that we call ethics? **Millar is showing us how different social orders reflect different economic stages of society. He reminds us in several places that people generally don't act according to philosophical or benevolent principles; they tend to act from perceived principles of interest or utility.**
5. Why does Millar consider the age of commerce, i.e. the age of arts and manufactures, to be an *age of improvement*? **It is a period where people have a decreased economic or political interest in dominating others. That does not mean that some inequities remain, but these reflect outdated habits or historical remnants rather than 'enlightened behaviours'. One of the most noticeable, of course, is SLAVERY that Millar singles out for attack at the end of the book.**
6. Millar is often considered to be a theorist of economic progress. Can you suggest how he might be? **If you follow the argument closely, Millar develops a 4 stage theory of PROGRESS that is evolutionary. Societies have a tendency to evolve from hunter gatherers to pastoral (herdsmen) to agricultural to commercial societies. Marx, apparently, took over his 4 stage material history from Millar.**

7. How is Millar's argument parallel to that of Marx? **Millar argues that political and social relations (both based on power) tend to reflect particular economic stages.**
8. How does Millar's theory of progress differ from that of Marx or, for that matter, Hegel? **While Millar's theory clearly involves progressive stages, it does not seem to imply any developmental inevitability. In some ways, modern commercial society is a lot like other commercial societies that have developed historically. In like situations, social *manners* and political institutions tend to mirror one another.**
9. Can you offer an example? **As societies become more wealthy and people become more specialized in terms of the manufacturing of goods, they tend to become less aggressive and more addicted to pleasure. In those situations, a standing army or something like it will always replace a citizen's militia.**
10. What might Millar say to Ferguson, who appears to think that the sense of civic duty is being eroded by commercial luxury? **He might suggest that you can't go back to a different stage and that *manners* will necessarily change as the conditions of life change. Furthermore, he might suggest to Ferguson that on balance the liberty and independence of the majority of the people in a commercial society vastly outweighs the problems that are attached to modern life.**
11. But Millar is not a simple-minded apologist for modernity. He views history in two ways that make him very different from a nineteenth-century liberal. What are they? **First, he is willing to take into account the importance of accident in history; despite general similarities, historical particulars can evolve somewhat differently. Second, modern enlightened progress is not guaranteed into the future. The manners and institutions of each age have their own problems.**
12. Generally speaking Millar is a fan of commercial society and particularly speaking, he thinks that England has achieved a remarkable stage of progress, particularly in terms of its appreciation of the benefits of liberty. What is different about his view of liberty from that of Rousseau? **First, real liberty requires economic improvement and the independence from material domination that it brings. Second, liberty is not a philosophical abstraction. British liberties arose in a specific context where the institution and consolidation of 'private property' played a crucial role. Third, liberties are not the subject matter of a social contract; they have their basis in patterned historical developments.**
13. Many Enlightened writers, including Voltaire, dismissed the age of feudalism, or the Gothic period, as the *dark ages* and made their starting point the classical world before the fall of the Roman Empire. How is Millar's approach totally distinct? **He shows how feudalism is in many ways a natural socio-economic political development that has parallels with many different societies around the world. He also shows how certain**

‘accidents’ of historical development, i.e. rude tribes conquering an extensive empire with established administrative components, made for unique or at least fairly distinctive developments.

14. What are some of those developments? **First, the attempt to control and financially exploit large territories meant that serfs evolved from slaves into progressively independent proprietors. Second, feudal society’s preoccupation with military valour and territorial acquisition through planned marriage helped give rise to a *code of chivalry* that helped transform the position of women in society.**
15. Many other writers, not necessarily enlightened ones, in eighteenth-century Britain venerated the feudal law and the ancient constitution. How is Millar clearly different? **Millar wants to critically understand the development of feudalism and, to the extent that he finds certain things interesting about it, he is not engaged in its defense.** Some Presbyterian historical writers suggested that Christianity played an important role in humanizing feudal warrior habits. What does Millar say? **Millar believes that this is nonsense. While his approach to the feudal period is different from and more evolutionary historically from most Continental Enlightened writers (who dismissed the period as the ‘dark ages’), he does think that it was in many respects still a brutal, primitive and superstitious period. He points out that Christianity, despite all its peons to charity and love, basically supported the domination of the people by the barons.**
16. How does Millar’s perspective on government differ from someone like Montesquieu, who views a balance between the forces of power as an ideal type of political structure? **Millar’s approach is much more historical. He discusses the ‘development’ of a ‘judiciary’, for example, as a development that, alongside a standing army, can only occur at a certain stage of economic development. He discusses ‘situations’ in which nobles or the crown compete for power and gain relative ascendancy. In other words, he wants to show you the historical ORIGINS of particular institutional configurations. Of course, that doesn’t mean that he doesn’t have an ‘axe’ to grind.**
17. Millar’s interpretation of the rise of arts and commerce shows that he has a particular axe to grind, doesn’t it? What is the particular axe grinding? **Millar argues that the development of trade and manufacturing is inherently ‘liberating’ for the vast majority of the population who are no longer under the thrall of aristocratic society. But of course, the agrarian revolution (enclosure and tenant farming) in Great Britain that created the conditions for a commercial society wreaked havoc on a large portion of the population. Millar (1771) unequivocally views these ‘improvements’ as positive. His teacher Adam Smith (1776) at least talked about the fact that modern commercial society made life more alienating for many ‘workmen’. Now, I guess you could say that Smith was writing later when the issue of manufacturing was more on the table in the discussion of ‘commercial society’ and that Millar was writing more about a society characterized by crafts than**

manufacturing. But it is still interesting that in the later editions, Millar did not see fit to present a more balanced picture.

18. Marx thought that Millar was an ideolog for commercial society and the dynamic class of the bourgeoisie. Is there much evidence for that interpretation. **Not really. Millar clearly sticks it to the traditional aristocracy. He likes the idea of social mobility because it means that traditional or customary patterns of domination can't find a point of purchase. But his analysis of merchants is not as an inherently dynamic class. In fact, he pictures them as trying to purchase land as soon as they make it big and many of them falling into the same excesses as the owners of formerly feudal estates.**
19. Still, Millar is very much a 'modern' and on the side of 'improvement' and the political liberty that it brings (although he is not a naïve theorist of progress). His comparison of liberty in the Highlands of Scotland with England is very telling. Do you remember it? **He contrasts the "independent sipirt of an English waggoner" with "persons of low rank in the highlands of Scotland". Obviously, he doesn't buy into Ferguson's image of the noble highlander.**
20. In what way, however, does Millar fall into a worshipful attitude towards the noble highland warrior? And what does his explanation tell you about his methodology? **Millar quotes from James MacPherson's largely fabricated *Poems of Ossian* to show that highly developed attitudes towards love formerly existed in Highland Society (the old Gaelic world). Such a progressive attitude shouldn't really exist among a rude hunter and gatherer society where no one thinks much about love because people are too busy being independent and trying to survive. Millar suggests that the poems must have been written at different times (oral tradition) and that some of these ideas must have developed in pastoral (pasturage) society where life was more easy at least for some.**
21. What does Millar's poke at the hypocrisy of the American colonists at the end of the book tell you about his *historical approach to concepts like rights and liberty*? **Millar argues that the discourse of liberty in America is motivated solely by the fact that they have, for the most part, been long out of the reach of British authorities and have an interest in increasing their independence. But their discourse can't really reflect the abstract *rights of man* because they certainly don't extend it to 'Negroes'.**
22. Millar's approach is not only socio-cultural – the *manners* of a particular stage of society give rise to certain political and ideological structures, not the other way around, but clearly historical. What can that tell you about the Scottish Enlightenment versus its continental counterpart? **The Scottish Enlightenment shows that the claim that the Enlightenment was not historical is unfounded. There's a lot of truth to the ahistorical claim for French, but not for Scottish, writers. It also tells you why many writers view the Scottish Enlightenment as the starting point for the disciplines of**

sociology and anthropology. The Scots were interested in showing how political institutions were not the crucial basis of society but, in fact, were superstructures based on cultural values that might, or might not, have an economic foundation.

23. What is for you the most interesting/fascinating aspect of Millar's historical approach? **For me, it is the way that he blends classical literature and modern travellers' accounts to develop his *conjectural approach* to history.**
24. One eighteenth-century writer, Robert Cullen (son of the famous Edinburgh physician William Cullen) said of writers like Millar that they had produced something entirely distinctive in the annals of knowledge. Can you guess what he said it was from what we've looked at above? **He said that the Scots had generated an entirely new *Philosophical History* that discovered patterns in the *manners, culture and relations of various societies.***
25. Marx, of course, owed some of his dialectical materialist historical approach to the Scots (who he acknowledged by the way). But before Marx, someone else bounced loudly off this approach. Can you guess who it was? **Hegel, whose conception of 'spontaneous order' in normal historical development had some very Scottish roots, since the Germans read their Scottish authors.**

Specific

1. What does Millar say that his book is all about? **The influence of improvements (economic) on manners. The relationship between social mores and economic change is key in the Scottish enlightenment because many Scottish writers believed socio-economic factors were much more determining than political/rational arrangements.**
2. What does Millar say about writers on "modes of government"? **He suggests that they often look for 'models' that could be imitated, but what he wants to do is to show readers that 'models' cannot be imposed because those political models have deeper causes in socio-economic life.**
3. Many authors, including Montesquieu and Rousseau, place an emphasis on climate as determining personality and institutions. How does Millar talk about this? **Millar suggests that climate is not determinate and that all societies of men have a propensity to improve. Moreover, societies tend to improve in remarkably similar ways. Finally, it is impossible to measure the effect of climate on the "fibres of the body" while it is very possible by comparing travel literature with classical texts to get at the 'manners' of different societies.**
4. Early on Millar articulates the 4 stage theory of progress. What is it? **1. hunting and gathering, 2. rearing cattle, 3. cultivating the soil, 4. engaging in the "various branches of agriculture".**

5. What is an essential defining characteristic of substantial progress? **The institution of private property, which becomes the “great source of distinction between individuals”.**
6. The eighteenth-century is sometimes referred to as the period of *humanity* (Peter Gay). What is crucial for the development of humanity according to Millar? **Freedom of want and leisure. This situation is also crucial for developing governments that pay attention to ‘rights’ and ‘justice’. In other words, many of the ‘virtues’ that have been discussed ideally can only be realized socially and politically when certain economic conditions have been met.**
7. How does Millar define and qualify historical progress? **He argues that it is a “natural progress from ignorance to knowledge”. But there is still plenty of room for “accidental causes” that retard or accelerate this progress. In addition, custom or “habituation to particular manners” can also impact development.**
8. Political theory and history often focus on the wisdom of individuals such as “lawgivers”. What does Millar have to say about that interpretation? **Individuals have far less influence than you might think. Often these so-called lawgivers simply reflect social values or are amalgams of those social values over time. They are products of their own culture or manners. It is the society not the individual that counts for progress.**
9. How does Millar define his approach or “method of judging”? **He claims to be employing a comparative method, which “throws the veracity of the relater very much out of the question”. The more you look for similar social patterns rather than authorities, the more likely you are to get at what is important.**
10. Millar points out that different manners, or different “habits and education”, reflect different stages. What is the first example that he wants to give us of the impact of these different stages and why? **He is going to talk about the “rank and condition of women”. Why he starts with women is interesting and not absolutely clear. You might guess, however, that he starts with women because he wants to show readers how something as basic and fundamental as sexuality gives rise to different attitudes depending upon economic and cultural development. Human manners are highly flexible and, in fact, can condition what we might consider to be primary impulses.**
11. Why is the “passion of sex” not very interesting in a “rude” or “savage” society for Millar? **Sex is relatively easy to obtain, so the “imagination” is not involved in creating sexual scenarios. Also the struggle for survival takes up a lot of time, so there is no room for the development of culture in which sexuality is a component.**
12. What is the function of ‘marriage’ in rude societies? **Marriage has limited cultural force; it is merely a way of ensuring that children will be provided for. If children could arrive at maturity earlier, relations between men and women in “primitive” societies would be of very “short duration”.**

13. There is an argument about culture and improvement going on here that is heavily biased. What does Millar think about primitive societies generally? **He thinks that they have a limited culture, a limited range, and an impoverishment of manners. Later on he will refer to these cultures, not merely as unrefined, but cruel. He is definitely on the side of modernity and anti the primitivism of Rousseau who is a target throughout the book. AT THE SAME TIME, MILLAR BELIEVES THAT THE 'MANNERS' OF RUDE SOCIETIES REFLECT THEIR ECONOMIC SITUATION AND ARE APPROPRIATE. We can't judge them by our standards, but we can and should remember "how poor and wretched" is the "aspect of human nature in this early state".**
14. Millar doesn't have much time for religion but he does pay lip service to the religious view of marriage. What's he say? **He says that marriage was given to us in "sacred scripture" as a "revelation" from God. But he clearly doesn't believe in these "original institutions". The bible merely reflects the values of a society that had progressed a certain distance from "rude" beginnings. Thus, the bible itself become a reflection of the manners of a particular society at a particular stage of development. Note how bold such an interpretation is in Presbyterian Scotland and notice how it announces a new approach to biblical exegesis.**
15. How is LOVE not an especially important factor in marriage for some time in the historical development? **Other considerations are much more historically important. Societies "institute" marriages that consolidate wealth or military alliance. Parents make the decisions for their children, and the children do not object because "love" is not an issue. Most individuals in "rude" or "simpler" societies are remarkably "indifferent" to love.**
16. How does all of this change as societies "progress in refinement"? **Sexuality is modified by culture in significant ways. As property becomes more important, sexuality is held in reserve and becomes a significant cultural variable. The "dictates of nature" can be "inculcated by the force of education". NEW FEELINGS CAN EMERGE or "GATHER STRENGTH" by a "comparison with those of people around us".**
17. What are the first cultural indications of a changing attitude towards sexuality? **The development of "rules of decency and decorum" with respect to the female sex. How do these new rules transform interaction? They privilege greater "delicacy and propriety". THE SEXUAL INSTINCT IS TRANSFORMED BY CULTURE.**
18. What does Millar want to say about the relationship between culture and gender that might surprise his readers? **Respect for women is not a given; it is a cultural product of increasing refinement. The closer you get to some primitive society or supposed state of nature, the more women will be treated as "inferiors" to men.**
19. Gender roles are clearly cultural concepts for Millar. Does he accept any genetic differences? **Yes he says that they are not as strong as men. Therefore, in any society**

where the skills of the hunter or warrior are privileged, they will be in a different 'station' and will operate in a "humbler province" (the household). Now, it is important not to let Millar's comments about natural gender differences obscure the fact that he is an exponent of greater 'respect' for women within a culture of refinement. But here's the interesting issue. In part, this respect is cultural product based on a modification of the "passion between the sexes". Therefore, it is in turn vulnerable to socio-economic developments that might give rise to too great familiarity between the sexes.

20. Millar believes that cultural 'refinement' is a complex product of economic progress, but he is not so naïve as to think that culture or manners is not common to all societies. How does Millar describe the impact of culture on women in tribal societies? **On the one hand, women are clearly 'inferior' to men and excluded from the dominant sphere of influence; at the same time, they may on occasions become 'martial' themselves with respect to outsiders. Thus, the women of Gaul accompanied their husbands on expeditions against the Romans and taught martial values to their children.**
21. Millar's cultural anthropology needs to at least try to explain the phenomena of more MATRIARCHAL societies. How does he explain this? **His arguments are quite detailed, but he goes into the way that older women in tribes eventually benefit from the fact that their sons relate to the mother rather than to the father. The mother-son bond becomes the basis of matriarchal authority, but this can only happen at a certain age and with certain restrictions. It does not generally mean that male authority is superseded.**
22. What are Millar's comments on the Greeks and Romans with respect to women designed to achieve? **Millar wants to show his readers, many of whom of course are women, that the Greeks and the Romans had extremely UNENLIGHTENED AND UNREFINED ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE FEMALE SEX. In some important respects therefore, even in the age of commercial empire, the Romans and the Greeks should not provide a model for the moderns.**
23. What is the model for progress in Millar? **Clearly it is European civilization with its "noblest discoveries in art or science" and its "most exalted refinement of taste and manners". He wants no part of Rousseau's noble savage.**
24. At what stage does the love or the "refinement of the passions of sex" first emerge for Millar? **It emerges during the pastoral age – when cattle were tamed and pastured and the conveniences of life were more readily available. It is when a person wants to pursue articles of 'comfort' that the "intercourse of the sexes" becomes an "object of attention". THIS IS AN AGE WHEN "DESIRES ARE REFINED" and DIVERSITY IS UBIQUITOUS. But the object of affection, now more finely defined, becomes harder to get. The obstacles act further on the imagination to make the object more desirable. This is when "LOVE BECOMES A PASSION" rather than a mere "SEXUAL APPETITE".**

25. What further development intensifies the cultural construction of love? **The accumulation of property makes relations between the sexes subject to greater obstacles. Competition between families in terms of wealth and rivalry makes opposition to relationships increase. Women become prized for their “chastity” and are hidden from men. The increased difficulty in “gratifying their wishes” (i.e. male) only makes them grow.**
26. Millar is committed to this *stadial* model of economic and cultural progress. How does he account for the love songs in the poems of *Ossian*, ostensibly about a Highland warrior society? **He argues that Highland society must have reached a high level of development, in effect a “golden” pastoral age. What do Millar’s comments about Ossian tell you about the progress of refinement? The pastoral age is capable of developing a fairly sophisticated culture of love that may or may not be intensified in future stages. A lot depends on the ‘particulars’ of progress if the ‘seeds of improvement’ are to flourish. What do Millar’s comments tell you about the *inevitability* of progress in *matters of love*? Millar is not an unqualified theorist of progress. He does suggest that many of the gains in civilization can be undermined. In particular, the “contracted habits of industry, avarice, and selfishness” of a commercial or “immersed in business” society could undermine certain kinds of hard won refinements. SO JUST BECAUSE MILLAR IS A MODERN DOESN’T MEAN THAT HIS ADMIRATION OF MODERNITY IS UNQUALIFIES**
27. What is the MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC “ALTERATION IN THE STATE OF SOCIETY” for Millar and what crucial institution does it give rise to? **The “improvement of agriculture” that gives rise to PRIVATE PROPERTY.**
28. Agricultural cultivation and private property under certain conditions (i.e. the development of landed estates of sufficient size) give rise to new cultural values with respect to love. But clearly not all agricultural societies give rise to such cultural refinement. Why didn’t the Greeks and Romans advance very far in this direction according to Millar? **Their security or empire was based on martial values. Those martial values were so fossilized as to make it difficult for the “passion of love” to achieve an ascendancy. Millar, later on in the text, does cite some evidence for a softening attitude towards women during part of the Athenian empire and Rome during the middle of the Commonwealth period. But, for him it is the development of Western society during and after the feudal period that is culturally crucial.**
29. What was totally unusual or a historical accident that gave an impetus to the “passion of love” in Western Europe? **The particular and peculiar development of feudalism that gave rise to a combined martial and ‘chivalric’ (“romantic love and gallantry”) code that reinforced each other.**
30. Why did the chivalric code or romantic love develop in the ruins of the Roman Empire? **First, the leading families closeted their marriageable women in order to ensure their territorial ambitions (chastity belts). Second, the women were educated to “assume”**

their rank. Third, marriageable sons had to delay marriage to these distant personae. Fourth, these female objects of attention were powerful stimuli to warrior prowess but also softened that prowess into a more general attention to honourable behavior. Fifth, sublimated sexual energies stimulated the imagination in ways that were conducive to the spread of romantic song and literature. Sixth, this chivalric culture as artifact and institution reinforced a set of values that made “love” the “ruling principle” of elite society and “gave a particular turn and direction to all his sentiments and opinions.” Seventh, mere “sensual pleasure” was almost totally buried within this “purity of manners” and “delicacy of sentiment”. All of these, according to Millar, reflected a unique “Gothic taste” to which there **“IS NOTHING SIMILAR IN THE WRITINGS OF ANTIQUITY”**.

31. Millar regards the feudal period as highly interesting and anything but the DARK AGES ridiculed by many Enlightened writers. Moreover, while the cultural values it produced had been modified, certain aspects still continued. Where could these cultural artifacts be found in the modern age? **In those “serious novels which, in France and England, are still the favourite entertainment.” The “respect and veneration for the ladies” was a valuable “improvement” and contribution to a more “refined” civilization.**
32. While Millar regards all of this as highly interesting, he doesn’t think that this “culture of love” is very stable over the long haul. What happens during the next important stage, when agriculture is supplemented by commerce? **The intercourse between the sexes increases because territory and rivalry become less important. To a certain extent, excessively romantic notions begin a decline. Men and women meet and make alliances more easily. But while romance recedes for Millar, women are now respected for those same “useful or agreeable talents” that are obscured in more authoritative martial societies. As romantic love recedes, “FRIENDSHIP” takes over.**
33. How does Millar describe women in terms of modern culture? **He suggests that they are 1) concerned about the rearing of children, 2) highly qualified in areas that require dexterity rather than strength, 3) having a “particular delicacy” that allows them to manage the affection of their husbands, 4) being “proficient” in the “various branches of domestic economy”, and 5) “led in a particular manner to improve those “feelings of the heart” that relate to tender relations with children and husbands. THIS IS THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATE SPHERES IN A NASCENT FORM. BUT NOTE THAT MILLAR SAYS THAT IT DOESN’T MATTER WHETHER THESE FEMALE CHARACTERISTICS ARE ‘ORIGINALLY CONSTITUTIONAL’ OR DERIVATIVE OF A ‘WAY OF LIFE’. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT THEY ARE ‘CULTURALLY REAL’. WOMEN WILL ‘FORM THEIR MANNERS’ IN RELATION TO THOSE CULTURAL VALUES THAT GIVE THEM ESTEEM IN PARTICULAR SOCIETIES.**
34. What kind of society exactly is Millar describing? **He’s describing a ‘commercial’ society that has some ‘manufacturing’ in it. But it is not an industrial society or our idea of a modern capitalist society. Besides the internal evidence in the text, what does Millar say**

that lets you know his idea of progress is not a society dominated by acquisition in the market? **Millar suggests that the “late rapid advances of luxury and refinement” are destabilizing civilization and threatening morals and manners.**

35. What is “luxury and dissipation” and “licentiousness” threatening to do according to Millar? **It is destroying or perverting those “appetites which nature has bestowed upon mankind for the most beneficial purposes.” HE ALSO POINTS TO THE WAYS THAT THESE CHARACTERISTICS OF “VOLUPTUOUSNESS” CORRUPTED THE EASTERN EMPIRES. THE CORRUPTION OF THE EAST ALSO LED TO THE DOWNFALL OF ROME. PROGRESS CAN COME TO AN END IF REFINED MANNERS ARE NOT PRESERVED AND IF INTERACTION BETWEEN THE SENSES BECOMES AN OBJECT OF ‘DEBAUCHERY’.**
36. What is one of the signs that a decline in civilization has begun? **The incidence of ‘divorce’ in society. Hence, Millar’s discussion of Roman divorce law in “those voluptuous ages of Rome”. Hence the lack of serious love literature during the last period of Rome’s greatness.**
37. What is, or should be, one of the major roles of education during the age of refinement? **To warn against excesses of luxury and pleasure, particularly with respect to sexual relations. Who in particular should be doing the warning? Ministers of religion should be ‘moralists’ for reinforcing the values that keep people together. THUS RELIGION IS REDEFINED AS MORAL INSTRUCTION AND ETHICAL REINFORCEMENT. THUS, MORALISING FOCUSES ON RELATIONS IN PRIVATE LIFE OR “DOMESTIC MANNERS” THAT ARE NOW VIEWED AS CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP.**
38. Do you see any interesting anticipations of Victorian morality or the Freudian critique of such in this argument? **Your own answer goes here. But note that sexuality manipulated and controlled has become, in some of the writings of the Scottish school, the key to maintaining moral civilization in an age of increasing luxury and self-interest. On the one hand, sex is everywhere. On the other, it can’t be spoken about apart from marriage and it is measured in terms of a friendship that preserves and further institutionalizes the separation of spheres. This is an incredibly important issue and one that hasn’t been looked at a very great depth by historians.**
39. We can now ‘whip through’ the rest of the book, since it is in many ways less interesting than the first chapter on women that ends with their role as defenders of civilization within the family. Millar wants to show us that, by looking at social relations over time, we can get a better perspective on what’s involved in this thing called “IMPROVEMENT”. What’s his argument about early patriarchal society or society dominated by authoritative males? **That it can’t possibly be a serious model for civilized relationships because it is a relationship based overwhelmingly on the “severe and arbitrary will of the father”. It is, however, a natural state of affairs for a rude society, since a “miserable state of society” requires leadership and the father is the natural source. When young he is**

stronger than his sons; when older his sons are used to his authority, which he supplements with wisdom. Patriarchal values are reinforced, of course, by custom.

40. For Millar, patriarchalism naturally continues when family and kinship networks give rise to larger societies. But he wants to give us lots of evidence that these relationships of patriarchalism have nothing intrinsically to do with paternalism or parental fondness. What does history show? **That fathers did not tend to have concern for their children and that the situation was highly oppressive. Children, and wives, were treated as slaves.**
41. Why are commerce and manufacturers (prior to luxury) a boon to individuals? **The decrease dependence on patriarchal authority or limit it “within narrower bounds”. This is a highly beneficial emancipation of people. YOU CAN SEE HOW MILLAR IS UNDERMINING THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON PATRIARCHAL AUTHORITY HERE. REMEMBER THAT HE IS WRITING IN PRESBYTERIAN SCOTLAND.**
42. Millar is also writing in a Scotland where remnants of feudal law remain supplemented by Roman law. He’s also writing for a British audience where traditional common law and precedent plays an important role. So, what’s he try to tell his readers? **Neither feudal nor Roman law are appropriate authorities for how one should deal with a commercial society where relations are more equal and softened by the feelings of refinement. Millar shows how the Romans tried to correct their laws when circumstances changed. WHAT MILLAR IS DOING IS MAKING AN ARGUMENT THAT THE ‘LAWS NEED TO REFLECT THE MANNERS OF THE PEOPLE’.**
43. This book was absolutely ‘huge’ in Scotland, so Millar clearly is promoting an agenda of modernization within limits. This is the agenda, by the way, of the gentry class of landowners in Scotland who embrace commerce when controlled by the values of land. But Millar has a warning for his readers. What is it? **There is a distinct danger in a “commercial age” of tending towards the “opposite extreme” and raising members of a “family” to “greater independence than is consistent with good order, and with a proper domestic subordination”. CHILDREN STILL NEED TO BE EDUCATED IN GOOD MORALS AND INSTILLED WITH THE “PRINCIPLES WHICH WILL RENDER THEM USEFUL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY”. TOO MUCH INDIVIDUALISM IS A BAD THING. Note how Millar is trying to walk a very fine line between what he thinks of as civilized progress and what he thinks may undermine it.**
44. Millar has a lengthy discussion of Rousseau’s primitive societies that lack luxury and Ferguson’s tightly linked clan society. But he certainly doesn’t accept their conclusions. What does he tell his readers about these societies? **These communities are not linked by virtue or authenticity; they are linked more by common danger and interest. The moment these societies improve, those bonds of community lose all their meaningfulness.**

45. As societies develop, new relations of dependence emerge based first on military prowess and later and more substantially upon the acquisition of wealth. Many traditional writers wanted to emphasize the paternal bond that existed in clan, pastoral and feudal societies. What is Millar's approach? **He wants to 'explode' and expose those bonds as dependent upon certain limited economic conditions and he wants to show that that the dependence established is not a genuine relationship but an expedient one, even if it becomes habitual over time.**
46. What economic revolution in feudalism does Millar spend time explaining as a very important development? **The development of tenant farming in Great Britain where former serfs gradually attain greater and greater independence from the Barons.**
47. What political development parallels this slow emancipation of the tillers of the soil? **The shift from large landowners being magistrates and authorities in their own domain to more balanced and impartial governments.**
48. What got in the way of this 'natural' improvement? **Here Millar is truly an enlightened writer who condemns the way that religious belief and practitioners reinforced and deified chiefs and leaders. He hits out at what he derides as anthropomorphic superstitions that have supported unjust authority longer than it deserved or served a useful social purpose.**
49. What particular conditions allowed the "Gothic tribes" to advance in "improvement" more than might have been expected given their rude beginnings? **Note that Millar thinks that feudal society did improve, especially after the 11th Century. He thinks that, while they destroyed a lot of what they conquered, they inherited some traditional jurisdictions; allowed themselves to learn from the conquered populace; but most of all, they were able to capture 'large' agricultural estates.**
50. Why is the size of the feudal properties such an important "accident" for Millar? **It meant that the barons needed to allow former slaves to farm at a long distance from the manor house and encouraged the replacement of arbitrary authority with more flexible terms. Those terms eventually led to a much more productive agriculture and the independence of many tenant farmers. Increased agricultural wealth, in turn, stimulated handicrafts and the establishment of towns where others could achieve independence. Thus, *liberty* became more than an ideal for a few; economic development made liberty a real possibility.**
51. Millar spends a lot of time spelling out feudal relationships and how they worked. Why do you think he does that? **I would suggest that he has three reasons. First, Scotland was still in some respects a feudal society in the eighteenth-century but that didn't mean that everyone understood how it worked. Ferguson's book was a perfect 'primer' even for understanding the basic institutions of feudalism today (i.e. 'wards', 'fiefs', 'escheats', etc.). Second, Millar wanted his readers to understand that there was nothing magical about feudal titles and relationships. Other societies had gone**

through similar stages. Changes to the feudal law in the interest of improvement should not be feared (i.e. getting rid of entailments on baronial lands that prevented their sale -- a huge issue in 18th Century Scotland). Third, if you read his argument closely, he comes out on the side of small proprietors or the gentry over the more powerful aristocratic families who, he argues, obtained domination over smaller landowners only through fear and intimidation. These powerful hereditary families had no right to continue their political domination of Scottish society in the age of improvement.

52. Millar provides a history lesson on the disputes between the sovereign and the aristocracy, which eventually elevated the *prerogatives* of the crown. What's his point? **That monarchical power arose in a particular context but ended up being "incompatible with the rights of the nobility and the freedom of the people". In other words, political institutions are not immutable but must be modified to meet the demand for freedom, rights and justice in an improving society". GOVERNMENT AND LAW MUST ADAPT TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC REALITIES AND THE MANNERS AND MORALS THAT RELATE TO THEM.**
53. For Millar, these British institutions, from the Magna Carta on, are in no way sacrosanct. Similar developments have occurred elsewhere and England is nothing special. What's his conclusion? **"It ought to be considered that the growth and decay of society have, in some respects, a resemblance to each other; which independent of imitation, is naturally productive of similar manners and customs."** **NOTE THE 'RISE AND FALL'; this is a CIRCULAR VIEW OF HISTORY. Great and polished nations have a tendency to "relapse into its primitive rudeness and barbarism". THE DAY CAN BE DELAYED BY REINFORCING THE 'MANNERS' THAT KEEP A SOCIETY CIVILIZED.**
54. What are the effects of "arts and manufactures" on the manners of society? **These are several. People become: 1) more peaceful, 2) more tranquil, 3) more industrious, 4) less martial but more litigious, 5) more specialized, 6) more independent and protective of their liberties, 7) more addicted to pleasures in the form of luxuries,**
55. What institutions reflect the new social arrangements? **First, the replacement of a citizen's militia with a 'standing army'. Millar thinks that this is perfectly natural and sees no reason to rejuvenate the military spirit that suited an earlier stage of society (a la Ferguson). Second, the separation of the judiciary and the professionalization of law. Third, the development of customs or instruments of taxation to pay for the standing army and the judiciary.**
56. What happens to the average person as a result of these 'improvements'? **People generally become more independent and protective of their 'privileges'. Sometimes, they even become 'insolent' of any authority.**

57. What happens to the people with wealth as a result of these ‘improvements’? **They tend to spend more on items that make them ‘comfortable’. These new forms of commodities take up increasingly more of their income and they have far less to use to make inferiors subordinate to them. If they spend too much, they will lose their estates and others will enter into them. This increased mobility further undermines the authority of the powerful (by eliminating the habit of deference to particular families). This “fluctuation of property” cannot be prevented, says Millar (referring most likely to attempts to maintain entails on large landed estates in Scotland).**
58. Landed property, of course, maintains its cachet. But something else becomes the mechanism for procuring social advancement and dignity that Millar has reservations about. What is it? **Money becomes the way that things are done and honours obtained; Millar suggests that money tends to undermine “nobler purposes of ambition”. So he’s not totally or unreservedly on the side of modernity.**
59. What is the ultimate tendency of these forces for Millar? Note that he is writing in the 1770s! **The ultimate tendency is towards an increasingly democratic form of government.**
60. Millar has lots to say that is political scientific, but this is one political scientist who wants to relate institutions to socio-economic relations as encapsulated in *manners*. So, when he talks about the opposition between monarchical and democratic principles in history and their modern outcome, what does he come down on the side of? **A popular representative government like Great Britain, where the monarch has to rule constitutionally. This is a society that has the greatest *practical* liberty possible in an “extensive territory”.**
61. What does Millar have to say about Rousseau’s vision of a more direct and property-less liberty? **The manners of Rousseau’s society according to Millar would be ‘barbaric’. True liberty needs to be based on improvement and improvement requires private property. The “motives of action” are very different in the two types of society despite the application of “liberty” to both. Thus, Millar defends his teacher Adam Smith’s approach to those of Rousseau. The liberty of a barbaric society is limited, necessitous, unrefined and, historically, is permeated through and through by domination. Only a commercial society, with a foundation in private property, can guarantee meaningful independence.**
62. Millar devotes his final chapter to the Master-servant relationship that captivated Hegel. Why, do you think, does he want to focus and conclude on this particular relationship? **Millar wants to suggest that historically social relations have exhibited high degrees of domination, ranging from unlimited subjection to lesser, but still objectionable, forms of power. These relate to gender as well as to the social order but also, in every case, they are opposed to more enlightened “principles of justice and humanity”. More liberal and views can only develop where they demonstrate “utility”. That “more extensive consideration of utility” only percolates in proportion to “improvements of commerce and manufacturing”. YOU HAVE TO GET ON THE BANDWAGON**

'IMPROVEMENT' TO GET THE REAL BENEFITS OF FREEDOM AND HUMANITY. THESE ARE HISTORICALLY GROUNDED PRODUCTS OF ECONOMIC STAGES. IF YOU UNDERSTAND THIS, YOU MUST OPT FOR A COMMERCIAL SOCIETY, EVEN IF YOU UNDERSTAND THAT IT CONTAINS SOME DANGEROUS TENDENCIES. YOU CAN TRY TO MITIGATE THOSE BY CULTIVATING THE MORES AND MORALS (MANNERS) THAT GOT YOU THERE AND MINIMIZING THE ONES THAT WILL ERODE THE BENEFITS OF COMMERCIAL SOCIETY. YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE OF GOING BACKWARDS BECAUSE BACKWARDS IS A MOVEMENT TOWARDS BARBARISM. AND BARBARISM IS THE ANTITHESIS OF FREEDOM AND MORALITY, WHATEVER ROUSSEAU MIGHT THINK.

63. What institution is totally barbaric and absolutely inconsistent with a genuine progress in *manners*? **Slavery is a throwback to barbarism and a sign that real progress has not been achieved. To the extent that it is still practiced in the colonies, it is a blot on the British Empire. Everyone should be free to obtain property or to have a property in their own labour. Millar calls this "domestic freedom" and domestic freedom, given his model, is more significant than abstract political freedom. Of course that extent of freedom is only possible in a society where the independence of individuals has been achieved historically. But given that achievement, remaining examples of slavery are indictments on the manners and sentiments of the age, says Millar.**
64. Why is *slavery* particularly dangerous according to Millar? **In order to maintain a precarious civilization and its blessings, you need to cultivate the refined *manners* of the people and to prevent the slow decline into barbarism. Slavery is totally inconsistent with the manners of a refined people. THE MASTER CANNOT HELP BUT VIEW THE DEBASEMENT OF HIS SERVANTS AS AN INFLATION OF HIS OWN DESPOTISM. THE MASTER CANNOT EASILY AVOID THE DESCENT INTO BARBARISM THAT HAPPENED TO THE ROMAN EMPIRE.**
65. Millar's praise for "domestic freedom" or the freedom that the increasingly specialized marketplace gives to individuals should not obscure the fact that the market created a new form of oppression. Millar is highly positive about economic progress in terms of its effect on individual freedom and liberty. But there is a sense in which we should not blame him for the worst effects of the market. What point does he make about those who are unable for any reason to "maintain themselves"? He says that **"The maintenance of the poor, is doubtless, a very important object, and may be regarded as one of the most difficult branches of the police of a country. In the early periods of society, when family-attachments are widely extended, the rich are commonly willing to take care of their indigent relations; and from the dispositions of a people unacquainted with luxury, those persons who have no other resource may expect relief from the occasional charity of their neighbours. But in a commercial and populous nation in which the bulk of the people must work hard for their livelihood, many individuals are, by a variety of accidents, reduced to indigence; while at the same time, from their numbers, as well as from the prevailing spirit of the age, their misery is little regarded by their fellow**

creatures...the real object of distress is apt to be overlooked, and without some interposition of the public, would often perish from want. Poor-rates therefore, in some shape or other, must be established; and from the nature of such an establishment, it is usually attended with much expense, and liable to many abuses."*****

66. Touchingly, who does Millar defend in the closing passages of his book? **The colliers and salters of Scotland.**
67. What final thing does Millar have to say about the advantage of his method? **He uses the example of slavery in America to reinforce the point that, if you want men to behave better, you can't direct them to philosophical principles. Those principles themselves emerge from socio-economic conditions and the *manners* to which they give rise. You have to understand those conditions and those manners before you propose solutions.**

The following is chapter 4 of my 1998 book entitled *The Age of the Passions*. I've included it here because it is on John Millar. Read it if you so wish. I apologize for any typos; this is the draft that went to the publisher prior to any fine tuning.

SMITH, MILLAR AND THE NATURAL
HISTORY OF LOVE

"Sensual pleasures," wrote John Millar, "may be connected in many cases, with the exercise of social dispositions."ⁱ This connection was particularly evident in the case of the attraction between the sexes. When moulded into conjugal affection, the passion of sex cemented the institution of the family and "laid the foundation of political society."ⁱⁱⁱ The gradual cultivation of love in history had contributed to that development of taste and appreciation for beauty without which civilized life would have been impoverished if not inconceivable. Refined and sublimated sexuality led to that "delicacy of sentiment" which characterized modern politeness.ⁱⁱⁱ It also ensured the domestic morality that Millar believed was an essential foundation of social cohesion and ethics.

Millar's treatment of topics of like sexuality and love was not only prescient; it also provides a useful introduction to a thematic thread which is so often ignored in writings on the Scottish Enlightenment -- the analysis of the human emotions and their relation to social sentiments and norms. In writings like The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks (1771) and essays such as "Of Justice and Generosity" which were attached to the fourth edition of An Historical View of the English Government (1803), Millar was concerned to explore the often intricate relationship between the establishment of civil society and the rise of domestic affection which so many scholars of Scottish culture have overlooked. Indeed, he outlined a theory of history in which economic development, jurisprudence and conjugal affection were closely intertwined. At the same time, he was very concerned that the self-interest and avarice which characterized an advanced commercial society might negate both justice and sentiment.^{iv} The negative effects of economic growth and luxury, Millar argued, were particularly visible in the decline of love in the modern age.

Millar's thought was typical of many Enlightened Scottish writers who constantly sought to maintain a balance between the positive effects of economic progress and the negative possibilities of a luxurious society increasingly populated by self-interested actors. Like his mentor, Adam Smith, Millar was impressed with the economic, constitutional and legal achievements of a commercial and recognizably capitalist Britain. At the same time, both Smith and Millar were worried that economic success could be projected too far and eventually destroy the fabric of sentiment and self-control upon which social life ultimately depended. Millar was very different from his teacher in one respect, however. He objectified these concerns with specific reference the rise and

fall of the **passion of love**. Smith was interested in many forms of discourse, but, as we shall see, he did not attach much significance to the language of love.

I

Adam Smith's The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759) represented a major contribution to the discourse surrounding human sensibility during the second half of the century. Smith demonstrated that the propensity for individuals to sympathize with one another led not only to a more extensive sociability but also to that self control without which society could not function. Smith's increasing emphasis upon the virtue of self-command throughout the various editions of his work helps to illuminate what it was that he viewed as problematic in the sentimental theorising of many of his contemporaries. In particular, he found their emphasis upon a universal humanity or abstract benevolence wrongheaded because it did not take into account the much more pressing propensity to self-preservation and self-interest. Moreover, it taxed the human emotional equipment with an ethical burden that it could not easily bear. Benevolence was not the bed rock of society. The more steady but limited sociability, which led to self-control and justice, was.^v

There was yet another way in which Smith diverged from the more general sentimental discourse of his age. This was in his unwillingness to attach any ethical significance to the attraction between the sexes. Whereas in La Nouvelle Heloise, Rousseau made the love of Saint-Preux for his Julie the sine qua non of his character's moral development; and while Smith's friend, Henry Mackenzie, believed that the "little

world of sentiment" was "made for women to move in"; one cannot for a moment imagine Smith thinking in such terms.^{vi} Indeed, it was with no little irony that in his Anecdotes and Egotisms Henry Mackenzie suggested that Smith was "seriously in love with a Miss Campbell...a woman of as different dispositions and habits from his as possible."^{vii} The very idea of Smith's ever having been in love seemed to run against the overwhelmingly masculine grain of his thought.

A lifelong bachelor, Smith probably did not know a great deal about the opposite sex. But ignorance never stopped him from pontificating on other subjects "which he **did not understand**."^{viii} Smith's relative silence on the topic of love owed much more to his conviction that love was an "attachment" which was more conducive to "jealousy" and "folly" than it was to ethics.^{ix} In the new chapter 'On the Character of Virtue' which he added to the 1790 edition of The Theory of Moral Sentiments, Smith underlined the importance of prudence for moral behaviour and suggested that its proper environment was the conversation of 'wise', 'virtuous' and, presumably male, friendships with whom one had been "long and intimately acquainted." The "wise security of friendship" was far superior to the instability of love.

Smith found it difficult to hide his distaste for that "weakness of love, which is so much indulged in ages of humanity..."^x He was much more inclined to sympathise with those "savages" who regarded it as an "unpardonable effeminacy." The heroic savage, at least, knew how to practice self-control; he was typically embarrassed by a "connection which is founded upon so sordid a necessity." At other times, however, Smith was prepared to put aside his own phobias, in order to deal with the subject of love more analytically. He recognized that love was distinct from mere sexual attraction and that it

owed something to the cultivated "imagination."^{xi} He accepted that a strong propensity to love was perfectly natural and more easily pardonable at a certain age. But he suggested that overly "serious and strong expressions of it" would not obtain much social sympathy. This was the reason that the character of the abject lover was so typically a figure of ridicule. If the lover wanted the approval of others, he had to learn to laugh at himself.

However, while love itself was a subject for good humoured raillery, the social dynamic could be transformed very quickly when, as was so often the case, secondary passions came into play. While the impartial spectator had little capacity to identify with the star crossed lover per se, he or she could very easily identify with the hopes, fears and disappointments to which love so readily gave rise. The kindness and generosity of the character of the lovers never failed to command respect. It was literally a tragedy if they were disappointed in their hopes for "security" and the expression of "mutual fondness for one another." The bravery and selflessness of true love were feelings which the observer could easily approve, while the shame, remorse and horror of a sexually betrayed member of the "fair sex" gave rise to genuine and heartfelt pity.

The "secondary passions" which were so inextricably connected with the "situation of love" made all of mankind interested in romance. The countless tragedies and romances to which it had given rise were important social and moral documents. But, as far as Smith was concerned, the love bond itself was not analytically significant; if anything, it was vulgar, distracting and ethically suspect. "The passion by which Nature unites the two sexes," was the "most furious;" and all "strong expressions" of it were "indecent."^{xii} Despite its fury, however, Smith did not believe that love played, or could ever play, anything like the dominant role in human motivation. Within the hierarchy of the

passions, love was much weaker than ambition. "Love," asserted Smith in a loose translation of La Rochefoucauld, "is commonly succeeded by ambition; but ambition is hardly ever succeeded by love."^{xiii}

II

Given his teacher and mentor's proclivity to devalue the ethical properties and sociological significance of love, John Millar's treatment of love and sexuality in essays like "Justice and Generosity," "The Effects of Commerce and Manufactures...Upon the Morals of a People," and particularly in the better known The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks is all the more striking for its boldness and originality. The latter is a seminal document of the Scottish Enlightenment in a number of ways. As one of the most influential of the Scottish 'conjectural' histories, it outlined a progressive theory of the development of liberty and civilization.^{xiv} In addition, it closely related social and political developments to clear cut economic stages, thus helping to pave the way for Marx's theory of dialectical materialism.^{xv} What is more, this work was one of the first to adopt a sociological perspective on the origins of the family, the rise of patriarchal authority, and the establishment of government.^{xvi}

It is also the first attempt to construct a natural history of love. Millar believed that, while Smith was correct in viewing the general tendency of commercial society as leading towards self-control and justice rather than an extended benevolence towards others, he had overlooked one of the most remarkable characteristics of modern life. While the "general and distant connexions of mankind," could not be expected to give rise to a very high degree of social sympathy, an advancing society was characterized by

a fascinating intensification of small-scale interaction. "In their domestic relations," he argued, "the happiness of mankind seems to depend more upon the warmth of friendship and benevolence, than upon the alderman-like virtue of justice."^{xvii} The development of civilization was characterized in particular by the growth of affection between husbands and wives and the extension of these "modifications of sympathy and friendship" to the offspring of the love bond. While the spread of the "domestic affections" was one of the most significant characteristics of social evolution, however, its continued progress could not be guaranteed. As a commercial society became more "opulent" and "luxurious", marriage could become a "mercenary bargain" and the family an impediment to individual gratification.^{xviii}

Millar traced the historical rise and fall of love most explicitly in The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks. The opening line of this treatise revealingly reads: "Of all our passions, it should seem that those which unite the sexes are the most easily affected by the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed...".^{xix} Although the desire for sexual gratification is a constant in the annals of mankind, Miller, suggested, it was capable of considerable manipulation and refinement. The level refinement was based, in turn, upon both the economic capacity of a given society and the particular historical and political environment in which it arose.

It was not to be expected that the "passion of sex" would achieve "any considerable height in the breast of a savage."^{xx} Sex was simply too easy to obtain; moreover, this crude sexual correspondence had to face considerable competition from a much sharper and compelling search for simple sustenance. The appetite for food submerged the appetite for sex. Only when a society had reached a certain stage of prosperity, Millar

argued, would it be possible to refine this sexual passion to any great degree. Thus, whatever marriages occurred among "rude people," were casual and flexible affairs. The nuclear family was relatively unimportant and entirely subservient to tribal and kinship connections. What little affection may have existed between husbands and wives paled in significance to the bond between mother and child.^{xxi}

The initial major refinement in the "passion of sex" occurred in the pastoral ages. The taming and grazing of cattle was a marked advance upon a life of hunting and foraging and, for the first time in history, allowed societies to achieve a modicum of comfort in their lives. It also allowed some individuals to acquire more property in the form of cattle than others and to further indulge their "indolent gratifications."^{xxii} It was at precisely this momentous moment in history, Millar argued, that human civilization moved beyond crude sexuality; it was then that "love becomes a passion." For the individual who had some leisure, it was now possible to form "nicer discernments" than mere animal attraction and to cultivate a "tender idea" of the opposite sex.

At the same time, the increase of wealth and the establishment of inequality gave rise to a development which would act as a further stimulant to sexual tension and refinement. It restricted sexual access. Those of higher rank now became anxious to protect their property and to maintain their status. Kinship groups began to separate from one another and to establish those hierarchies which could only hamper a more general contact and communication. Marriage became an important and ever restricted institution as it became interwoven with dowries, alliances and notions of legitimacy. In such an environment, the role of the male patriarch grew in significance and his power over his female dependants intensified. One of the most important forms which this power took

was the development of a new idea of female 'chastity'. And chastity, in its turn, further stimulated men's frustrated imaginations and made them dream the dreams of love.

Millar believed that the concept of love could only be developed in a society that had reached the stage of pasturage. He utilized this analytical insight in a fascinating examination of the The Poems of Ossian. The tension in these poems, he very astutely argued, depended upon a genuine love bond between the sexes.^{xxiii} These "agreeable pictures of a 'golden age'," were not fabrications, but the documents of a society which was able to carry refinement to a new height and which was still relatively unacquainted with the excesses of 'gain', 'avarice' and selfishness' which could obtain in a more polished commercial nation. The fact that the The Poems of Ossian seemed to speak to a hunting rather than a pastoral society did not bother unduly this 'conjectural' thinker. Millar merely pointed out that there "can be no doubt that, in his time (i.e. Ossian's), the people in the West Highlands of Scotland, as well as upon the neighbouring coast of Ireland, were acquainted with pasturage."^{xxiv}

Though it was possible for pastoral societies to cultivate the passion of love, it was difficult for them to sustain a literature and a civilization within which it could undergo further refinement. As pastoral societies grew, they soon became the envy and the scourge of other peoples. The life of leisure was circumscribed by the code of the warrior in a society that often had to acquire new land in order to develop and survive and which had to constantly think of its own defence. A more lasting culture of love was possible, however, with the improvement of agriculture. Agricultural production allowed for a more stable population and greater security. Moreover, with the establishment of tenant farming, it could eventually ensure that a much larger sector of the population

could feel the blessings of a comfortable existence and, in turn, the refinements of life and of love.

III

In the first instance, however, Millar tells us that this was far from being the case. The early small scale agricultural societies, such as were typified by Greece, intensified the cult of the warrior and the citizen rather than the lover. Helen, the wife of Menelaus in the Iliad was considered as little more than the property of her husband; her abduction was the equivalent to the theft of his treasure.^{xxv} Nor did the larger agrarian and commercial empire of the Romans make a significant cultural contribution to the language of love. The Romans moved from pastoral barbarity to commercial luxury too rapidly to consider the position of women or the pleasures of love. But the unique society which was built upon the ruins of the Roman Empire made a very particular contribution to this discourse.

It is often assumed that the writers of the Enlightenment dismissed the feudal period with the phrase 'dark ages'. While it is certainly true that enlightened Scots wanted to proceed beyond the age of feudal 'ceremony and circumspection', a closer look at their writings indicates a more balanced assessment of the achievements of the 'Gothic age'. In the Scots Magazine for 1771, for example, a member of the Scottish literati suggested that, despite the "despotic power" of the warrior barons and the artificial and endless "train of forms and titles," this unstable period made a significant contribution to western manners.^{xxvi} In his essays for the periodicals the Mirror and Lounger, Henry Mackenzie readily criticized those who were too eager to deride the romantic literature of feudal

society.^{xxvii} Such works, he suggested, transported readers into the "region of exalted virtue" and "dignified sentiment"; they were an antidote to the "cold and unfeeling temperament of worldly minds." James Anderson was a notable propagandist for economic improvement and enlightened 'conversation', yet he engaged in a vigorous defence of Gothic architecture in his influential periodical, the Bee.^{xxviii} But it was John Millar whose historical writings brought the feudal period to attention of English speaking readers. The Monthly Review noted that in An Historical View of the English Government (1786), Millar had presented a view of the development of feudalism that was at once unusual and intriguing.^{xxix} In that work, Millar suggested that the peculiar circumstances which obtained after the demise of Roman authority were critical to the establishment of constitutional authority in Europe. The independent power of the great barons; the traditional maintenance of Roman provinces and jurisdictions; the survival of traditional laws and the "Gothic institution of juries"; and the complex military system of alliances and dependencies; all contributed to the development of a type of civilization in Europe which was able to eschew despotism and to conceive of liberty.^{xxx} But perhaps most significant, the large distances between properties, which hampered the attempts of the monarchy to gain a complete upper hand, also prevented the lords from seeking to increase production through the intensification of feudal controls. Instead, they obtained additional revenue by means of a slow but steady transformation of villeinage into tenant farming.^{xxxi}

It is worth remembering the complexity of Millar's picture of feudal society when one evaluates his contribution to 'conjectural' history. For Millar was only too aware of the role of accident and circumstance in history; and he was certainly no naive theorist of

progress. For him, the Gothic period was both peculiar and important. The development of western civilization could not be appreciated without understanding it. Feudal society had made a lasting contribution to politics and the art of government. And, if the moderns were more aware of the importance and the limits of 'justice' than their predecessors, it was the debates of the feudal period which began to show the way. These debates were not the fruit of legislative wisdom or "any pre-conceived system of policy."^{xxxii} Rather, they were the natural product of historical evolution within a particular environment.

It is Millar's comments on the 'manners' of the Gothic period, rather than its structure and politics, which particularly interest us here. For the constant defensive posture of medieval society, combined with its intricate system of stratification, inadvertently resulted in some "sentiments and affections, which are of great consequence to the general intercourse of society, as well as to the happiness of individuals."^{xxxiii} In his historical account of Gothic society, Millar repeated his claim from The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks that upon the "mere animal instinct" of sexual attraction, it was possible to "graft" a high pitch of enjoyment. The honour, pride and hierarchy of a society on constant vigilance, exhibiting extreme caution, and intensely aware of the significance of all alliances, made love its ethic.^{xxxiv}

Before a medieval youth of rank could marry, he needed to prove himself as a warrior. He not only had to prove himself as a fighter, but as a man of consummate honour. The 'chivalric code', to which he adhered, interwove the language of love and the language of fealty. The loved object, demanded from him an extreme (and often artificial) delicacy, formality and sensitivity. The "delays, disappointments, the uncertainty of success," all

of these further heightened the ideas of love which became imbedded in that civilization's consciousness.^{xxxv} Romantic love stimulated military valour which, in turn, intensified the passion of love. So much so that the passion of love was often "disfigured and rendered ridiculous by affectation, and became productive of artificial and fantastic manners." The knight and lover had so cultivated his imagination that he could sacrifice his life for a beauty which he had never seen, much less worshipped from afar.

Despite all its 'artificial punctilios', Millar clearly thought that romantic love had much to recommend it.^{xxxvi} It encouraged civilized manners and engendered a new respect for women.^{xxxvii} If the passion of love derived from the powers of the human imagination, it was no less "sincere" and "faithful" for that.^{xxxviii} For the first time in history, men learned good manners and genuine politeness from the tutelage of women. The values of love were further propagated by the Bards and writers of romance whose performances "with all their faults, may be regarded as striking monuments of the Gothic taste and genius, to which there is nothing similar in the writings of antiquity...".^{xxxix} And the manners and institutions of chivalry had left a lasting legacy on European taste and sentiments up to the modern age.

The modern French and English novel, argued Millar, would have been inconceivable were it not for the Gothic romances which it succeeded. The European "respect and veneration" for the female sex -- so foreign to the early Greeks and Romans -- was another legacy of that age. This attitude towards the female sex had contributed in countless ways to the refinement of civilization and the pleasures of social life. It was, concluded Millar, a lasting and a "valuable improvement."

IV

There were aspects of the Gothic inheritance, however, which were not so socially benign. The entire feudal era, according to those Scottish writers who analyzed it, breathed an air of formality and artificiality. Beneath its forms, there often resided a more sinister kind of deceit and circumspection, of the sort which had recently reared its ugly head in Lord Chesterfield's essays on the uses of politeness.^{xl} Even where they were attached to important social values, suggested Millar, the "advantages" of "Gothic manners" and "romantic love" were mitigated by the "false taste" and "extravagant conceits" which characterized feudal culture.^{xli}

While the enlightened Scots believed firmly in the power of sociability and politeness, they wanted to put it upon a much firmer foundation than the ceremonies of that peculiar period. Many saw that foundation in the development of a commercial society. Whenever he enthused upon the virtues of commercial society, Millar always paid homage to his teacher Adam Smith. In an essay "On the Advancement of Manufacturers" which was subjoined to the Historical View, Millar claimed that Smith was right in pointing to the price of butcher's meat as a crucial turning point in British history.^{xlii} When meat became scarce and valuable because of more extensive farming, livestock became a priority and manure was provided for intensive agriculture.^{xliii} Intensive agriculture gave rise to profit which stimulated the luxury trade and made the market more important in society. Millar's model of economic development closely paralleled that of his teacher, but with some important differences of emphasis. For one thing, Millar was far less suspicious of foreign trade than Smith was and the 'market'

which he envisioned was far more international in scope. For another, he was much more comfortable with the urban environment and less hostile towards merchants and manufacturers than his mentor. Thus, Millar provides an interesting example of a student who was willing to transform the decidedly agrarian capitalism of Smith into something much more modern. Whereas the 'commercial' society of Smith was still one in which agriculture dominated the market, Millar's model of a commercial society was much more in tune with Britain's overseas expansion and her developing role as the pre-eminent trading nation in the western world.^{xliv}

The importance of commerce for Enlightened writers was not only that it stimulated economic improvement and political liberty, but also that it whittled down the barriers to communication. The special qualities of love and also of the female sex had been made clear in both the pastoral and the feudal age. But, whereas an intensification of sexual emotion had occurred because of more restricted access, there was a concomitant lack of free exchange. Commercial society, by breaking down the unnecessary barriers of hierarchy, brought men and women together in a new and special way. They could now engage more freely in mutually beneficial conversation; moreover, they could become 'friends'.

In commercial society, Millar suggested, women became "neither the slaves, nor the idols of the other sex, but the friends and companions."^{xlv} This, of course, is not necessarily the same thing as suggesting that women are equal to men or that the growth of conjugal affection is invariably progressive, as certain social historians have failed to realize.^{xlvi} Simply because ridiculous distinctions are done away with, it does not mean that all rank is thereby eliminated. Millar fascinates precisely because he so accurately

describes the new "rank and station" which women are now to occupy and the one which "appears most agreeable to reason." Since nature has given women the duty of childbirth, it seems perfectly agreeable to Millar that their most "immediate concern" is with the rearing and caring for children. Because a woman has "skill and dexterity" rather than muscular strength, she is obviously best suited for the "interior management of the family." And because women have a "peculiar delicacy, and sensibility, whether derived from original constitution, or from her way of life," one of the main functions of the wife is to keep her husband's affections by comforting him in his troubles and enjoying his pleasures. This is not necessarily a role that today's women would relish and one that needs skilful deconstruction rather than simplistic evaluation in terms of such simplistic perspectives as the rise of 'affective individualism'.

Although the relationship between men and women within a commercial society is predicated upon affection, genuine respect and even love, it is one within which separate spheres of influence are clearly delineated. Millar tells us something about both the spheres of operation and his vision of commercial society when he cites the Bible as a document which provides a good working description of the ideal wife of a doting husband. Among other things she: "worketh willingly with her hands"; "giveth meat to her household"; "maketh fine linen"; "her tongue is the law of kindness"; and she "eateth not the bread of idleness."^{xlvii} Yet another injunction comes from Pericles who advises women to never appear "abroad without being covered with a veil." For good measure, his fellow Athenian, Lysias, warns his audience to keep their wives at home and not to allow them out to markets and funerals. Finally, in a passage that had increased significance for readers in the Scottish capital, where social status was measured

inversely according to the floor one occupied, Lysias told husbands that they were to reside in the bottom floor of the house with their wives on the floor above.^{xlviii}

Thus, if the converse and love between the sexes was to increase, it would appear to have been at the price of the married woman's communication with the outside world. The home now became the abode of love and affection; it was transformed into a sacred domain from which the dutiful wife should not wander unnecessarily. We see here an early prototype of the Victorian home and the woman's place within it. It is not quite the liberating environment or relationship that historians such as Lawrence Stone and Edward Shorter have depicted.

V

Millar regarded commercial society as a progressive improvement upon its feudal predecessor. As such, it conformed to the pattern that scholars have identified as the 'stadial' theory of history. If we are to avoid unnecessary anachronism in dealing with the Scottish 'conjectural history', however, it is important to point out that Millar's concept of a commercial society had at least as much to do with thirteenth century Italy as it had with nineteenth century England. Millar explicitly compared eighteenth-century Britain with the city states of the renaissance which, he believed, exhibited strikingly similar characteristics.^{xlix} He also quoted Solomon as the voice of "a people advancing in commerce and in the arts of life." Pericles and Lysias were the orators of the commercial empire that was ancient Athens.

Just as these commercial states had arisen from more primitive agricultural

communities, so too they faded into insignificance. What is more, they lost their former manners and morals, something that Scottish writers and moralists found quite unsettling. In the conclusion of his discussion 'Of the Rank and Condition of Women in Different Ages' and in essays such "On the Morals of the People," Millar warned that, just as it was possible for a society to advance, it was also possible for it to decline. The problem was wealth. "There are certain limits beyond which it is impossible to push the real improvements arising from wealth and opulence," he argued.¹ One of the effects of "great wealth and luxury in a polished nation," he suggested, was to "create an immoderate pursuit of sensual pleasure and to produce habits of excessive indulgence in such gratifications."ⁱⁱ When this happened "particular attachments" tended to get lost in the "general propensity." The passion of love, which attained its "highest degree of refinement in a state of society equally removed from the extremes of barbarism and of luxury," was no longer a viable social and moral force.

The commercial civilization which existed in Great Britain had created a delicate balance between economic progress and moral improvement, between comfort and love, but there was no guarantee that this harmony would continue hereafter. While Millar criticized the "paradoxical opinions" of Rousseau, who regarded the "rude and savage life" as the "parent of all the virtues," he was not overly sanguine about the future of civilization and love.ⁱⁱⁱ The general diffusion of wealth could result in a debilitating luxury which destroyed both the economies of individuals and the nation.^{liii} But economic devastation was less serious than the effects upon morals.

In a developing commercial society, the institution of marriage was founded increasingly upon genuine affection. Marriage and the family, in all its relations, gave

rise to all the "various modifications of mutual sympathy and benevolence."^{liv} Millar admitted that the range of these emotions was less than extensive but he was convinced that the conjugal relationship, and its extension to any offspring, was ideally "adapted to the limited capacities of the human heart." Moreover, these emotional relations and domestic affections had achieved more for the good of society than any abstract visions of humanity and benevolence. In rude societies, love and marriage were limited and it was necessary to rely on such other virtues as courage and fortitude. But the modern world was held together by the domestic relations and affections which the power of love had bound together.

In addition, the increasingly refined connection between the sexes was inextricably connected to a more extensive improvement. It was related to 'taste' and 'manners', to the sense of beauty, and to all the arts of a civilized society. Controlled and moulded into love, the sexual propensity had stimulated the imagination and allowed it to "paint" all the varied colours of culture.^{lv} All of these were, threatened, however, in a world that was luxurious, dissolute and selfish.

"Luxury and expensive living," suggested Millar, "are the natural attendants of great wealth."^{lvi} Individuals vied with one another in "elegant magnificence" and "fashionable extravagance". In a luxurious society, men became obsessed with amassing wealth. They became increasingly unwilling to take the duties of marriage and parenthood upon themselves. The number of bachelors in the state increased.^{lvii} Unable to get sexual satisfaction in an honourable relationship, many became 'gallants' and, so, the incidence of prostitution increased. With the increase in prostitution came a concomitant decrease in the status of women.

Such a situation could be seen in the manners of the inhabitants of Rome at the beginning of its decline, claimed Millar. The "degree of luxury and expensive living" which obtained was unfavourable to the institution of matrimony. Augustus tried to remedy the situation by taxing bachelors and giving premiums to married couples. But, once the manners of a nation were in decline, it was difficult, if not impossible to reverse them. The 'mercenary' Romans duly married but typically lavished more affection on their concubines than their wives. Similar developments could be found in the Asian despotisms, in modern Italy, in France, and now, even in England, commented this very worried Scotsman.^{lviii}

VI

What could be done to stop the moral rot and to restore the power of love? This topic is more properly the concern of the next chapter; for, as we shall see, Scottish moralists and writers from Allan Ramsay to James Fordyce were concerned to restore the position of love in the human canopy of values. As a conjectural historian who had theoretically assessed the decline of so many civilizations, Millar was not inclined to easy solutions. One of the tendencies that he particularly warned against was the ever increasing communication of the sexes. In the early development of commercial society, the increased contact between men and women was beneficial. It allowed individuals to find partners for whom they felt real affection and it encouraged the blossoming of love. Contact between the sexes was still supervised and controlled. In "nations possessed of moderate wealth," little societies were formed within neighbourhoods, business

acquaintances and kinship groups.^{lix} There was not much room for indiscriminate intercourse with "strangers."

In the increasingly polite and polished society of the modern age, one's number of acquaintances was "extended and diversified." Women had lost all their reserve and were now claiming "an equal share with the other sex."^{lx} Such promiscuous mixing tended to blunt the individual's perception and to render him or her incapable of "a strong or lasting attachment to any individual." By degrees, continued Millar, the "sensibility of the heart" was eroded and the capacity for love quite annihilated. In place of the tender feelings, there was substituted 'sensual enjoyment', 'gallantry' and 'intrigue'. These characteristics were entirely inconsistent with domestic happiness and social cohesion.

Millar concluded his account of the history of manners and morals with a sobering analysis. A number of benevolent and enlightened thinkers had "indulged the pleasing speculation" that the progress of the arts and sciences naturally went alongside the perfection of human nature and virtue.^{lxi} While this hypothesis was not totally without historical foundation, Millar argued, it could not sustain the prediction that such a marriage of morals and material life would continue in the future. What is more, it did not conform to the natural history of love. Indeed, it appeared that, past a certain point of development, economic improvement and scientific development inexorably tended to destroy this delicate weave in the social fabric. The passion of love was already in decline in economically advanced countries like England and France. Once its subtle power was negated, no philosophical or legislative interventions could ever hope to replace it. The corresponding damage to society would be considerable. Millar maintained that "nothing can be more inconsistent with the finer feelings of the heart;

nothing more incompatible with the order of society; nothing more destructive of those bands which unite men together, and enable them to live in mutual confidence and security, than debauchery and dissolute manners."^{lxiii} Self-interest, combined with sexual depravity, led to a situation in which not only the was the status of women "degraded," but marriage and the family lost its hard won status.

The loss to culture was immeasurable. Millar's perspective on civilization was typical of enlightened Scottish writers in so far as it depended upon the proper cultivation of individual mind and taste. The natural history of marriage and the family had evolved to the point that the developing child did not merely receive basic care but the kind of nurturing which supported a complex society in its manifold connections. Though this painstaking evolution incorporated civic transactions and historical particulars, it remained firmly grounded in the human sentiments and the general pattern of economic development. That same pattern, however, led to a situation in which the wheel of conjectural history came full circle and economic growth was in a position to destroy what it had helped to create.

Like so many Scottish writers, Millar was aware of the possible dangers inherent in economic advance. The Scottish intelligencia closely monitored both the positive and the negative aspects of socio-economic change during the eighteenth-century. In the first half of the eighteenth century, they tended to be advocates of polite refinement, economic improvement and the spread of knowledge throughout the Scottish community. By mid-century, as evidenced in the lectures and writings of authors such as Adam Ferguson, James Barclay and David Fordyce, they had already begun to focus on the dangers involved in a society wherein artificial politeness could disguise aggressive self-interest,

wherein economic growth was accompanied by corrupting 'luxury', and wherein the search for abstract 'knowledge' could act as a corrosive of group norms and solidarity.^{lxiii} By the later eighteenth-century, such concerns were firmly embodied in Scottish literary circles and were even present in the final revision of Adam Smith's The Theory of Moral Sentiments of 1790.^{lxiv} Despite his all his admiration for the achievements of commerce in establishing the virtues of justice, Millar was no exception to this typically Scottish perspective on the delicate balance between economic improvement and social sentiment. The concluding lines of his essay on the "Effects of Commerce...On the Morals of A People," will appear surprising, perhaps, to those who have viewed him as a straightforward advocate of economic materialism or natural justice, but they would not have sounded foreign to the ears of many of his contemporaries:

Nature has wisely provided, that the education and even the maintenance of the human offspring, should not depend upon general philanthropy or benevolence, deduced from abstract philosophical principles; but upon peculiar passions and feelings, which have a more powerful and immediate influence on the conduct of mankind; and, when these passions are weakened, these feelings destroyed, we shall in vain expect their place to be supplied by the general views of utility to mankind, or particular interpositions of the legislature.^{lxv}

Economic improvement and the growth of justice may have stimulated the development of civilization and helped to refine the social passions. They were, as Millar warned,

neither a guarantee nor a substitute for those necessary feelings.

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- i. John Millar, An Historical View of the English Government, (hereafter HV), (London, 1818), Vol. IV, 251.
 - ii. HV, Vol. IV, 218.
 - iii. HV, Vol. IV, 223-4.
 - iv. HV, Vol. IV, 256-7.
 - v. The thrust of Smith's argument was well understood by his Enlightened Scottish contemporaries. William Richardson adapted Smith's view of ethical behaviour in his study of Shakespeare's characterization; Henry Mackenzie cited the Theory of Moral Sentiments in his argument that sensitivity without self-control was ethically suspect; Hugh Blair and Moderate clergymen referred to Smith's moral theory in their sermons; and Smith's student, John Millar, explicitly utilized his teacher's ethical theory to explain the limits to "benevolence" and the remarkable evolution of 'justice' in society. See especially "Of Justice and Generosity" and "The Progress of Science relative to Law and Government," in HV, Vol. IV, 235-265 and 266-318, esp. 254 and 289.
 - vi. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, La Nouvelle Heloise: Julie or the New Eloise. Letters of Two Lovers, Inhabitants of a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps, trans. Judith H. McDowell, (London, 1968), 46-50 (Saint Preux) and 172f (Julie) and Henry Mackenzie, Julia de Roubigne, (New York, 1979), Vol. II, 107.
 - vii. The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie, ed. Harold William Thompson, (Oxford, 1927), 176.
 - viii. Anecdotes and Egotisms, 124. Mackenzie was recounting a scene in the Oyster Club, called "Adam Smith's club" wherein Smith was pontificating on naval subjects which "he **did not understand**."
 - ix. TMS VI.ii.I.18.
 - x. TMS V.2.9.
 - xi. TMS I.ii.2.1.
 - xii. TMS I.ii.2.
 - xiii. TMS I.iii.2.7.
 - xiv. On conjectural history in the Scottish Enlightenment in general, see especially Roger Emerson, "Conjectural History and the Scottish Philosophers," Canadian Historical Association's Historical Papers (1985), 63-90. Emerson is particularly acute in suggesting that conjectural history had important roots in an earlier religious and scientific training and did not represent as revolutionary an approach to social phenomena as some writers have suggested. Works such as the Bible and Lucretius' On the Nature of Things, for example, provided both materials and models for the 'stadial' theory of economic development. On John Millar in particular, see William C. Lehmann, John Millar of Glasgow, 1735-1801, (Cambridge, 1960), esp. 122-133.
 - xv. See Ronald L. Meek, "A Scottish Contribution to Marxist Sociology," Economics and Ideology and Other Essays, (London, 1967), 34-50 and Andrew Skinner, "Economics and History: The Scottish Enlightenment," Scottish Journal of Political Economy, 12, (1965), 1-22.
 - xvi. John Millar of Glasgow, 1735-1801, 134-144. See also Paul Bowles, "John Millar,

the four-stages theory, and women's position in society," History of Political Economy, 16:4, (1984), 619-637. Bowles essay contains some very provocative criticisms of both the civic humanist and the natural jurisprudential interpretations of eighteenth-century Scottish culture. On these perspectives, see especially Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, ed. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge, 1983) and Knud Haakonssen, The Science of a Legislator, (Cambridge, 1981).

xvii. HV, Vol. IV, 255. The citation is taken from the essay "Of Justice and Generosity."

xviii. HV, Vol. IV, 256-7.

xix. The text of the third edition (1779) of "The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks," (hereafter Ranks) is included in John Millar of Glasgow, 166-322 and is the one that I am using here. The citation is taken from page 183.

xx. Ranks, 184.

xxi. Ranks, 199.

xxii. Ranks, 204.

xxiii. Ranks, 206.

xxiv. Ranks, 206-7. See, especially, Millar's footnote on 206. See also his essay "Of Epic Poetry," in HV, Vol. IV, 322.

xxv. Ranks, 209.

xxvi. Scots Magazine, September 1771.

xxvii. The Lounger, (Edinburgh, 1985/87), no. 28.

xxviii. The Bee, (Edinburgh, 1791), no. 2. For the more critical perspective on the feudal period, see John Robertson's summary of William Robertson's views in The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue, (Edinburgh, 1985), 78-80.

xxix. Monthly Review, Vol. LXXVII (1787), 106-16.

xxx. HV, Vol. II, esp. 77-81, 100-104, 169-70, 199-217 and 299 (citation).

xxxi. HV, Vol. II, 188-199. Millar follows his teacher, Adam Smith, in citing the importance of the rise of tenant farming and the ways in which the production of greater revenue increased luxury trade and stimulated the development of the towns.

xxxii. HV, Vol. II, 261.

xxxiii. HV, Vol. I, 119.

xxxiv. HV, Vol. I, 122-3.

xxxv. HV, Vol. I, 123-4.

xxxvi. HV, Vol. IV, 187. The citation is taken from the essay "The Effects of Commerce and Manufactures, and of Opulence and Civilization, upon the Morals of a People."

xxxvii. Ranks, 213.

xxxviii. Ranks, 214.

xxxix. Ranks, 215-16.

xl. Scottish writers such as Henry Mackenzie condemned Chesterfield for concentrating upon the selfish and deceitful uses of politeness. They were concerned that politeness, which had a natural basis in human sociability, could be grafted onto the indifference and egoism of the modern age. See John Dwyer, "Clio and Ethics: Practical Morality in Enlightened Scotland," The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation, 30:1, (1989), 54-5.

xli. Millar argued this in his essay on "The Gradual Advancement of the Fine Arts," HV, Vol.

IV, 330-1. This and other essays discussed in this paper were finished manuscripts which were not intended for inclusion in the Historical View but which the "Friends of Mr. Millar, to whom he entrusted his Manuscripts" felt that it was their duty to publish, which they duly did as the fourth volume of the edition. See HV, Vol. IV, iii-iv.

xl. See HV, Vol. IV, 102-137, esp. 104.

xli. HV, Vol. IV, 104f, esp. 110, for Millar's debt to Smith.

xlii. It is important to avoid anachronism in describing Millar's view of commerce. While intensely urban and elevating foreign trade, Millar did not foresee either the industrial revolution or Britain's role within it. Thus, his most common comparisons were between Great Britain and the commercial empires of Greece and the Italian city states.

xliii. Ranks, 219; HV, Vol. IV, 218-19.

xliiii. See, for example, Lawrence Stone's The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800, (London, 1977), which describes the rise of so-called "affective individualism." Stone and his successors fail to appreciate the complexities of sentimentalism and are too enamoured of the concept of bourgeois individualism. Even more of a cultural and social reductionist is Alan Macfarlane, who pushes the 'bourgeois arch' of calculating acquisitiveness as far back as the twelfth century in Marriage and Love in England, 1300-1840, (Oxford, 1987).

xlv. Ranks, 220-1.

xlv. In Edinburgh's classical New Town, built upon enlightened eighteenth-century principles, those of higher rank traditionally lived on the bottom floors, while occupants of lower status accommodated themselves above. On the New Town, see A.J. Youngson, The Making of Classical Edinburgh, (Edinburgh, 1966).

xli. Ranks, 217.

l. Ranks, 225.

li. HV, Vol. I, 122-3.

lii. HV, Vol. IV, 175.

liii. HV, Vol. IV, 206.

liv. HV, Vol. IV, 217.

lv. HV, Vol. IV, 221.

lvi. HV, Vol. IV, 224-5.

lvii. Millar was not the only Enlightened Scot to suggest that the incidence of bachelorhood was a sign of social decline. See my discussion of 'bachelors' in Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1987), 107-112.

lviii. HV, Vol. IV, 230.

lix. HV, Vol. IV, 228-9.

lx. HV, Vol. IV, 229. The attentive reader will notice that Millar was expressing a not uncommon eighteenth-century male paranoia that entry of women into public life threatened the entire social structure. The language of love was not the language of equality. Quite the reverse; it added novel restrictions to female participation in social life. On this subject, see also Barbara M. Benedict, "'Service to the Public': William Creech and Sentiment for Sale," Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland, ed. John Dwyer and Richard Sher, special issue of Eighteenth-Century Life, 15, 1-2, (1991), 119-46.

lxi. Millar may have had David Hume in mind, whose essay "Of Refinement in the Arts" painted

a much more optimistic picture of commercial and cultural progress than the writings of his friend, Adam Smith.

lxii. HV, Vol. IV, 233-4.

lxiii. Ferguson's Institutes of Moral Philosophy, For the Use of Students in the College of Edinburgh was published in 1769 and he had long been warning against the dangers of luxury and specialization in the classroom. On Barclay and Fordyce, see Henry Hutcheson's "An Eighteenth-Century Insight into Religious and Moral Education," British Journal of Educational Studies, XXIV, (October, 1976).

lxiv. It was in the edition of 1790 that Smith moved away from his former faith in the prudent virtue of men of middling rank and sought to attach morality to an internal conscience. At the same time, he showed increasing concern about the ambition of the middling ranks of British society and their tendency to imitate the rich and powerful. See TMS, p. 16 (introduction) and VI.iii.23-30.

lxv. Bowles perceptively suggests that, by the time Millar composed this essay, he had become much more pessimistic about the general tendency of commercial society than in his earlier Ranks. This increasing concern was also reflected in the writings of his teacher, Adam Smith. See "John Millar, the four-stages theory, and women's position in society," 635.

Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy

The Conceptual Framework

1. What is Niklas Luhmann's analysis of love in modern society? **Modern society is impersonal and individualistic in many respects. The lack of 'closeness' is compensated for by greater intensity in the love relationship. The reduction of the close connection also allows for its intensification.** Luhmann refers to this outcome in the love code and intensification of the love pairing to *interpersonal interpenetration*.
2. What is involved in the transformations of love, particularly between the seventeenth-century and the early nineteenth centuries – the formative period for modern love? **Progressive adaptations of the semantic matrix surrounding issues of love.**
3. What is the dynamic of these adaptations/transformations? **Progressive differentiation.** What purpose does differentiation ultimately serve? **Progress towards a more functional society.**
4. What form does this differentiation in the interest of functionality take? **It takes the form of systems that enhance particular functionalities by becoming simultaneously more complex and self-referential. The economy is such a system.**
5. What blocks the differentiation that is characteristic of *modernity*? **The degree to which society is stratified. Stratified societies appear to be more primitive to Luhmann.**
6. Why is *individuation* necessary for differentiation? **The concept of the individual, individual freedom, and individual pleasure, erodes stratified structures. In an important sense for Luhmann, the individual is not the starting point but part and parcel of the differentiating process. The individual becomes a system connected to other increasingly functional and specialized systems.**
7. Niklas Luhmann's theoretical approach comes out of the structural functionalism of Emile Durkheim. How? **He views modernity as an evolutionary development based on increasingly functional differentiation and individuation. Historically, that means a shift from relations that are hierarchical and stratified to ones that are functional.**
8. How does Luhmann's approach go beyond Durkheim's structural functionalism? **Luhmann is a systems theorist who views functional differentiation in terms**

of the development of interrelated but distinct ‘systems’ that have their own rationale.

9. In what other ways does Luhmann expand/improve upon Durkheim? **Luhmann is a product of modern information theory in so far as he views systems as communicative systems that rely upon differences between symbols to differentiate themselves from other systems and to develop separate codes of meaning.**
10. Why is Luhmann concerned to apply his theory to a historical phenomena such as love? **He says that the biggest weakness of most social theories is their inability to deal effectively with the complexities of historical development. They run aground and show their weaknesses when trying to account for historical phenomena. The trick is to develop a theory that is sufficiently grounded and flexible to be able to inform an intricate historical process.**
11. Why does historical analysis need social theory? **Only social theory is able to illuminate historical phenomena; without theory history is either meaningless or a simplistic narrative that does not inform ‘why’ things occurred as they did and not in some other way.**
12. How does Luhmann’s synthesis of evolutionary communications and systems theory attempt to explain the development of love? **Luhmann tries to show you how discussions of love evolved in terms of a code that made use of binary and other differences in symbolic meaning in ways that increasingly made love an individual choice and a self-contained world within which love operated.**
13. How does the development or codification of love reveal a particular complexity of systems development that most theories of modernization completely overlook? **Luhmann’s discussion of the development of love shows 1) that systems relate to their environment but not in simplistic ways and 2) that systems can only adapt to changes in the environment by referring to their own structural refinements and 3) that while these structural refinements allow for new possibilities, they are anything but simple reflections of changes in the environment and should certainly not be categorized simply as ideological superstructures. Codes provide real meaning and have a life of their own. The general evolutionary pattern needs to take into account the particulars of the code. Societies and parts of society can “lag behind” because they cannot easily adapt their code to changed circumstances or opportunities.**
14. Luhmann believes that his approach is postmodern. In what way is it postmodern? **Luhman argues that the ‘humanist’ agenda is an analytical dead end in its “exaltation of a subject” who has now become decentred. There is no telos of human life or progress of reason that can provide a**

satisfactory explanation of humankind. That is why he prefers looking at the relation between interrelated ‘systems’ and ‘environment’, in which the “rational individual” is simply one such system.

15. What is the tendency for modern ‘systems’ to follow? **They become increasingly “self referential” in some essential ways. That does not mean that they cannot adapt to changes in the environment, but that they need to do with reference to their own internal structures. Thus “love” can only adapt by drawing on the possibilities inherent within its own code. Whenever the code and the environment run into a disconnect (which may involve systems becoming incommensurate with one another), there of course will be an attempt to draw on any available resources, but these may be limited.**
16. How does today’s experience with love highlight the problem? **Luhmann thinks that love’s code has become a problem because individuals increasingly define themselves in terms of personal growth and impersonal careers. The universe of love, always a difficult thing to sustain and putting extreme pressure on the code, has become increasingly unrealistic in terms of the environment. Luhmann suggests that the idea of romance has exploded and, to the extent that love survives, it is a modest commitment to working out the inevitable problems of “interpersonal interpenetration” that are bound to arise. A rather pessimistic view of the future of love, to say the least!**
17. But, lest you think of Luhmann as simply an exploder of love’s illusions, remember that **most of his book shows just how rich, powerful and open ended some of these so called illusions could be. This is not a social theorist or clinical analyst like Parsons, who sums up intimacy as “reciprocity of perspective”. This is someone who can show you exactly how the “improbabilities” and “incommunicabilities” of love function.**
18. Luhmann clearly thinks that his approach provides a richer and more complex understanding of modernity than other approaches. Who does he criticize and why? **He criticizes Foucault because his theory of “power over suffering bodies” is crude. It 1) cannot show us why differentiation took the particular shape it did, and 2) cannot show us what is positive or meaningful in discourse. He criticizes Habermas on similar grounds. Habermas’s “paradigm of intersubjective understanding” simply cannot explain the way discourse actually functions as linguistic codes. To assume that extended discourse will achieve the goals of justice fails to see that justice itself is part and parcel of a code that develops in historical time.**
19. Luhmann has a very striking analysis of codes that problematizes all attempts to solve modern problems with ethical solutions. What is it? **He suggests that moral codes began to run into problems as early as the 17th century. Moral codes speak in terms of ‘universals’ that are no longer relevant when society**

- begins to differentiate itself into functional systems with self-referential codes. For example, discussing love in terms of morality becomes unworkable by the nineteenth-century because love has a morality all its own. Attempts were made in the eighteenth-century to reconnect love as a system with morality by appealing to sentiment, but these new linkages simply made ethical paradigms in general more difficult to maintain.
20. What does a universalistic ethics need to 'function' according to Luhmann? It needs a more unified and, typically, stratified society. Once significant functional differentiation sets in, and differences keep making differences, uniform approaches are impossible to maintain.
 21. Why is love a useful/important topic for Luhmann and why must it still be regarded as a limited topic? Love is a 'system' that contributes to individuation in some ways but not others. Love clearly has a capacity to 'go beyond' structures that focus on the individual and even in some ways "interpersonal interpenetration" explodes individualism, since you see yourself in the eyes of the other. But it is still limited because there remain other systems that need to be looked at that intersect with love, i.e. the economic system.
 22. Do you agree with Luhmann's approach? Isn't it interesting that Luhmann's approach suffers from some of the same problems as Durkheim's? Analytically -- while it doesn't make whatever is the only way that it could be nor does it suggest a simplistic connection between function and the communicative media, it still retains the core concept of evolutionary functionality. It confounds modern functionality with communicative complexity. It assumes that certain pattern of development associated with modernity is 'normal'. It doesn't allow for significant critique outside of overlapping systems defined in terms of 'codes'. It renders a more general *systemic* critique implausible. It problematizes human *intentionality*, transforming the subject into a complex series of binary 'switches'. The only things that have any autonomy are the 'systems' themselves. The "bath of historical facts" may be richer in Luhmann than Durkheim but it is still made to fit a pretty limiting conceptual structure. There certainly is an "artistic sensibility" here that is missing from most social theories, but all the sensibility operates within a paradigm that codifies the imagination.
 23. What definition of the *psyche* underlines all of Luhmann's writings? The individual *psyche*, if we can even speak of it, is a node on communicative networks with no integrity of its own. Ironically, this book about the evolution of subjective individualism shows that this thing called the individual is nothing more than an increasingly sophisticated cyborg. Durkheim's notion that the individual is a creation of society is expanded to the individual as the creation of differentiating social systems.

Specifics

Introduction

1. What is Luhmann's book about? **The transformation of the discussion of love into a self-referential system through successive adaptations of the love code.**
2. Why does Luhmann think that his theory is the best blend of evolutionary and communication theory? **He argues that it is based in an understanding of "differentiation of systems" that evolves by experimenting with "adaptive capacity" through manipulating the "real assets" of "the generalized symbolic media of communication". In other words, functional differentiation is predetermined in advance and it does this by drawing on different possibilities in the way we talk about things like love, wealth, and power.**
3. In talking specifically about the "codification of intimacy", Luhmann is going to have to draw a lot on seventeenth and eighteenth century novels. That's where the discussion of love takes place most fully. Why is that a problem for him? **In novels, writers don't always make their agenda clear, so Luhmann is going to have to 'convince' us that particular shifts in meaning are taking place.**
4. What is the single biggest difficulty in analyzing the way symbolic codes operate? **The words may remain the same, but there are often subtle shifts in meaning.** Who is the best person for understanding those shifts that take place between systems and environments? **Luhmann wants to say that it is the social theorist. But his dissing of history is typical of social theorists. Why should we trust him over, say, the cultural historian? Why should we assume that his particular developmental assumptions are the ones that are really important? For example, the eighteenth-century is the key age in the development of 'love' for him and yet he reduces its significance to an appreciation for the "incommunicability" of intimacy. There are a ton of writers talking about love in the eighteenth-century, and not simply in novels. John Millar is just one of them. And some of them want to manipulate the cultural variables in love in quite particular ways. It is one thing to say that history uninformed by social theory is meaningless, but quite another to suggest that a social theory can determine what 'must have' had to happen.**
5. What does he say about novelists that could be controversial? **He says that novelists tended to "animate the code rather than expand upon it". Why on earth would he say that? Has he read all the novels? Does he even discuss Rousseau's *The New Heloise*? It seems to me he could be accused of reading selectively in ways that's suit his theory.**

Society and the Individual

1. What is the relationship between society and the individual that Luhmann wants to explore? **The way in which the evolution of the social structure to greater functionality impacts on, and in a sense creates, the modern individual. As society becomes more impersonal and the individual more free, the problem of intimacy and intimate relations becomes central.**
2. What is a real and valuable insight of Mr. Luhmann about modernization? **Modernization isn't simply about the 'impersonalization' of relationships that Mr. Weber talks about. It is also about the 'intensification' of some kinds of relationships. Modernity is a blend of impersonal and more intimate personal relationships that requires explanation.**
3. What is the term that Luhmann uses to describe the fundamental end point of developments associated with love? **Interpersonal interpenetration is for him the pattern of development towards increasingly greater intimacy. It is a "process" that requires serious unpacking because we cannot really know others or even ourselves and yet there developed, contrary to any probability, a way of relating where individuals are receptive to anything and everything about another person. Moreover, that receptivity arguably becomes essential to understanding oneself as an individual because it is continually reinforcing of the self.**
4. How is this completely different from those forms of differentiation that move towards the impersonal? **In the general scheme, people are looking for differences from one another in order to explore the diversity of individual attributes. This difference is perceived as freedom from the imposition of others. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY FEEL THE NEED FOR A "WORLD THAT IS STILL UNDERSTANDABLE, INTIMATE AND CLOSE". And this same difference between the world that is close and the world that is distant allows people to "channel the flow of the information they receive."**
5. What do the "semantics of friendship and love" provide in the modern world? **Highly positive feedback about who you are and affirmation for your approach and choices in the world. That is why the classical notion of "friendship" has to change. Friends now have to be able to send and receive signals that are much more complex than would derive from mere compatibility or association in a more stratified orderly society. Love, of course, is going to play an even more dramatic role and to absorb friendship within its orbit.**
6. Why is it difficult to examine the relationship between systems of communication and environments? **Symbolic systems become codified and tend to be "durable". Thus, adaptation to changes in the environment take place with respect to the code. Codes don't get dumped in changed**

circumstances (or rarely); they are stretched, twisted, bent, adapted as far as possible.

7. What demand associated with modernity made it necessary to do a hell of a lot of stretching of the love code? **The demand for closeness to balance the increasing impersonality of much of the new social world.** How was it done? **It was achieved by playing with all of the traditional resources associated with love. The particular adaptations differed from country to country, but tended to be exported or imported and modified as necessary. What is most interesting is the way that the highly elitist language of gallantry or libertinage was brought from the periphery into the center of the love code and universalized within the system.**
8. What wider environmental development was necessary according to Luhmann before the new codification of intimacy was possible? **The shift from a stratified to a more functional society. To the extent that society still remained stratified, a more universalist codification of love was not plausible. But to the extent that society was becoming more functional, elements of the language of love were adapted and recast.**

Love as a Generalized Symbolic Medium of Communication

1. What does Luhmann mean by “generalized symbolic media of communication”? **For him they are “semantic devices” that allow for communication on a topic. They are particularly important because many kinds of communication would be considered “impossible” or at least “implausible” without semantic agreement. They are absolutely necessary to the evolution of the social system as a whole. Moreover, they are capable, in the modern world, of becoming self-referential systems in themselves. Love is such a “generalized symbolic media of communication”. It allows people to agree on something that otherwise would be incomprehensible and give rise to never ending confusion and even conflict. It is also capable of a high degree of systematic development.**
2. What does functional development or evolution depend upon? **The development of new and more adaptive forms. These take the form of increasing functional complexity for Luhmann, but what is important for him is that they require the existing “media of communication”. If that is lacking, you will not get new and more adaptive forms but “deformations”; “certain functional areas will lag behind” without the semantic resources necessary to incorporate change. Language has power for Luhmann; it can’t do whatever it wants; but it can accelerate or impede change.**
3. What does an abstract analysis of functionality and language obscure according to Luhmann? **It obscures the fact that language or culture is also the “form” and “stimulant” of “feelings”. In order for change to occur, it needs to be**

- “socially mediated” through “semantic devices” or it will not happen or will happen in highly distorted ways (deformations).**
4. What did the seventeenth-century already understand about love very well according to Luhmann? **That love was an immanent code or “model of behaviour” that provided a “point of orientation”. It was the “enhancement of the meanings anchored in the code” that allowed love to be “learned” and “interpreted”. The seventeenth-century code had “trends for change” already imbedded within it that allowed it to adapt to changes in the social structure that made it “complementary”.**
 5. What is the huge problem that love has to face and overcome in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century? **As individualism increases, it is seemingly impossible for love to occur because of the fact that each person is affirming an “egocentric projection of the world”. This makes close communication extremely difficult unless the code of love has the necessary resources to develop a highly “paradoxical” form of intimacy. Luhmann argues that the seventeenth-century already had the semantic tools to facilitate this evolutionary adaptation.**
 6. What is the obstacle to development along more individualist/functional lines for Luhmann? **The social stratification of the seventeenth-century meant that the family and marriage were a political institution incapable of dealing with the ‘paradoxes’ that inhabit love. This meant that the codification of intimacy had necessarily to take place outside of marriage. The paradoxicalization that filters out the problems of intimacy and facilitates the transition to another stage of social development has to be developed within *amour passion* outside of marriage.**

The Rhetoric of Excess

1. What does Luhmann mean by the “rhetoric of excess”? **He means that the semantics around love increasingly tend towards a notion of love as an excessive, uncontrollable set of feelings that allow for increasing intensification of the love bond. He thinks this happens in the seventeenth century, in the discourse of love as libertinage (i.e. outside of marriage).**
2. What is necessary if the language of love is to allow of this kind of excess and intensification? **A love code that allows for paradox. Because these relationships are highly unstable, distinctly and definitively temporal and, in an important sense “impossible” (how can one really know another so intimately?) they must take the form of absolutes (undying love).**
3. Unlike John Millar, Luhmann doesn’t think that the chivalric discussion of love allowed much room for development towards modernity. What exactly is the problem? **For Luhmann, chivalric love ‘idealizes’ the other as an object of**

unattainable “perfection”. This ideal notion of love has a corresponding trope in religion, particularly in its neo-Platonist form. But ideal types do not admit of the kind of paradoxical attitudes that would come to support modern conceptions of love.

4. Where exactly does love become sufficiently paradoxical as “to proclaim the unstable stable”? **It takes the form of a stable and unified paradox or “illusion” in seventeenth-century literature. LOVE BECOMES A PASSION for which one is not responsible. This is not a simple passive assessment of love, although the notion of being a slave or victim of the passion remained. It also provide a rationale for “freedom of action” to pursue the loved object. Once the transition from passive to active is sufficiently understood, there is the POTENTIAL FOR LOVE TO BECOME SELF-REFLEXIVE. IN OTHER WORDS, NO RATIONALE CAN BE PROVIDED FOR LOVE. LOVE HAS ITS OWN SET OF RULES. LOVE, MOREOVER “PRESS GANGS” A HOST OF OPPOSITES WITHIN ITS SELF-REFLEXIVE ORBIT: LOVE-HATE, HOPE-DESPAIR, DARING-FEAR, ANGER-DEVOTION. THIS BECOMES A UNIFIED SYSTEM TOWARDS WHICH INDIVIDUALS RELATE THEIR BEHAVIOUR.**
5. What does Luhmann mean when he suggests that love relates to a “social system” rather than a “psychic system”? **While we think of love as something that relates to inner feelings, those same feelings are already always identified and triggered by the code itself.**
6. Why does Luhmann suggest that interactions between lovers and objects of love always take the form of *double contingencies*? **The process of “seduction” not only becomes a game with 2 player but also 2 players who can see through one another moves. Once you subject yourself to the code, even if you wish to stay in control, you run the risk (and this is the game’s fascination) of losing control.**
7. What two opposites does the game of love or seduction have a tendency to combine? **It combines the “desire for conquest” with that of “self-subjugation”. What does Luhmann suggest is always going on once you are in the game? Everything becomes “excessive”; “instability” is the rule; “blindness” to other considerations is normative. It is an “unusual situation” that makes “unusual” and paradoxical demands. Behaviour that would be considered irrational or diseased in other contexts is normalized within the code. The typical hierarchical orderly relations with the world are “usurped”.**
8. Once the code stabilizes, what *ironic* development is possible? **Love can be learned precisely because it is a code. Although the language of the code is one of passion, instability, and excess, one can learn how to navigate the code**

on its own terms; one can know what to look for; one can know when love negates the self; one can love oneself in love; one can know when love will end, even while one still loves. One may not be able to say what love is, but one knows it and its manifestations by one's own and one's partner's responses. This is clearly by the 17th century already a self-referential system.

9. What other kinds of evidence can one draw upon to suggest that the treatment of love in the 17th Century is becoming a self-referential system? **It not only focuses on its own internal criteria, but it also differentiates itself from other systems, namely the classical emphasis on reason and self-control. That is a 'different' system, whose rules need not apply to love, at least not while one is in love. What is interesting about the seventeenth-century is that religious and secular moralists are continually attempting to make love subservient to norms other than its own. These attempts prove increasingly futile.**
10. What eighteenth-century codes of behaviour will also eventually run into conflict with the new semantics of love? **The emphasis on polite conversation and sociability. The emphasis on friendship. These are based on control rather than excess and, as love develops its own terminology, it provides problems for these neo-classical behavioural patterns. The love code is at first ambivalent but increasingly becomes "tyrannical" whenever other behaviours threaten its dominance. Eventually, any external justification for love is treated with derision.**
11. What problem, however, does this tyrannical love have to confront, and what is the solution? **It's own temporality. It is understood that love ends. It gets round this problem in a number of ways: 1) constantly deferring of love as "not yet", 2) continually stoking the fires of love in the codified imagination, 3) being in love with love itself, 4) focusing on the present in love "as if" it will never end.**
12. What solution is impossible, at least for most of the seventeenth century? **Finding perpetual love in marriage. Marriage was not only subject to other rules (dynasty, property) but also signaled a "cooling out" of the excess that defined the self-referential system that is love. Marriage was tied to a social system that at best could only provide a "background" to *amour passion*. All this, of course, was to change in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century as marriage came to be viewed as a "love match". But for the seventeenth-century, the discourse of love and the discourse of *libertinage* (affairs) ran together.**
13. Social time and love time diverged in the seventeenth-century. How did love time work? **Love time, instituted by the code, was characterized by the beginning, middle and end of the love affair. One's behaviour varied accordingly. One only had complete control at the very beginning of the**

love game; once one entered the game, one looked for *enhancements* in terms of intensification; one could recognize, albeit not always easily because of the illusion that is love, the signs that the game was coming to an end in the decline of intensity on the part of at least one of the lovers. The end of the love affair was, of course, difficult. But the code of intimacy meant that everyone had to agree on the “value of the game as a game”.

14. What is “dynamic” and “explosive” about the temporality of love according to Luhman? **Love has to come to an end once the feelings are no longer there and the imagination is no longer stimulated. A much more intensive relationship than friendship, love transforms our understanding of time. Friendship’s history is tied to society, but love has its own sense of history and not just in terms of duration. For it always makes an appeal to “eternity” when it knows full well that love “fades”. That it another of love’s paradoxes. You have to act as if and, indeed, believe that love is eternal.**
15. Why is marriage not a solution to the issue of temporality, at least in the seventeenth century? **Not only is marriage tied more closely to social time (household, children, generations, social structures) but “socially contrived” passion was inconceivable within the temporal framework of the love affair.**
16. How was the new attitude towards love’s temporality diffused in society? **In the novel, where the love affair has a beginning, a period of intensification, and an end. It is interesting that, when marriage finally does become the culmination or happy ending of the love affair, that it is not discussed. According to the code, it would be difficult to discuss a happy marriage in terms other than the socially balanced ones of comfort, stability, conversation and other equally “bland” condition of life.**

From Gallantry to Friendship

1. What is the point of this chapter? How does it relate to Luhmann’s methodology? **Luhmann wants to explore the different paths in which the increasing emphasis on love (love as a code) could be connected with the wider social system in order to become more stable. The language of gallantry provided an aristocratic culture with a way of framing new ideas of love. But it had to compete with the bourgeois paradigm of love as a special kind of friendship in the seventeenth century. Even in the eighteenth-century, moralists attempted to connect the language of love with friendship. Although gallantry was usurped, the code of libertinage on which it was based remained at the core of discussions of love and was later reabsorbed in ‘romance’. Friendship, despite its invocation could not provide a replacement. Luhmann wants to suggest that ‘love’ as something different from older classical and moralistic/religious notions of friendship eventually ‘won’ in terms of its lasting influence on the code. Why the eventual**

- culmination of love in romance? This is a clear case where Luhmann thinks that his theory of differentiation is the key to why friendship could never fit the bill required for 1) individuation and 2) intensification of closeness.**
2. It is not sufficient to develop a self-referential code of intimacy in order to sustain the same. What internal development within the code provided a more stable link between love and the wider society? **The wider social code of ‘gallantry’ or the ‘art of love’ that served to stabilize behaviour more generally. It demonstrates conclusively the increasing power of love that it was able to generate rules of behaviour that could persist in the absence of a love affair but left the entire social arena charged with the possibility of love.**
 3. Any codification of rules allows one to learn appropriate behaviour, but gallantry was more visible and more tangible as a set of rules that taught one the practice of love, and routinized its “paradoxy”. But gallantry was artificial and limited the innovative possibilities of the code. What “psychologically refined” posture opened up the possibilities of love according to Luhmann? **The notion of a “return to the natural”. Gallantry was dismissed as artificial, frivolous, and characterized by potential manipulation of the rules.**
 4. At this point in the book, Mr. Luhmann begins to come up against historical phenomena that don’t help his thesis of functional differentiation and individuation. What problem does he encounter and how does he deal with it? **Luhmann recognizes that the attack on gallantry coincides with a return to religious morality. He also admits that Protestant literature in England made a contribution to new ideas of love by coupling affection and friendship in marriage as a viable alternative to gallant love. But, because this doesn’t fit his thesis of love as increasing “interpersonal interpenetration” he analyzes these developments as “transitional developments”. For Luhmann, both religion and friendship (in the form of “liking” rather than “loving”) must recede in the evolutionary process that complements interpersonal fragmentation with intimacy. The theory is really doing a lot of the driving here.**
 5. What is the agenda of the eighteenth-century that Luhmann thinks must necessarily end in failure? **It is the attempt to couple friendship with love. For many eighteenth-century writers, and Luhmann is perceptive here, what begins with love should be moulded into friendship. But that friendship must be “induced by love” that is free. For a time, argues, Luhmann it may have seemed that the neo-classical idea of friendship could be “fused” with the new understanding of love. He has some interesting things to say about love being superior to friendship in Christian and medieval understandings of the difference between a ‘relationship’ and a ‘divine quality’. But he doesn’t really assess the neo-classical revisiting of friendship or the literature of love as a special kind of friendship because it doesn’t fit his model.**

6. What are we on the way towards for Luhmann? What kind of love is going to be the epitome of its codification? **Romanticism. Before friendship can be linked to love for Luhmann, it has to go through the crucible of romanticism. Romanticism in turn feeds into Luhmann's model of differentiation.**
7. What does Luhmann say that suggests that his thesis is being selective about historical possibilities here? **"It is nevertheless love and not friendship which has won the race and ultimately determined the code for intimacy. Why? It is not easy to pinpoint or verify the reasons for this, but one can, however, assume that despite all privatization of and distinction between everyday and special friendship (Thomasius), it proved impossible to delimit friendship, i.e. to differentiate within it. The obsession with virtue within the cult of friendship, relying as it did on a generally recognized set of morals, would seem to bear this out."** In other words, love wins because it fits the evolutionary model of differentiation and individuation. As if the modern individual and the impersonally functional world were "inevitable"!!!
8. What eventually happens according to Luhmann? **The classical code of *amour passions* morphes into Romantic love. This was "guaranteed by paradoxicalization". [Note the sense of inevitability here despite all of Luhmann's suggestions that codes do not necessarily evolve in determinable/deterministic ways.]**

Plaisir and Amour

1. The seventeenth-century discussion of love remains the crucial lexicon for its codification for Luhmann. What for him is the **major** discovery made by writers about love in the culture of libertinage? **The fact that you can seduce by pleasing the other. While the art of seducing by pleasing differs qualitatively from true love, it is difficult to spot the difference and easy for the libertine to manipulate the responses of others within the love code. This sets up an important and fundamental (binary) distinction between true love and false love that drives a lot of the refinements in the semantic code.**
2. What is the function of "semantic codes" for Luhmann? **To specify differences that "make a difference". By "differentiating differences" the "social system can be said to refine its preparedness to process information by differentiating differences that are both tailored to particular functions or interactive constellations and further specify the other possible occurrences in comparison to which certain events gain in informative value". IT SOUNDS TO ME A LOT LIKE LUHMANN IS REIFYING SOCIETY AND TENDENCIES IN SOCIAL SYSTEMS HERE.**
3. How does Luhmann refer to Derrida in this context? **He doesn't care what the ontological status of the information is. For him, the binaries (of Western thought!) are necessary 'differences' that allow information to be processed**

in functional ways. Thus, Derrida is absorbed in a functionalist account and ‘decidability’ is subsumed under adaptability.

4. What is the “binary opposition” that Luhmann regards as fundamental to differentiation in the code of love? **The “difference” between *plaisir* and *amour* in the seventeenth-century. This creates a new field of communication that needs to be explored and that provides possibilities for innovation.**
5. So we are back to the seventeenth century as the fundamental turning point in the development of love’s code. We are moving past the stage of libertinage/gallantry to a more sophisticated understanding of the psychological properties of love. And the word that roots everything is “pleasure”. Why is the concept of pleasure so important developmentally? **Pleasure or *plaisir* is entirely a subjective individual experience; it makes the individual a self-referential *system* in terms of what gives him or her pleasure. Pleasure is pleasure. You can’t critique it from the outside, hence the self-referentiality.**
6. How can even the distinction between pleasure and pain be brought within the orbit of self-referentiality? **You can “enjoy pain”, an assumption that gives rise to masochistic figures, and this concept is extremely useful for love because it allows you to play with loving your suffering and pain as a lover.**
7. Pleasure seems to be about oneself. How does the concept of pleasure “open up” possibilities in love that go beyond oneself? How does it have “far reaching” consequences for social relations? **You can see and react to the pleasures of another. You can try to please others. This is potentially dangerous for the subject, because pleasure can be manipulated by others once its source is discovered (i.e. Rameau’s nephew). You can learn the *art of pleasing* others. You can also, of course, learn the *art of seducing* others. It is difficult, with this advancing stage of gallantry, to distinguish between “sincere and insincere” attempts to please.**
8. Pleasure in itself is insufficient as a concept to develop a field of communication. In the first place, it tends to be short lived. In the second place, it needs to be related to social acceptance or rejection to serve as a source of symbolic innovation. **But connect pleasure to amour and you do have a new field of communication. The art of pleasing can be an introduction (foreplay) to love. It can also be a deception of love (as in seduction). Now one needs to make precise distinctions (differences) between pleasure (including sexual) and true love, which nonetheless are difficult to decipher. The code of love now has to develop a sophisticated architecture to differentiate true and false love. Love now becomes capable of increased refinement, but still within the more general structure of paradoxy. Luhmann refers to this as the creation of a new and complex series of “positive and negative” informational switches for testing love.**

9. Can you offer an example of how this constant testing of and for love works in practice? Even a negative, like the duration of absence, can be a 'sign' of whether or not one really loves. Absence past a certain point could be read as "indifference". Even a positive, like exaggerated attention, can be a sign of whether or not one really loves. Is the attention coming from the heart or merely a mechanism of deceit? **THE IMPORTANT THING FOR LUHMANN IS THAT THE PLEASURE-LOVE BINARY MAKES EVERYTHING IN AND ABOUT THE OTHER 'INFORMATIONAL'. AND THIS NOT COINCIDENTALLY BUT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY BECAUSE, AS WE ALL KNOW, LOVE FADES BUT THE SIGNS OF ITS FADING ARE NOT CLEAR.**
10. What does love need to maintain itself in the temporal domain of the rise and fall of love? **Evidence of the lasting character of the moment within a process that requires constant re-evaluation. THIS IS WHAT LOVERS DO WHEN THEY TEST FOR EVIDENCE THAT LOVE ENDURES OR WHEN THEY ENGAGE IN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP. AND THIS IS FRAUGHT WITH PROBLEMS OF 'INTERPRETATION'. "HE SAID, SHE SAID" BUT WHAT DID "HE MEAN, SHE MEAN"? PEOPLE CONSTANTLY 'SCAN' FOR INFORMATION. HERE LUHMANN IS TRULY AT HIS BEST IN SHOWING HOW A RECOGNIZABLY 'MODERN' LOVE AFFAIR IS CONDUCTED AND JUST HOW AWARE PEOPLE ARE THAT LOVE IS A 'PROCESS' WITH CERTAIN STAGES.*******
11. In yet another brilliant *tour de force*, Luhmann shows why he thinks that the 'modern' discussion of love (seventeenth century on) erodes traditional morality. **Traditional moral codes are expressed as universals that are timeless, but the code of love is subject to its own temporal order that relate to the possible shortness of love and life. The orientation in love is to the "moment before and the moment after" that makes earthly love entirely incompatible ultimately with divine love. And this, of course, is another reason why religion becomes increasingly irrelevant to the modern individual at his most intimate. Intimacy with another human being now operates on an entirely different plane than intimacy with god.*******
12. But, according to Luhmann, what always happens when important differences are consolidated? This is an interesting refinement of the evolutionary theory. **Luhmann suggests that you should look for a return to 'normalcy' after major innovations. But that same normalcy, or reference to traditional distinctions, will be impossible to maintain. Thus, the religious revival and attempt to equate love with older ideas of friendship were, ultimately, unsustainable.**

Love Versus Reason

1. The traditional classical ideal was that love should be governed by reason. Religious developments in the West elevated love above reason as long as it was ideal and focused on the Godhead. Earthly love was only supportable as a reflection of divine love. During the Protestant Reformation, love took a more emotive and highly personal turn, but according to Luhmann did not impact very profoundly on the codification of intimacy. The eighteenth-century revitalized the classical ideal of reason and gave a new impetus to functionality by celebrating reason's concordance with or domination over nature. It was only natural that neo-classical reason should attempt to triumph over love as well according to Luhmann. Why couldn't it? **By this time, love had already achieved a sufficient degree of codification to at least assert its claims within its own territory. Love demands recognition and reason cannot assert claims that deny its self-referentiality. NOW THIS IS THE SHORTEST AND MOST UNSATISFACTORY CHAPTER IN LUHMAN'S BOOK. IS HE TALKING ABOUT THE EARLY ENLIGHTENMENT WHEN HE THROWS AROUND THE TERM 'REASON'? SURELY HE SHOULD KNOW THAT REASON IN THE 18TH CENTURY IS USED BY SHAFTESBURY AND MANY OTHERS TO EXPLORE THE EMOTIONS AND TO ASSESS THEIR FUNCTION. BY RELYING ON LITERATURE AND NOT LOOKING AT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE IN A VERY SYSTEMATIC WAY, LUHMANN WEAKENS HIS CASE CONSIDERABLY.**

En Route to Individualization

1. What does Luhmann mean by "en route to individualization and how does this impact his analysis of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment? **Luhmann believes that progress or differentiation to a more functional society requires the freeing up of the individual as his/her own referential source of 'personality'. In order for the modern code of love to be differentiated, it needs to conform to this movement towards individualization. The love relationship is the only intense relationship compatible with individualism. This means that a person can only love one person at a time. The relationship is exclusive of others.**
2. What does "exclusivity" allow that social inclusivity would not? **An intensification of the relationship -- a closeness that is highly intimate and confined to the lovers themselves. It creates, in a sense, a little world of love for the lovers. This provides greater 'depth' for individualization.**
3. Why, despite all its drawbacks, was "love" chosen over "friendship" as the basis for male-female relations? **Friendship focuses on mutual accommodation and hinges on both the 'details' and the 'environment' of the relationship. But love allows you to focus on the 'individuality' of the other and, therefore, gives an enormous boost to that individuality. Love not only recognizes but also affirms the other as an individual.**

4. What does love dispense with that friendship does not in its assessment of the other? **It dispenses with traditional and enlightened morality. During the seventeenth and eighteenth century many attempts were made to bring love into the moral equation, whether it appealed to reason or sentiment. But those would have restricted the individualizing possibilities in the code.**
5. For Luhmann, what possibility made an objective discussion of love increasingly problematic and what writer's resort to 'substitutions' made this apparent? **The possibility of deceit and artificiality with respect to love (*plaisir* vs *amour*). The writer who exposed, but could not overcome, the difficulty of discovering what was true or natural in a civilized world characterized by artifice is, of course, Rousseau.**
6. What then are lovers thrown back on; what resort do they have? **They only have the markers of the communicative code itself (increasingly seen as "switches") and their own subjective view of the world. But, and this is important, in a world where deceit and artifice are always possible, even the markers or switches become subject to subjective interpretation. Thus, as Luhmann succinctly puts it: "The old problem of distinguishing between true and false love thus receded, for self judging emotion now generated only true love – or failed". This is a highly individualized or subject related world.**
7. What happens to love in the second half of the eighteenth-century? **It becomes increasingly self-referential at the same time as it becomes more universal. All "external circumstances and obstacles which handicap the lovers recede into the background. Love now handicaps itself..."**
8. How does love contribute to individualization? **It personalizes the subjects as unique individuals who are cherished precisely for that uniqueness. Moreover it continually affirms the lovers as individuals in their own right.**
9. Why is it now, finally, possible to think of marriage in relation to love? **Because now marriage can be viewed as a solemnized blending of two unique individuals without reference to the social structure. That doesn't mean, of course, that the married couple will not be engaged in aspects of the social environment. What it does mean is that the core relationship is quite separate, at least conceptually, from those other environmental relationships. It is an intimate relationship that continually feeds on its own intimacy. That is, of course, as long as it lasts. But the point is that, as long as it does last, it is a self-contained self-referential world of love.**

The Incorporation of Sexuality

1. How does the incorporation of sexuality transform discussions of love? **When sexual attraction becomes natural and part and parcel of love, it means that only the individuals concerned can make the choice that is suitable to them. It further stimulates individualization and sets the lovers off from social controls and expectations.**
2. How does the incorporation of sexuality change the longstanding opposition between friendship and love? **Friendship can no longer be a substitute for or superior to love. Any friendship as in marriage much allow for a sexual attraction that is highly germane to it. The statement that you can't be "just friends" (Platonic love) with a member of the opposite sex to whom you are attracted makes sense in this context.**
3. Sexuality has always been an aspect of love. So what does Luhmann mean when he wants to suggest that it becomes "incorporated" in the love code? **Sexuality was traditionally distinguished from love as an 'animal' activity. When the love code was connected to libertinage, sensuality provided evidence that one did not really love but was manipulating the code for sex. During the Protestant moralizing of the seventeenth-century and the moralizing of the early Enlightenment, sex was something to be overcome by friendship or modified into friendship. But the anthropology of the mainstream Enlightenment rediscovered sexual passion as something 'natural' (or God given). The passions become 'useful'. Even free love and incest were for a time taken up in the literature. This new interest in sexuality allowed it to be incorporated into the love code and to provide material for its differentiation.**
4. What does Luhmann think is the most important change of the eighteenth-century? **The significance of sexual attraction or chemistry in love. Love incorporating sexuality completely transforms the latter into something positive and interesting. Luhmann wants to argue that the major issues relating to sexuality – i.e. sexual difference, sexual exploration and experimentation, and even sexual repression – are quintessentially eighteenth-century, rather than nineteenth-century, developments.*******
5. What is another way of saying this that relates to the title of Luhmann's book? **With the full incorporation of sexuality, love can truly be said to become "passionate". Intimacy becomes "sexually based".*******
6. Previously, love could be seen to be sullied by the sexual connection, but now that it was incorporated, a new range of "possibilities" opened up for the code. What does Luhmann include in these possibilities? **Titillation, foreplay, sublimation, pornography – now no longer subject to traditional controls, at least not in the world of the lovers.**
7. How does this new emphasis on sexuality impact cultural products like the novel according to Luhmann? **Not only in the obvious ways of incorporating**

- sexually charged themes into the literature but also in the way that one actually sees the literary product. Thus love stories move from contact to foreplay to climax and to marriage or indifference. The literary product parallels the sexual relationship. Interesting analysis don't you think? Implications for Mr. Freud don't you think?
8. The incorporation of sexuality begins in France but spreads elsewhere. What does Luhmann think is fascinating about the English adaptation? **He suggests that the British embrace sexuality at first and then become inhibited about it. In either case, sexuality and sexual problems become "the focus of attention". Victorian prudishness has already been accomplished in England by the late eighteenth-century. THIS IS A TOPIC IN MY BOOKS 'THE AGE OF THE PASSIONS' and 'VIRTUOUS DISCOURSE'.*******
 9. To what does Luhmann attribute the English move to control sexuality in marriage rather than to incorporate/assimilate it more fully in the code? **He claims that the English were not ready to do this, that they had not developed the love code sufficiently, that they were still tied to Puritan ideas of friendship, etc. I MAY WANT TO GO INTO THIS AS I DON'T FIND IT SUFFICIENTLY DEVELOPED. IT ASSUMES THAT THE BRITISH DISCUSSION WASN'T SUFFICIENTLY DEVELOPED OR INFLUENTIAL, WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE THE CASE BUT NEEDS EMPIRICAL SUPPORT. IT ALSO IGNORES 1) THE FACT THAT LUHMANN'S FAVOURED ROMANTICISM BLOSSOMED IN ENGLAND AS WELL AS HIS 2) NOTION THAT LATE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITISH SEXUALITY, EVEN IF REPRESSED, WAS HIGHLY CHARGED.***** THERE MAY BE A LOT MORE GOING ON HERE THAN LUHMANN'S FUNCTIONAL MODEL AND ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT DIFFERENTIATION WILL REVEAL.**
 10. In any case, what does Luhmann attribute this English semantic incapacity to? **The fact that British attitudes still remained highly stratified and that issues of "taste", including those related to sexuality, were gentrified. ISN'T THIS A CASE OF A CONTINENTAL WRITER STEREOTYPING THE BRITISH AS ASEXUAL?**
 11. Why was as penetrating a writer on sexual matters as Rousseau still not able to embrace the implications of sexuality for love according to Luhmann? **Luhmann thinks that Rousseau is still caught up in the classical discussion of virtue that elevates friendship over love and that his semantics get confused when he tries to apply moral universals to an increasingly subjective and self-referential semantic realm.**
 12. But how did the new revelations with respect to sexuality end up eroding old ideas of friendship? **In the older semantic realm, friendship was separated**

- from and superior to love precisely because of the contaminant of sexuality. Now friendship is “availed of predominantly in order to reevaluate sexuality”.
13. We’ve seen how marriage could be conceived of as a blending of unique individuals. What is now added to the mix because of the interest in sexuality? **Sexual attraction and compatibility now become the foundation upon which more “ennobling” friendships are built. Thus, the choice of the “heart” is a “sexual selection”. As such, it has nothing to do with reason or social institutions. It must be free.**
 14. Sexuality becomes so intertwined with this most intimate form of friendship that the relationship can no longer be defined as merely “friendly”. What does Luhmann mean by this insight? **The traditional notion of marriage as a friendship is exploded. Marriage may still be conceivable as a traditional form of friendship, but because sexuality is so germane to the chemical attraction, NO ONE CAN LEGITIMATELY COERCE OR INFLUENCE THE CHOICE OF PARTNER BUT THE INDIVIDUAL. The move towards greater INDIVIDUALIZATION is clear.**
 15. What are the implications for objects pornographic once the connection between sexuality and love is affirmed? **Pornography becomes “obscene” because the objects of attraction are not unique but interchangeable. HERE LUHMANN HAS PROVIDED AN INSIGHT INTO WHY SEXUAL LIBERATION ENDS UP BEING SEXUAL REPRESSION. HE MIGHT HAVE APPLIED THIS BETTER TO HIS ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH CONTEXT.**

The Discovery of Incommunicability

1. The inclusion of sexuality in love was a very important “change” that took place in the eighteenth-century according to Luhmann, but that was not the epoch’s most important conceptual “discovery” or semantic innovation. What was it? **The incommunicability of love.**
2. Why is incommunicability eventually more liberating than problematic? **It encourages you to explore your highly personalized world beyond anything that can be communicated in the real world. Your illusions now can usurp reality. [But not without generating problematic disconnects, especially when love is diffused more generally and to those incapable of navigating loves paradoxes (i.e. with irony, cognitive distancing).**
3. To what can incommunicability in love in the late eighteenth-century be attributed? **Not only the ever present possibility of deceit but now the “impossibility” of sincerity. WORDS CANNOT COMMUNICATE THE COMPLEX OF EMOTIONS INVOLVED. INTIMACY IS**

COMPROMISED FROM THE VERY MOMENT THAT IT ATTEMPTS COMMUNICATION.

4. Luhmann has already informed us that semantic codification (in other words communication) attempts to render the impossible possible. Is he now telling us that the code of love has broken down because it can no longer effect communication? **Far from it, the code is not only maintained but goes to a higher stage precisely because the absence of communication can be the most intimate form of communication. Lovers intuit one another. The “iron law of attribution” allows them to attribute meanings without words.**
5. Why does Luhmann suggest that “utterances” are no longer suitable or sufficient in themselves in the lovers’ world? **“The utterance itself, owing to the information it provides, becomes information for the attribution process. It allows conclusions to be drawn as to how the other thinks of himself as someone who loves or no longer loves, is someone hoping for love, expecting or demanding it; how he overcomes his doubts in the chances for a lasting relationship; how he assumes the partner to have such doubts or attributes them to her in order to exonerate himself; how he exploits the fact that the partner knows, but cannot say, that she is no longer loved; and how he manipulates situations in which both know that both know that non-communication has more advantages for one than the other”. All of these on-off switches so complicate and problematize communication and push it “up against the barriers of the possible”.**
6. How does the epistolary novel of the eighteenth-century highlight these “instances of communicability”? **They show that the reader can often see things more clearly and “really” than the writers of the letters themselves.**
7. Incommunicability obviously has negative aspects in that lovers can never really fully know the motives of themselves and others. What, however, is the “positive” outcome of this incommunicability? **“Human interpenetration” is actually enhanced and intensified by “transcending the possibilities afforded by communication”. It is not just a case of attributing through the eyes or gestures, although that is clearly a part of it, but it is also that the individuals concerned actually “intensify” their relationship by constantly going beyond, to the extent that they actually view each other as the “horizon representing his own experiences and actions.” Love intensified allows them to lead a life as “selves” “which could not be realized in the absence of love”.**
8. What is the remarkable feature of the incommunicable world that the lovers construct? **It is a romantic illusion more or less completely unchained to the ‘real’ world. It allows you to explore yourself and your intimate other without limitations. You could not do this anywhere near as effectively outside of the love relationship because the real world would push up**

barriers. But in the love affair, a personalized world is created that “transcends all means of expression”.

Romantic Love

1. What is the remarkable achievement of Romanticism for Luhmann? **Romanticism elevated the “concreteness and uniqueness” of the individual to a “universal principle”. But it could never have achieved this without the crucial changes in the codification of love.**
2. What is the tidal change with respect to love that romanticism effects? **Now love becomes completely and totally self-reflexive.**
3. What concept seals the self-reflexivity or lack of “external moulding” that is characteristic of modern love? **Fate or destiny.**
4. **Romantic love** obviously is the high point where the individualized world and the code of intimacy reinforce one another. This is where the “love match” becomes the focal point for personal intimacy and social reproduction. What stood in the way of romanticism, particularly in England for Luhmann? **1) The idea that new ideas of love (semantic difference) were not commensurate with social institutions (structural difference) and 2) The tenacity of the older ideas, especially of male friendship that made sense of a more stratified society.**
5. What was happening to erode these long held values? **For Luhmann, interestingly, it is not simply undifferentiated or abstract individualization. For individualization to really have purchase, it couldn’t simply be abstract, contractual or negative, it needed to be “filled out and enriched with content”. THE CODIFICATION OF INTIMACY THEREFORE WAS CRUCIAL TO THE REALIZATION OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUALISM.**
6. How revolutionary was the paradigm shift that romanticism effected? **Now the subjective world completely dominates the world of objects. In fact, “the world of objects, (i.e. nature, became the sounding board of love)”. Love becomes not only “its own” but also a higher sphere of existence. ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE.**
7. What, however, is indispensable to the individual transcendence provided by love? **The presence of the other – your lover. Without love, you are “incomplete” in a new way. You are incomplete because you can’t realize your “self”.**
8. Romanticism is a seemingly inevitable evolutionary telos. It arrives on the scene as both an anthropology and a literature. What is the problem when you try to

normalize more generally it in the world of social relations? **The application in practice has to be the merging of love and marriage. The problem is that marriage is a real relationship that can make heavy demands on and even betray romance (hence the earlier separation of the two categories in the seventeenth century). If “marriage” is love (i.e. romantic love) and if “love” becomes marriage, then most marriages must end up either as failures or only very partial successes. THE STAKES INVOLVED IN MARRIAGE BECOME VERY HIGH, AND THE RESULTS WILL NOT EASILY MEET THE EXPECTATIONS. WE ANTICIPATE SOME REAL PROBLEMS THAT THIS ‘MODERN’ UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIAGE MUST CONFRONT WHEN LOVE AND MARRIAGE POSSESS A “NEW SET OF CONNOTATIONS”.**

9. What do we look for in marriage today? **We anticipate a highly reflexive and dynamic relationship in which not only our own “happiness” but our very “meaning” is caught up in the other person.**
10. How does Luhmann describe the “coincidence of feeling” involved in modern love? **“A corresponding feeling had to be emotionally affirmed and sought after and that one loved oneself as lover and beloved and also loved the other as lover and beloved”.**
11. Although this “reflexivity of loving” is now open to everyone and does not necessarily require highly cultivated or extreme passions, it still requires something quite difficult to achieve in practice. What is that? **Intensification of feelings that also need to be maintained.**
12. Why was this easier to postulate in romantic literature than in practical life? **Romanticism is idealistic and paradoxical (hence ironic and ambiguous) in ways that are quite sophisticated. When applied to real life universally, those same elements cannot be easily maintained. Once lacking the capacity for ironic distancing, the strain on romantic notions is extreme. Love can easily turn into “revulsion”.**
13. What’s another way of putting this? **Love creates a world of its own, but is not easily institutionalized in the real world.**
14. Why is the traditional conception of ‘friendship’ in marriage no longer a viable option? **Love is the dominant model for intimacy and intimate friendship has already been recodified in terms of sexual intensity. You can’t simply jump out of the code or easily replace it with a code that no longer functions.**
15. When love fails in the modern world, what effect does it have on the individual? **A sense of isolation, incompleteness and failure. Who do you think is more affected by the failure of love – men or women? Why? [Arguably at this period it must be men because men’s sense of self is mediated by the beloved,**

whereas the beloved woman inhabits a less complex ‘natural’ world of love. Does this explain why today’s males are more effected by the breakdown of marriage than women?]

16. Why is Hegel’s claim that people would make better marriages if they listened to their parents than their own inclinations totally irrelevant according to Luhmann? **Such advice ignores the fact that “individualization” combined with “interpersonal penetration” have become dominant and dominating features of modern life. Moderns R Us. Like it or not, we live and die within the code that constructed us.**
17. What do we need to accept about love in the modern world? **There is no “prospect of stability in love or other intimate relationships”.**
18. How did romanticism as literature deal with this problem? **It retreated from the real world into an imaginary world of exaggerated emotion.**
19. Why is postmodernity simply the illusion of escape from these and other predicaments of modernity? **For Luhmann, postmodernity is simply the continuation of the individualizing and differentiating tendencies of modernity. To the extent that it offers any alternative to modernity, these are spurious, nothing more than delusional criticisms of transitional elements in modernity.**

An Essay on the History of Civil Society

Some General Considerations:

1. Can you sum up Ferguson's overall agenda in the *Essay*? **Ferguson wants to ensure that the civic (vigorous citizenship or membership in society) is retained in civil society. Another way of putting this might be to say that he is worried about the loss of strong feelings of community in society. Yet another way is to describe active citizenship in the local community as virtue and to oppose it to a self interested society.**
2. What word does Ferguson use most often to describe the decline of societies that have lost their vigor? **The term he uses is the classical civic humanist term **CORRUPTION**.**
3. In classic civic humanist discourse, the enemy is typically **luxury** and is associated with rising standards of living and the introduction of **Asiatic modes of softness and effeminacy**. How is Ferguson's approach to luxury radical? **Ferguson does not deny the potential for 'corruption' in a society that is economically progressing, but he redefined luxury as 'A QUALITY OF CHARACTER AND THE MIND'.**
4. What thorny contemporary problem does this allow Ferguson to solve or at least ameliorate? **Ferguson is able to **RETAIN ECONOMIC PROGRESS WHILE LIMITING ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS**. As long as **CHARACTER** is maintained and the links to the **COMMUNITY** strengthened, the negative tendencies of **PROGRESS** can be managed.**
5. What's the other term that Ferguson uses most often when he wants to talk about **progress**? The term is **IMPROVEMENT** and it is a concept that has considerable import in a Scottish national community that feels threatened by **economic backwardness**.
6. Thus, Ferguson is seeking an **escape from the cycle of progress and decay, while at the same time taking the threat to civic virtue very seriously**. This is a very Scottish agenda. In civic humanist discourse generally, one of the ways to prevent decay is to establish a **CONSTITUTION** that will at least inhibit **CORRUPTION**. What does Ferguson have to say about this approach? **Ferguson argues that no political constitution can prevent the slide into corruption once the **VIRTUOUS MANNERS** of a people have been compromised. Civic involvement is an issue of **MANNERS AND MORALS NOT POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**.**
7. Ferguson's *Essay* is clearly about **politics**. Why do you think that Ferguson has come down to us as a **founding father of sociology**? **Ferguson's approach focuses on the 'BINDING' BEHAVIOURS OF GROUPS and the **DISTINCTION BETWEEN A COHESIVE 'COMMUNITY' and a more **ARTIFICIAL SOCIETY****. Ferguson also characterizes the **MODERN WORLD** as an increasingly**

SPECIALIZED AND BUREAUOCRATIC DOMAIN CHARACTERIZED BY POSSESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM Thus the work in lots of places articulates the assumptions and preoccupations of the sociologist.

8. What would be a better way to use to describe Ferguson's agenda than either 'political' or 'sociological'? **Ferguson is a moral theorist in the tradition of virtue ethics. His major concern is the corruption of moral values in a 'modernizing' society.**
9. What is Ferguson's solution to the problem of modern society and do you agree? **Ferguson is eager to instill 'vigor' into the 'body politic' and his solution, only hinted at here, but certainly followed elsewhere, is MILITARY TRAINING.**
10. Why is military training an antidote to the modern sources of corruption? **It focuses the MIND on 'service to the community'; it stimulates courage and fortitude; it mitigates the focus on the 'self' that is so characteristic of the modern world.**
11. How is this program of revitalization based on social rank or hierarchy? **Ferguson believes the ELITES, who are emulated by others, need to set an example of CIVIC LEADERSHIP for others to follow. The common people also need militia training to prevent their minds from being dominated by the self-interest that comes from spending their entire lives providing for their and their families' subsistence.**
12. How is Ferguson's agenda clearly different from that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau? **Rousseau believed that it was necessary to return to a SMALL-SCALE COMMUNITY in order to have a PRESENCE without which he thought that virtuous behaviour would be impossible. Ferguson provides a solution that allows you to retain a larger society with a DIVISION OF LABOUR.**
13. How is Ferguson's conception of PRIVATE PROPERTY different from that of Rousseau? **Ferguson thinks that PRIVATE PROPERTY IS NATURAL although not something that is given in some fictitious 'state of nature' or that qualifies as a 'universal right'. Rousseau thinks that private property is an aberration.**
14. Private property clearly is not a universal for Ferguson, because he describes Spartan society as being communal with a high degree of civic virtue. But why does Ferguson think of it as being natural? **His view of 'natural' is empirical. We see private property as commonplace in many societies that have progressed passed the 'rude' state. Therefore, it cannot be 'unnatural'. Moreover, it is connected with 'improvement' or 'progress' that seems to be a blessing for mankind.**
15. What is the connection between private property and the development of civil society? **Private property leads to economic improvement and economic improvement, civil society and civilization run in tandem. In case you don't**

know this, this argument about civil society and civilization was also made by David Hume. But Ferguson has a real bone to pick with David Hume's 'utilitarian' approach because it ignores the **THREAT TO CIVILIZATION** that improvement carries in its wake.

16. What, for Ferguson, makes Rousseau's argument about virtue in a small-scale society inadequate? **Rousseau's desire to get to some 'original' scene of interpersonal virtue is AHISTORICAL. It ignores that fact that social progress is not simply negative. Even the 'barbaric' period (feudal society in the west) was productive of vigorous virtue, not of course without some inconveniences. Every stage of society is a 'blend' of positive and negative characters and characteristics.**
17. What is the single most important lesson that history provides for anyone interested in political science? **HISTORY TELLS US THAT THERE IS NO PERFECT STATE. All states have their pluses and minuses. ENLIGHTENED RATIONALISM FAILS TO UNDERSTAND HUMAN NATURE. The French desire for enlightened despotism under perfect law sadly mistakes the nature of human beings and would be a nightmare instead of a rationalistic utopia.**
18. What error does eighteenth-century rationalism make? **It overlooks the passionate character of human beings. It tries to construct a perfect society for imperfect beings. MEN AND WOMEN ARE A COMPLEX MIXTURE OF EMOTIONS. THEY ARE INVIGORATED BY 'AFFECTIONS' AND 'ANIMOSITIES'. THEY HAVE 'DESIRES' AND NOT JUST ECONOMIC ONES. THEY HAVE LOVE FOR THOSE THEY ARE CLOSE TO; DISLIKE FOR 'OTHERS' THAT ARE NOT PART OF THEIR COMMUNITY; THEY WANT TO BE APPROVED OF AND TO BE SPECIAL (even if only in their little circle or 'station'); THEY ARE FIERCELY INDEPENDENT AND INCLINED TO PROCLAIM THEIR 'RIGHTS' (which are not universals but particular). THEY ARE NATURALLY 'FACTIOUS'. AND THESE ARE THE HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS THAT POLITICAL SCIENCE AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE TO WORK WITH AND THE REASON WHY UTILITARIAN ARRANGEMENTS SIMPLY WILL NOT WORK.**
19. What is the major difference between the **body politic** and the **human body** for Ferguson and why doesn't the analogy between them work? **The human body must age and decay, but the BODY POLITIC CAN BE REINVIGORATED BY INTELLIGENT INSTITUTIONS. But those institutions need to understand and channel the human passions, which are messy.**
20. Despite the 'messiness' of the human passions, their mixture of self and social interest, and the difficulty of managing them, what can an **empirical study of human nature** show us about **virtue**? **It shows us that: 1) virtue is a verb (an action) rather than an abstraction; 2) character is developed in particular communities and can't be separated from the genus of those communities; 3) service to the community is the surest road to happiness; 4) that community cannot be some**

rationalistic abstraction but is a flesh and blood community; 5) virtue, rightly understood in terms of service to the community, is the best route to happiness.

Moving Through the Text:

1. What characteristic differentiates humans from other species? **They are supremely social beings who operate in ‘troops’. Their very survival, success or progress, depends overwhelmingly on a social bond that is facilitated by language. They convey ‘sentiments’ as well as ideas to each other.**
2. Why does it make no sense to talk about the *individual’s* nature or the *individual* in some originary state of nature? **The individual is a detail of the human species. Thus, ideas of society based on individuals in the state of nature or of society as a ‘contract’ are entirely misleading about what is naturally ‘human’.**
3. What is the appropriate *social scientific* method for understanding human communities? **Not to conjecture, but to collect the available facts.**
4. What do the ‘facts’ indicate and do you agree? **Art and artifice are natural to all human communities. The relentless desire to project and improve are in man’s (using the term here generally to include women of course) nature. Wherever possible, mankind will seek to dominate nature and IMPROVE THEIR LOT. Men have a “multiplicity of wants” WHICH WILL EVIDENCE THEMSELVES WHEREVER CONDITIONS ARE RIGHT. HERE IS A NOTION OF MAN AS AN ‘IMPROVER’ WITH UNLIMITED ‘DESIRES’ THAT IS AN ASSUMPTION THAT UNDERPINS ALL OF FERGUSON’S THOUGHT. THIS RELENTLESS DESIRE FOR ‘PERFECTION’ GIVES RISE TO A RICH VARIETY OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGIES IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS. BUT, AND THIS IS IMPORTANT, HUMANS SEEK AND NEED MORAL AS WELL AS MATERIAL IMPROVEMENT.**
5. What does Ferguson have to say about the ‘situations’ in which human communities find themselves? **All are equally natural. None are ‘perfect’. But PROGRESS is NATURAL and based on the desire of all societies to IMPROVE their condition and to seek PERFECTION. The differences between societies are not based on any difference in their ‘natural impulses’ which are the same, but in terms of a misapplication of their industry.**
6. Why is it a serious error on the part of civilized societies to denigrate the progress or the manners of small-scale societies? **It is a mistaken view of PROGRESS. Just because a small-scale society is not technologically advanced or polite, that does not mean that it has not made significant PROGRESS IN TERMS OF MORALITY AND HAPPINESS. Societies that are advancing in the liberal and technological arts may, in fact, be retrograde in terms of morality and happiness.**

7. Why are definitions of man as ‘rational’ severely limiting for Ferguson? **They ignore the fact that mankind is also a ‘passionate’ being. His (her) passions and drives often play a much more important role than reason in the construction of human communities.**
8. What are the two basic sets of passions for Ferguson? Which are most important for the human species? **The two sets are 1) those that relate to self-preservation and 2) those that relate to LOVE of our fellows. Both can be deemed important, but: 1) the second is necessary to limit the pernicious effects of the first and 2) only the second leads to any lasting happiness.**
9. What major role do the selfish interests play in the development of civil society? **THEY LEAD TO THE INSTITUTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY. Private property, in turn, leads people to have a “motive” to improve “the mechanical and commercial arts”. But the same selfishness that could transgress against JUSTICE leads to the development of CIVIL SOCIETY to PROTECT PRIVATE PROPERTY.**
10. Why is it incorrect, says Ferguson, to conflate *self-interest* with *self-love*? **The true love or care for the self leads one to conclude that selfless behaviour or LOVE FOR OTHERS is more productive of happiness than egotism. Moreover, Ferguson argues that the real INTEREST of a person lies in controlling his or her selfish impulses.**
11. Perfect worlds do not exist, at least on earth. Ferguson knows that disinterested benevolence is not a realistic agenda. He only wants to point out that **virtue rightly understood brings the most happiness.** In order to have an impact on real life in real communities **it is crucial for the STATESMAN to know how to strengthen the positive pole of morality and to dampen negative effects of different social structures.**
12. If it is difficult for men to have **disinterested benevolence**, says Ferguson, it is obvious that they do have some **disinterested passions**. What might these be? **THEY HAVE LOVE FOR THOSE THEY ARE BONDED WITH AND THEY HAVE “HATRED, INDIGNATION, AND RAGE” TO THOSE THEY DON’T LIKE. THESE PASSIONS OFTEN OVERWHELM SELF-INTEREST.** And, for Ferguson, anything that counteracts selfishness is something that plays an important function.
13. So, Ferguson is not analytically interested in perfect benevolence or perfect utility, which do not align with the nature of men as empirically discovered. What he really wants to do is to focus on those passions that **bond** humans together. What are these? **Ferguson begins with man’s social disposition and then moves to the habitual affections that men develop by living together. He focuses especially on the courage that is generated by defending those that one is close to and the**

animosity that is generated by any outsiders that threaten the community. A sense of common danger is perhaps the most effective of all social glues in the community. **HOSTILITY TO OUTSIDERS IS INNATE AND WAR IS A NATURAL CONDITION OF MANKIND. PATRIOTISM GIVE RISE TO GENEROSITY AND SELF-DENIAL**

14. What rather extreme conclusion does Ferguson draw with respect to war? **Without war, he says, society might not have achieved its ‘object’ or ‘form’. While the quarrels of individuals are ‘vices’, the quarrels of nations are productive of ‘virtues’. By making people behave like this, Providence has ensured that the ‘multitudes’ unite.**
15. What does Ferguson have to say about **reason** apart from the fact that it is not the only or dominating characteristic of human nature? **Reason, he says, is developed through activity more than speculation. HUMAN BEINGS ARE ESSENTIALLY ‘ACTIVE’ ANIMALS. ALL OUR SKILLS ARE BROUGHT FORTH IN ACTION. AND WE ARE ‘AS A MULTITUDE’ MOST HAPPY WHEN WE ARE ACTING, DESPITE OUR COMPLAINTS AND OUR DESIRE FOR REPOSE. IT IS THE ‘MEANS’ RATHER THAN THE ‘ENDS’ THAT INVIGORATE US.**
16. What does Ferguson have to say about **abstract speculation** despite the fact that he himself is engaged in speculations about human nature and civil society? **He says that speculations of reason are highly overrated and have less influence on men’s behaviour than is commonly recognized. The most important theoretical and moral discoveries have been made by people who are ENGAGED. Additionally, abstract knowledge and speculation should not be confused with SUPERIORITY. Some societies without as much knowledge are vastly superior to us in terms of creativity, literature and art, not to mention morality.**
17. What does Ferguson have to say about **book learning**? **He says that it is grossly overrated. The “grammar of dead languages” is all too often devoid of the VIGOR THAT ANIMATES MORE CREATIVE AND VITAL SOCIETIES. The latter are certainly better at forming CHARACTER than we are.**
18. What does the **history of our species** show us with respect to ‘self-preservation’ or the “care of subsistence”? **Ferguson suggests that human history conclusively demonstrates that most societies are animated by ‘AFFECTIONS’ or ‘COLLISIONS’ more than self-interest. When joined and adjudicated by reason, these passions constitute our moral natures. The FACTS of human history show us that all people have a sense of their RIGHTS and of JUSTICE. The desire of ‘self-preservation’ may be more constant and uniform, but the others are “a more plentiful source of enthusiasm, satisfaction and joy.”**
19. What does Ferguson have to say about the “good of mankind” or universal benevolence as the foundation or end point for discussions of rights and justice? **He**

says that people don't generally consult the "good of mankind" but, rather the good of the community to which they belong and, in particular, their 'friends' and family. **NOTE THAT, DESPITE THE INTRODUCTION OF FAMILIES, FERGUSON IS NOT VERY INTERESTED IN THE LOVE BOND BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN. HIS FOCAL POINTS ARE CLASSICAL FRIENDSHIPS (MALE) AND CLAN KINSHIP NETWORKS (MALE DOMINATED). IT IS INTERESTING THAT AN ARGUMENT THAT FOCUSES ON 'LOVE' EARLY ON, IGNORES THE LOVE OF THE SEXES. IN PART THIS IS BECAUSE SUCH LOVE IS INTRINSICALLY PRIVATE RATHER THAN PUBLIC IN ITS ORIENTATION. WE ARE A LONG WAY FROM EDMUND BURKE'S ECONOMIUMS ON THE 'LITTLE TROOP' OF THE FAMILY.**

20. And yet, the LOVE OF MANKIND, is the ideal type of love and the ideal type of virtuous construction for Ferguson? Whose his hero? **Epictetus is Ferguson's hero, a person who was able to completely bury his personal self interest and who had a "mind that was always master of itself".**
21. What is the basic problem with the MODERN AGE for Ferguson? **It confuses 'happiness' with self-interest. What is more, it confuses self-interest with the pursuit of pleasure or repose. For Ferguson, it is activity and struggle that bring happiness and the effect of repose is lassitude. Past a certain point, sensuality is completely boring and actually painful. Happiness is about 'means' rather than 'ends', it needs to be approached indirectly. It arises more from the "pursuit" than the achievement. It resembles a GAME.**
22. What is the implication of this understanding of life in a modern age where EASE can be found rather easily for those with resources (i.e. Aristocrats). **The elite of society need to find an OCCUPATION that is worthy of their energy. They should not be CONSPICUOUS CONSUMERS, or at least not only that. And they need to CHOOSE OCCUPATIONS that reinvigorate their SOCIAL CONNECTIONS.**
23. Why is MATERIALISM a completely wrong headed way of understanding man? **Ferguson suggests that it treats man as a 'machine' rather than as a 'mind'-'body' combination. The HUMAN BODY NEEDS TO BE EXERCISED FOR A PERSON TO BE HAPPY.**
24. What conclusion about VIRTUE and PASSION does Ferguson draw? **He suggests that Virtue can NEVER BE DISINTERESTED. The SOCIAL PASSIONS ARE DEEPLY INTERESTED AND INTERESTING TO US. That's why the TRADITIONAL DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN SELF-INTEREST AND BENEVOLENCE ARE BOGUS. THE 'SOCIAL DISPOSITIONS' ARE THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF PERSONAL HAPPINESS.**
25. What *communities* are the most virtuous and the happiest? **Ferguson suggests that it is those that build the HABIT of serving the community.**

26. How are MODERN ELITES depriving themselves of genuine happiness? **They fill up their lives with “solitary pastimes” or “cultivate what they are pleased to call a taste for gardening, building, drawing, or music.” These merely “fill the blanks of a listless life”.**
27. What important analysis does Ferguson have of MANNERS? **He argues that the MODERNS, in their attention to cultivated ‘manners’, have undermined the role of MANNERS for building CHARACTER. Modern manners are undermining virtuous character and may lead to the ruin of the NATION itself.**
28. What is the primary drawback and danger of MODERN STATES? **Their territory is too extensive and they make relationships between the parts too utilitarian. What’s best is DIVISION, COMPETITION, and EMULATION rather than ABSORPTION within the abstraction that is MODERN SOCIETY. That’s also why the TERRITORIALITY of the Modern State is a drawback. Like Ancient Rome it extends itself by depriving itself of vigour where “every little district was a nursery of excellent men.”**
29. What is the implication for Ferguson’s SCOTLAND? **He thinks Scotland’s independence and virtue is being strangled by proximation to an all encompassing empire. As a HIGHLANDER he may have a double reason to dislike absorption.**
30. Why are “peace and unanimity” not safeguards for public virtue as far as Ferguson is concerned? **These actually destroy ‘public life’ which is based on “the agitations of a free people”**
31. Ferguson talk a lot about freedom and equality **between nations** but he has a different attitude **inside nations**. What argument does he make about RANK? **He argues that SUBORDINATION is natural and exists in most societies, even though it might be informal. He believes that people find their “place” in society. Thereafter, different societies will take on a MULTIPLICITY OF FORMS with DIFFERENT GOVERNMENTS and CUSTOMS.**
32. Ferguson describes the different basic forms of government as democracies, aristocracies and monarchies and, generally and despite his admiration for democracies, comes down on the side of MONARCHIES WITH RANKS THAT BALANCE POWER AND PREVENT PREDOMINANCE where territories are large. **THIS IS ALL VERY MONTESQUIEU. BUT, AS WELL, IT SHOWS THAT FERGUSON IS REALLY PREOCCUPIED WITH HIS OWN SOCIETY AND THE MORAL DANGERS THAT HE THINKS IT FACES (70F) FROM DESPOTISM AND INNER CORRUPTION.**
33. What is the PRINCIPLE THAT ANIMATES MODERN MONARCHIES? **There are a variety of principles, but an important one in terms of the ELITE is**

HONOUR. Ferguson suggests that, should honour be displaced by the **MAXIMS OF COMMERCE**, the animating principle of Monarchy would be negated.

34. What is the general or typical evolutionary pattern that Ferguson discerns in history? **IT IS THE MOVEMENT FROM DEMOCRACY TO DESPOTISM.** The real *state of nature* for Ferguson is the opposition between a despot and the people that will eventually begin the cycle of decay While the corruption of societies can take different forms, it is always related to the usurpation of the civic virtues by the selfish interests. Ferguson, however, thinks that a good political understanding of the **PRINCIPAL ANIMATING PRINCIPLES** can prevent this from happening.
35. How does Ferguson get at the early stages of society? Is he interested in looking at pre-history? **No, instead he CONJECTURES what beginning societies must have been like by looking at RUDE SOCIETIES today.** In particular, he uses **TRAVEL literature to look at NORTH AMERICAN NATIVE SOCIETY. HISTORY FOR HIM IS NEVER UNIQUE, AND ALWAYS IN A SENSE, CONTEMPORARY.**
36. What is Ferguson interested in when examining rude or early societies? Is he interested in laws, constitutions or other administrative structures? **Only to the extent that they can give him information on the ANIMATING SPIRIT of these COMMUNITIES. He much PREFERS GREEK TO MEDIEVAL HISTORY because it provides less FACTS and more on the ACTIVE SPIRIT of MANKIND. The IMAGINATIVE quality of such histories is not a drawback but an insight into that active and vital spirit. LITERATURE INFORMS HISTORY AND MANNERS.**
37. The adoption of **private property** is a huge step in the **progress of mankind** and Ferguson seems to consider it natural (but **slow in developing**). It is a **“principal distinction of nations in the advanced state of mechanic and commercial arts”.** **THE INVENTION OF PROPERTY MOVES SOCIETY FROM ‘INSTINCTUAL’ FORMS OF SOCIABILITY TO CIVIL SOCIETY. CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVES ‘GENERAL PRINCIPLES’ OF GOVERNANCE THAT ARE MISSING FROM RUDE SOCIETIES.**
38. Is **JUSTICE** a consequence of civil society for Ferguson? **No, in fact JUSTICE ALREADY HAS ITS FOUNDATION IN THE ROUGH EQUALITY OF RUDE SOCIETIES and IS NOT ADAM SMITH’S SET OF ‘RULES’ TO MAKE A COMMERCIAL SOCIETY FUNCTION. THUS, JUSTICE LIKE RIGHTS IS NOT AN ABSTRACTION OF RULES BUT AN EXPERIENTIAL CONDITION.**
39. What is the **CHARACTER** of the **NORTH AMERICAN NATIVE** for Ferguson and what point is he trying to make? **Ferguson suggests a fairly conventional**

arguments that the animating spirit of the ‘savage’ is FORTITUDE but he wants to correct the false notion that such a fortitude is the absence of SOCIABILITY. His NOBLE SAVAGE is also ANIMATED BY AFFECTION (sometimes “strange affection” as in the case of torturing and admiring a captive). What is interesting about these communities, for Ferguson, is how they think of anything commercial or mercenary as sordid. NOW, IS THIS AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE MOTIVES OF NATIVES OR A EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION DERIVED FROM PERCEIVED EUROPEAN ISSUES AND CONCERNS?*****

40. In a highly ETHNOCENTRIC construction, Ferguson argues that these more ‘instinctual beings’ can: 1) only be aroused by their immediate passions rather than distant projects, 2) have virtually no ‘cares, and 3) follow the “simple dictates of the heart”. This is neither good anthropology nor good history. It’s purpose is to highlight what has been lost by MODERNITY and CIVILIZATION.
41. What invariably happens to rude nations when they are confronted by “more civilized nations” (at least prior to the latter’s decline)? Ferguson says that they are always CONQUERED AND DOMINATED.
42. What does the movement of society from the rude to the barbarian state of early private property signify in terms of manners and morals for Ferguson? Men become “hunters of men” and “Every nation is a band of robbers”. Ferguson is highly critical of European society because of its addiction to riches but points out that this era of ‘violence’ was also characterized by ‘affection’ within clans and tribes. Even the ‘division of labour’ reinforced bonds. In its domestic relations, and treatment of strangers, this society could be tender and generous. REFERENCE TO THE OSSIANIC POEMS TO REINFORCE THIS INTERPRETATION. THE DISADVANTAGE OF THIS SOCIETY IS THAT MANY PEOPLE LIVED IN ‘TERROR’ AND THERE WERE NO LAWS TO PREVENT TERRITORIAL AGRESSION.
43. How does Ferguson describe the disadvantages of this woeful society? He describes it as a society governed by interest without law but with “consolations” in terms of the warrior values of honour and the connections of clans as communities. Even the distinction of ranks did not break, but in many cases, strengthened the bonds between men. Where people did have a “fixed attachment” these were strong. NOTICE THE BALANCED, IF NOT VERY SCHOLARLY, ATTITUDE TOWARDS MEDIEVAL SOCIETY.
44. The Section “Of the Influences of Climate and Situations” shows just how ETHNOCENTRIC Ferguson’s historical methodology is. What does he have to say about the extremes of climate (“the regions of the VERTICAL SUN”. He says that these areas around the poles or equator play NO PART IN THE HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY. THUS THEY ARE OUTSIDE OF HISTORY*****. MILDNESS, GENTLENESS AND PACIFICITY ARE NOT THE MATERIALS

OF HISTORICAL PROGRESS.*** THESE CLIMATES DO NOT ADMIT OF 'PROGRESS' AND DO NOT ALLOW MAN TO PERFECT "HIS NATURAL FACULTIES")***** THESE PEOPLES ARE "DULL AND SLOW", HAVE "IMMOVABLE PHLEGM" AND FALL READY VICTIMS TO EUROPEAN DOMINATION.**

45. Where is the locus of historical development? **SOUTHERN EUROPE, where the "IMAGINATION IS KINDLED, AND THE UNDERSTANDING INFORMED" and NORTHERN EUROPE WHERE "THE FRUITS OF INDUSTRY HAVE ABOUNDED" "On one side, learning took its rise from the heart and the fancy, on the other, it is still confined to the judgment and the memory." LIKE ROUSSEAU, FERGUSON BELIEVES THAT THE RATIONALIZING NORTH NEEDS TO BE INFORMED BY THE PASSIONATE SOUTH.**
46. Climate makes Europeans the SUPERIOR people for Ferguson, especially to those African tribes "who are exposed to the more vertical rays of the sun" (114) From a "moral view" the extremes of heat or cold are "equally unfavourable to the active genius of mankind". **F. QUOTES DIRECTLY FROM ROUSSEAU'S SECOND DISCOURSE.**
47. Other ethnocentric statements: 1) **"The most respectable nations have always been found where at least one part of the frontier has been washed by the sea". THIS ALLOWS COMMERCE.** 2) "there is scarcely a people in the vast continent of Asia who deserves the name of a nation". 3) real legitimate contenders for national titles are those states who maintain **"a balance of power"** in Europe. 4) **"If we mean to pursue the history of civil society, our attention must be chiefly directed to such examples, and we must here bid farewell to those regions of the earth, on which our species, by the effects of situation or climate, appear to be restrained in their national pursuits, or inferior in the powers of the mind."**
48. Ferguson now moves to CIVIL SOCIETY IN EUROPE PROPER where SEPARATION allows for national identity formation. **He argues that most of the progress of societies or "multitudes" is instinctual or ACCIDENTAL rather than from any RATIONAL DESIGN. The rational design is always constructed afterwards. All structures arise from "SITUATION AND GENIUS OF THE PEOPLE" rather than from "PROJECTS" of individual men. WHAT GENERALLY HAPPENS IS THAT THE LOVE OF DOMINION IS GRADUALLY ADJUSTED INTO A BALANCE OF POWER. COMMUNITIES SEPARATE AND SECURE THEMSELVES. AS SOCIETIES GROW, HOWEVER, IN TERRITORY, GROUPS WITHIN SOCIETY SEPARATE THEMSELVES INTO DIFFERENT ORDERS AND INSIST ON THEIR GROUP RIGHTS. THUS, THE PUBLIC INTEREST IS SECURED NOT BY ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP BUT BY ACTIVE OPPOSITION. THE TENDENCY TOWARDS MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT IS NATURAL IN LARGE STATES AND PART OF THE BALANCING OF POWER BETWEEN ARTISTOCRATS AND PEOPLE.**

49. Ferguson believes that every society is characterized by **casual subordination** and that it only requires the right conditions for the subordination to become formalized. The construction of the **monarchical court** facilitates this movement by putting the leader in an awful relationship with the people.
50. Civil society accelerates its development as it creates **institutional forms** such as the military and the judiciary to preserve the external and internal integrity of the nation. These again are arrived at **not through any speculative interventions** but as a natural consequence of perceived inconveniences. Those who view it as the state's role to increase population have failed precisely because **they do not understand that population growth cannot be achieved by intervention but is a function of secure political establishments and a growing economy. FERGUSON IS AGAINST THE 'CONTRIVANCES OF STATESMEN' IN NATURAL HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS.**
51. Ferguson is especially interested in what happens to a secure society with a large population and a growing economy **since that is the kind of society that he is primarily concerned with.** What does he argue invariably happens in that kind of **naturally improving society?** **Ferguson believes that these kinds of societies emphasize the selfish over the social passions and unleash a "MULTIPLICITY OF DESIRES". This 'marketplace of desires' has the real potential to corrupt society and then its laws and constitution will be of no benefit since the judges and rulers will follow only their own self interest.**
52. Ferguson has a surprising analysis of the MERCHANT in this scene of corruption. What does he say? It's worth quoting:
- “The trader, in rude ages, is short-sighted, fraudulent, and mercenary: but in the progress and advanced state of his art, his views are enlarged, his maxims are established: he becomes punctual, liberal, faithful, and enterprising; and in the period of general corruption, he alone has every virtue, except the force to defend his acquisitions. He needs no aid from the state, but its protection, and is often in himself the most intelligent and respectable member.”
- NOTE THIS THIS PRAISE OF THE MERCHANT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A DYNAMIC ROLE. THE MERCHANT IS SUNKEN WITHIN A DESPOTIC SOCIETY. BUT IT IS INTERESTING.*****Read on, however.**
53. When does Ferguson argue that the “solid basis of commerce” is “withdrawn”. **It is when MERCHANTS SEEK TO INFLUENCE STATE POLICY. Then the “period of vision and chimera is near”.**
54. (Page 140, my text) **Ferguson leaves commercial discussions to Adam Smith, who he says is coming out with a great book (this was written in later edition of 1773).**

Note that Fergie tells readers to remember that Smith is also the writer of *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and that the two works need to be read together not apart.***** Note also that F. is happy to leave this subject because it doesn't particularly interest him.

55. What does Ferguson remind his readers of in this discussion of commercial refinement and corruption? **He reminds them of his earlier theme, i.e. that happiness doesn't come from letting desires control you but from public service.**
56. What is Ferguson's argument about national defense and a militia? **He claims that military service is one of the best ways to re-animate public spirit in a time when commerce and luxury are proliferating. He criticizes the specialization inherent in a standing army. He prefers the notion of a citizen's militia led by men of honour as an expression of public virtue.**
57. How do we know that Ferguson, especially, wants those of noble family to exercise military leadership? **He complains that when the nobles gave up the sword for the couch or the gambling hall they relinquished both their best affections and their civic virtue.**
58. What does Ferguson call the establishment of a professional army? **He calls it a "breach" in the "system of national virtues".** What does Ferguson term the expansion of a commercial empire? **He calls it a "ruinous maxim" that confuses territoriality with the "grandeur of a nation".** Whereas war can bring out the "best talents" and the "best affections", the conquests of professional soldiers and the "effeminate empires" created are signs of degeneracy.
59. Why is private property a good thing for Ferguson? **We've already enumerated some reasons but Ferguson is nothing if not repetitive. Here he suggests that private property makes people 'independent' and combative of intrusions on that independence. So it makes them more, not less, vigorous. Moreover, private property is a remarkable stimulus to energy. But private property can be a force of corruption. While more equal distribution could be argued, it likely would only work in a small democracy. The only place that it has ever worked perfectly, argues Ferguson, is Sparta.**
60. Why should we not worry too much about private property according to Ferguson? **Private property in itself (in terms of subsistence and enjoyment) is not the real corruptor. It is when WEALTH GETS CONFUSED WITH "DISTINCTION" AND "HONOUR" THAT THERE IS A REAL PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION. IT IS THEN THAT VIRTUE IS CONFOUNDED AND THAT "AVARICE AND MEANNESS" TAKE CONTROL. AS LONG AS RANK IS CONNECTED TO HONOUR, THE DANGER IS MINIMAL.**
61. What distinction does Ferguson want to make between FORMS OF SOCIETY AND PROPERTY, ON THE ONE HAND, AND MANNERS ON THE OTHER?

Ferguson suggests that FORMS OF SOCIETY ARE LESS IMPORTANT THAN CHARACTER OR MANNERS. If virtuous character is maintained, then the forms are secondary. It is the “manners” or “character” or “spirit” of a people that need to be examined and not the POLITICAL CONSTITUTION.” REMEMBER THAT SCOTLAND DOES NOT HAVE ITS OWN CONSTITUTION AT THIS TIME (since 1707) AND YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF FOCUSING ON ‘MANNERS’.

62. What happens to the concept of HONOUR when STATUS IS CONFOUNDED WITH WEALTH? **For Ferguson, there is a real danger of HONOUR being DETACHED FROM WHAT IS HONOURABLE OR PRAISEWORTHY in a society whose wealth is rapidly increasing, especially in connection with an eastern empire.**
63. Why is democracy particularly dangerous in these kinds of societies? **Ferguson believes that popular assemblies will be even less resistant to the general public contagion and will express their “feelings, animosities, and rights” without any control. He hints that their patriotism will take the injudicious form of promoting EMPIRE.**
64. Ferguson is not really worried about democracy or even a bourgeois society in 1767. What group is he really worried about? **He’s worried about the leadership in society. He’s worried about the corruption of the aristocracy.**
65. What balanced society, ruled by law, does Ferguson praise? **He praises England as the country that has *par excellence* perfected laws through experience and statute rather than some artificial systematization. Law, for Ferguson, is a kind of treaty between different factions.**
66. But if England has legal perfection and a balanced constitution, what’s still a real problem for Ferguson. **Ferguson argues that the LAWS AND CONSTITUTION ALONE CANNOT PREVENT NATIONAL DECLINE IF ‘MANNERS’ AND ‘MORALS’ ARE CORRUPTED. England could still turn into a despotism despite its laws and ‘rights’ could become a dead letter if the judiciary are corrupted.**
67. Where, for Ferguson, are real RIGHTS enshrined? **In the minds of the people who practice them.**
68. Why is Ferguson so intent on arguing that societies don’t really imitate one another? **He wants to argue that while societies have certain general developments in common, the CHARACTER OF A COMMUNITY is *sui generis*. Societies have their own life and death apart from others. This doesn’t mean that societies don’t sometimes build on each other, but the extent to which they do so should not be exaggerated. IN OTHER WORDS, IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND A COMMUNITY, LOOK AT THE WAY THAT GROUP WORKS, AND**

LOOK BEYOND ITS LAWS. OTHERWISE YOU WILL MISS WHAT IS REALLY CRUCIAL TO ITS GENIUS. Hegel, of course, took this idea and ran with it.

69. Why is the study of literature (especially poetry) so important to Ferguson, more important in some ways than history itself? **Because it is their LITERATURE THAT SHOWS THE ‘SPIRIT’ OF A PEOPLE. Ferguson is, in a sense, inventing or at least advocating socio-cultural history.**
70. How does Ferguson echo Rousseau’s *Essay on the Origin of Languages*? **He argues that the first communications of language are EMOTIVE. Men are first poets and their speeches are SONGS. HERE IS AN EMPHASIS CLEARLY ON THE PASSIONATE, RATHER THAN RATIONAL, NATURE OF MAN. BUT INTERESTING THAT THE ‘PASSION BETWEEN THE SEXES’ IS MISSING.**
71. What do “rude” or small-scale societies indicate for Ferguson that is similar to Rousseau? **The natural “emotions of the heart” that get lost in sophisticated societies characterized by a SEPARATION OF SPHERES AND A SPECIALIZED DIVISION OF LABOUR.**
72. How does Ferguson describe the movement from “poetry” to “prose” that is different from Rousseau? **He argues that such a move is NECESSARY FOR PROGRESS and that it is even important in certain periods to affirm the prose form and the kind of useful information that it conveys. BUT, and there is always a BUT with Ferguson, it is important to recall that the poetic or emotive language also speaks to the CHARACTER and PASSIONATE NATURE of man. THE LESSONS ONE REQUIRES ARE DIFFERENT IN EVERY SOCIETY AND EVERY STAGE. LITERATURE IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE BECAUSE IT SPEAKS TO A PART OF MAN THAT MORE SCIENTIFIC LANGUAGE CANNOT REACH AND MAY EVEN DEBASE.**
73. What happens when, as in the Enlightenment, men become more rational and speculative? **For Ferguson, this significantly distorts man’s nature. Moreover, LEARNING SHOULD NOT BE MERELY SPECULATIVE (i.e. DAVID HUME), IT NEEDS TO BE ‘ANIMATED’.**
74. What is the word that Ferguson uses to describe the DANGER OF MODERNITY and that corresponds to Rousseau’s use of the term *supplement*? **The word that Ferguson uses is “SEPARATION”. The division of labour or specialization in a complex differentiated society “separates” men from one another (species life) and from themselves.***** THIS ALSO INVOLVES A DANGEROUS SEPARATION OF THE ARTS (THAT ‘ANIMATE’) FROM THE PROFESSIONS. USING A MECHANICAL IMAGE THAT WOULD BECOME COMMONPLACE, FERGUSON SUGGESTS THAT MODERN**

SOCIETY IS BECOMING AN “ENGINE” OF WHICH PEOPLE ARE SIMPLY “PARTS”.

75. How is NATURAL IMPROVEMENT twisted by this process? **WHEREAS THE DESIRE FOR IMPROVEMENT IS INSTINCTUAL AND GRADUAL AND ANIMATES MAN, WHEN ‘SEPARATED INTO PARTS’ BY THE DIVISION OF LABOUR IT ‘CONTRACTS’ AND “LIMITS THE VIEWS OF THE MIND”. WHILE THE INSTRUMENTAL GENIUS OF THE MASTER OR THE STATESMAN MIGHT BE EXPANDED BY THE NEW COMPLEXITIES, MOST PEOPLE BECOME MORE CONFINED. EVEN THE SOLDIER “IS CONFINED TO A FEW MOTIONS OF THE HAND AND THE FEET”. THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY LOSERS BY IMPROVEMENT.*******
76. How is NATURAL SUBORDINATION twisted by this process? **WHEREAS FORMERLY SUBORDINATION HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH ‘CHARACTER’, MODERN SUBORDINATION HAS MORE TO DO WITH WEALTH AND ‘ACCESS TO EDUCATION’. THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ARE LEFT BEHIND BY THIS PROCESS AND LOSE ALL THEIR SENSE OF THEIR OWN CHARACTER. COMMERCIAL SOCIETY “DEPRESSES THE MANY”. THE LATTER’S MOTIVATION BECOMES CONFINED TO WHAT IS MOST ‘SORDID’.**
77. When mankind “tread on a larger field, and SEPARATE to a greater distance”, Ferguson believes that the glue that holds communities together will not easily hold. The community becomes a state with its own “superstructure” and even “sentiment” and “reason” become SEPARATE professions. Every “PERFECTION OF GOVERNMENT” **“weakens the bands of society”**. What is the net result for Ferguson? **THE CLAIMS OF ‘PRIVATE LIFE’ SUSPEND THE DUTIES (virtue and happiness producing) OF THE CITIZEN. THE ‘ENTERTAINMENTS’ OF ‘PRIVATE SOCIETY’ REPLACE THOSE OF ‘PUBLIC LIFE’. THE ‘GAME OF HUMAN LIFE’ ONCE PLAYED FOR A “HIGH STAKE” THAT INVOLVED VIGOR, ENERGY AND AFFECTION, BECOMES A MATTER FOR RATIONAL CALCULATION AND POLICY. THE POLICY IS A UTILITARIAN CONSTRUCT RATHER THAN AN EMOTIONAL COMMITMENT.**
78. Although we are no longer in a position to fully understand, much less appreciate, the virtues of a more simple people, and instead concentrate on their deficiencies, Ferguson wants us to at least **contrast their “great affections and animosities” with our “irresolution” and calculating “moderation” in order to understand where we ourselves may be deficient.**
79. Ferguson’s interest in the loss of civic virtue makes him perhaps an inadequate judge of the benefits of modernity. But, despite his overwhelmingly masculine approach, he does admit that there are some interesting possibilities in the cultural values that

modernity inherited from feudalism. What does he say about CHIVALRY? **He says that chivalry combined the “warrior” with the “lover” and institutionalized a veneration for the “female sex”. This “antequated” and often “ridiculous” system nonetheless had “lasting effects on our manners” and made a remarkable contribution to modern politeness and civilization. THIS, OF COURSE, IS NOT Fergie’s theme, but it is interesting that he at least mentions it. His students would make much of the male-female relationship.**

80. Ferguson is now beginning to sum up. He begins by suggesting that the **strength of communities is owing to two things**. What are they? **“Affection” for our own community and “force of mind” (fortitude).**
81. How are these forces of cohesion undermined by Modernity? **Modern societies replace social affectivity with selfishness. We “SUBSTITUTE” anxiety and care for ourselves for the “affection he should have for his fellow creatures.”**
82. What do we need to do to reinvigorate and preserve “national character”? **Ferguson says that we should take our lesson from WAR and revive the military spirit. We need to instill martial “habits”. We need to “occupy” peoples’ minds with thoughts that go beyond the care of the self and reconnect them with society.**
83. On the negative side, what do governments need to STOP doing? **Governments need to halt the process of bureaucracy and to allow party factions and divisions to multiply. Where there are animosities there also is energy and affection. Governments need to ‘manage’ less, even if this results in less efficiency. Independent communities, like Scotland, need to maintain their SEPARATE identities rather than becoming ABSORBED WITHIN AN EFFEMINATE EMPIRE.**
84. Ferguson is especially concerned that “prosperous” and “polished” societies find ways to rekindle “national ardour” especially in the minds of the multitude. **Ferguson seems to think that the multitude are ‘dangerous’ when their minds are not expanded above and beyond their subsistence.**
85. What common ethic or pattern of behaviour does Ferguson rail against? **He attacks the concept of “EASE” or complacency that has become the ruling idea in many people’s minds. He attacks the concept of “moderation” (he belonged to a party in the Church of Scotland called the “Moderates”) when it equates with lack of engagement.**
86. Ferguson is worried about MODERN “SUBSTITUTIONS”, especially the substitution of FORM for SUBSTANCE in the political affairs of men. He wants to rekindle “SPIRIT” even at the risk of FACTIONALITY IN SOCIETY. What ‘factions’ will he not tolerate? What controls does he want to keep in place? **He seems to want to maintain the social order. He seems very fearful of anything that smacks of democracy. What he is against is the POLITICAL**

MANAGEMENT OF SCOTLAND BY ENGLAND (through a guy named Henry Dundas). And the people he wants to animate and engage are clearly ARISTOs.

87. What should the PUBLIC be in Ferguson's mind? **"A knot of friends".** What should PUBLIC ORDER allow to Ferguson's way of thinking? **A greater amount of disorder and dissention.**
88. What then is STATECRAFT? **Not management but an understanding of the ingredients of 'public character' and the need for its exercise.**
89. What are appropriate PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS? **Ones that inhibit public engagement the list and exercise sentiments productive of civic virtue the most (i.e. a Scottish militia).**
90. For Ferguson, "polished nations" reduce **character** to professions and turn **leaders into "clerks and accountants" (bureaucrats).** What country does Ferguson think is a perfect example of this? **China. It is interesting that Max Weber studied eighteenth-century China as a pre-industrial model of bureaucratic rationality.**
91. What becomes the necessary qualification for leadership in Modern society for Ferguson? **He mentions "graduations of the university", interesting since he himself was a university professor and Scottish landed society was now making sure that its sons had a university education to perform their more modern roles.**
92. What is the real source of Modern "weakness" and "effeminacy" for Ferguson? **The "mind" or the character of the mind.** What kind of education is required to animate the mind? **Moral or literary education.** What kind of 'exercise' is necessary to reinvigorate the mind and reconnect it to the public? **Military exercise.**
93. Why is the contrivance of a sinking fund a particular danger in Modern society (i.e. deficit spending)? **It encourages prodigality over frugality and undermines the accumulation and flow of useful capital. Economic waste is a sign that civic values are already being undermined. This is very Adam Smith, who was worried about exactly the same thing.**
94. But wealth, and even luxury, are not the problems for Ferguson that they were for many other Scottish writers. He thought that they were confusing a symptom with a disease and trying to treat the symptom rather than the disease itself. What is the real diseases if it is not luxury? **The real disease is the 'corruption of men's minds. As long as men's character remains untainted, and as long as they don't negatively impact the national treasury, luxuries can even be economically useful. What is at issue is people's ATTITUDE towards luxuries. Have they become slaves to commodities and comforts or do they still have minds attuned to their duty and real happiness? IT IS MANNERS and the MANNER of USE THAT IS THE REAL ISSUE.**

95. What prevents a man from being a slave to his selfish passions and provides him with an opportunity for genuine happiness? **Not reason controlling the passions, and not self-control in the abstract, but an “addiction” or “habit” of affection towards one’s friends.**
96. Without friendship and affection, what does Modern social interaction degenerate into? **Rousseau’s description of men wearing masks and needed to be constantly on “guard” against one another. But friendship and genuine affection, and even animosities, can prevent against that outcome if they are maintained, says Ferguson.**
97. What are the main advantages/disadvantages of rude society? **The affections and animosities are vital but government is weak.** What are the main advantages/disadvantages of polished society? **Government is strong but the bonds between people are weak.**
98. Why is luxury a relative term for Ferguson? **Almost anything can be regarded as a luxury depending on one’s vantage point. Thus, critics of luxury often refer to the recent past as a model, whereas those in the past probably did the same thing. The real issue must always be whether or not there is character – in the stoic terms of fortitude and affection.**
99. Ferguson was a clergyman. What does he say about the clergy’s sermons against luxury? **They make the mistake of trying to assess “moral characters by external circumstances”. The issue of luxury is a “quality of the mind”. Thus, Ferguson allows the aristocracy (the only ones with access to luxury) to access luxuries without guilt, but only just as long as they maintain their virtuous characters. These can only be maintained in ‘action’ not in ‘speculation’.**
100. How does Ferguson defend the privileges of rank and superordination? **He says that unequal wealth is necessary for “social order” and even “salutary” for the social status that it confers and the commerce and industry that it puts into action. IS THIS SIMPLY AN APOLOGY FOR THE ARISTOCRACY?**
101. What happens, however, if the idea of riches command the IMAGINATION? **Then luxury truly corrupts.**
102. How does luxury go beyond a particular class and become an INFECTION? **Once the elite equate their honour with their wealth, this sets a bad example and a train of corruption that INFECTS “all orders of men, with equal venality, servility, and cowardice.” Every thought on personal pleasure becomes in effect “a new avocation of his mind from the public”.**
103. Why might the middle classes of men be more virtuous in a state of corruption than the “higher orders of men”? **The former still require the virtues of “business**

and of industry” to make their fortunes, while those who are supposed to possess “courage and elevation of mind” become ‘SOCIAL REFUSE’.

104. Ferguson says that the “commercial and political arts” tend to progress together. But there is a problem when the **“cravings of luxury”** replace “independence”. **The danger is that progress will not continue and that corruption will lead the state back into the cycle of decline and despotism. But the way one remedies this problem is not to design political systems or constitutions that could never withstand the corruption of minds. The only thing that can withstand corruption is an “independent mind”.**
105. What happens when “independence of mind” is compromised? **Social rank is undermined and society is divided into opposed “classes”. MARX READ FERGUSON BY THE WAY!!**

AFTER VIRTUE

General Points

1. What is MacIntyre's argument with respect to morality or virtue? **MacIntyre follows Aristotle in arguing that virtue is an action or the functionality of belief systems that have no metaphysical independence of their own but must be understood in particular *political* contexts. In other words, the *virtues* are behaviours that are *practiced* in a social community.**
2. MacIntyre is advocating a kind of *virtue ethics*? What other kinds of ethics does *virtue ethics* challenge? **On the one hand, it challenges all ethical conceptions based on *rights* and *justice* (deontological ethics), since there are no fixed rules for rights or justice apart from their definition within the community. On the other hand, it challenges any ethics based on *emotivism* (consequentialism or utilitarianism) since these focus on individuals as somehow separate from the societies in which they live.**
3. What is the significance of *character* in MacIntyre's discussion of virtue? **For Ferguson, virtue cannot be captured in rules or principles, but depends on the rational judgments of people with *character*. Rules and principles multiply and contradict one another in pluralistic societies; they provide no stable framework for action. Character and integrity, on the other hand, are developed by practicing virtue within a community with coherent values. Those values will be discovered by respecting the *traditions* of the community in question.**
4. MacIntyre obviously thinks that Aristotle's basic understanding of ethics is the correct one and that the Enlightenment threw out the baby with the bathwater when it rejected the Aristotelian framework. What things does MacIntyre **not like** about Aristotle's ethics? **He thinks that: 1) it contains unnecessary metaphysical assumptions about an *essential* human nature, 2) it is static in defining the Greek polis and its social structure as the only possible arena for virtue, 3) it assumes the *unity* of the virtues, and by implication, 4) it fails to appreciate the presence and significance of *conflict* in the moral community.**
5. Why is MacIntyre a big fan of Adam Ferguson? **There are several reasons: 1) Ferguson has a *historical* understanding of the genesis of different moral communities and 2) Ferguson underlines the role played by *conflict* in developing *character*. In several places, MacIntyre goes so far as to suggest that Ferguson has provided an *empirical* foundation for a basically Aristotelian understanding of virtue.**
6. Why does MacIntyre want to **insist** on a tradition of ethical discourse that includes Sophocles as well as Aristotle? **Sophocles' insistence on the tragic**

dimension of ethical decision making in a complex society, and the unavailability of conflict, supplement what is a rigid and doctrinaire kind of Aristotelianism.

7. What is MacIntyre's biggest beef with *modern* society? **Its acceptance of an emotivism that allows *individuals* to pursue their own pleasure. In slang terms, you might say he hates the notion of *doing one's own thing*.**
8. What's the problem with "doing one's own thing"? **It is destructive of community and, for MacIntyre, it is the community that frames virtue for the individual, not the individual who decides what he or she *wants* virtue to be.**
9. Why is the pursuit of individual happiness ultimately self-defeating? **Happiness is not achieved *directly* by following one's selfish passions; happiness is achieved *indirectly* by adhering to communal values and contributing to the common good.**
10. Why is *emotivism* philosophical and ethical nonsense for MacIntyre? **Emotivism suggests that all moral judgments are really *preferences* or expressions of feeling. This is problematic because: 1) how could you ever identify or specify the 'feelings' that give rise to moral approval; the statement "feeling = approval" is nonsense; 2) it confuses emotion with approval; 3) it has no clear *functional* meaning in showing us how we move from feeling to action in practice; 4) even if such a statement had functionality, it would make individual moral judgments fleeting (according to changes in feeling); 5) communally, it would render moral disagreements interminable; 6) finally, it totally obscures the fact that *emotivism* was a reaction and response to what eighteenth-century thinkers perceived as dogmatic and limiting socio-political restraints rather than a theory that could provide any kind of foundation for moral behaviour.**

Specific Page by Page Analysis

1. What should the Enlightenment Project be viewed as, according to MacIntyre? **As a highly flawed strategy that continues to dominate most academic discourse. As a discourse that developed in a special socio-historical context where the old backdrop of Christian teleology blended with a new emphasis on human nature in terms of the *passions*.**
2. How does MacIntyre describe this synthesis? **He says that it is a "failed" attempt to conjoin "man as he happens to be" with "man as he could be if he realized his essential nature". The idea is that man's untutored nature needs be reconciled with his telos. Such a view is still highly Christian in so far as it points to a human nature capable of perfectability, but in this case on earth rather than in heaven.**

3. MacIntyre regards this project as a gluing together of “incoherent fragments”. How so? **The Christian telos was all about correcting a flawed nature; not to find a rational foundation for moral beliefs that could be “deduced from true statements about human nature”. As Kant’s attempt to dance around this teleology demonstrates, morality is not really intelligible when you try to move arbitrarily from a factual “is” to a normative “ought”.**
4. How does MacIntyre suggest that it might be possible to move from an “is” to an “ought”? **He suggests that it is possible if you are not talking about some so-called “principles” of human nature but if the “ought” is already contained in some fashion in the “is”. Thus, the statement “he is a good farmer” can derive an ought from an is because the notion of a farmer already presupposes what good farming is. It is a functional concept.**
5. In what way, therefore, is it possible to speak of a “good man”? **It is only possible if you already have a TRADITION or a SET OF ROLES that define what it means to be a MAN. You are not trying to get at some ABSTRACT DEFINITION OF MAN OR HUMAN NATURE. You are not trying to get at some AHISTORICAL or UNCONTEXTUALIZED MAN.**
6. In MacIntyre’s discussion of virtue ethics, what does it mean to talk about a good man? **It means to talk about what a “good man” would do in a certain situation that has already been predefined. What has to be rejected for this functional definition of virtue to have any meaning? The notion of an “essential human purpose” or human nature has to “disappear”. Only in this way can moral statements be “factual”.**
7. What for MacIntyre was the REAL AGENDA OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT? **The liberation of the ‘self’ from outmoded forms of social organization. This liberation MacIntyre also labels the “invention of the self”. What was its effect on moral discourse? The separation of ethics from politics. How is this SEPARATION demonstrated in the modern academic curriculum? Politics is separated from philosophy.**
8. What two approaches to ethics were generated as a result of finding an ethical solution to the problem of the self? **Deontology (Kant) and Utilitarianism. What was absolutely revolutionary in Benthamite utilitarianism? Bentham and his followers did not “flinch” from trying to locate morality in the individual, specifically the pleasure seeking and pain avoiding individual”.**
9. What was the major difficulty faced by the utilitarians? **They could not easily define pleasure or happiness and also they needed to make a move from their psychological thesis to general principles of morality. John Stuart Mill was the first to put into question the problem of deriving ethics from psychology when he argued that the notion of ‘happiness’ needed to be “enlarged”.**

10. What Aristotelian concept did Mill's nervous breakdown uncover? **That happiness, and by implication, virtue is not unitary but "polymorphous". Even more, the concept of happiness can only be understood by reference to a community and its cultural values.**
11. Why is the formula of the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" a dangerous construct? **If happiness is polymorphous, the slogan is an ideological mask for an agenda. You always need to ask yourself what particular actions or strategies are being condoned in its use.**
12. What for MacIntyre did the conflicts in utilitarianism eventually lead to? **The notion of 'emotivism' or that morality is an individual "choice". What emotivism can't really explain very well, however, is the fact that moral reasoning is not simply a matter of preference. Thus, Kant was able to argue that moral rules did have a certain "authority" and "objectivity" that could not be explained by intuition or emotivism.**
13. Why does MacIntyre find the Kantian notion of "freedom" and its deduction into "rights" unconvincing? **He suggests two problems: 1) it is difficult to universalize rights, 2) it is virtually impossible to universalize rights if one considers that the concept of 'rights' only developed at a certain historical period in a certain socio-political context. Rights claims typically (always for MacIntyre) have "a highly specific and socially local character".**
14. What was the ethical result of all of this Enlightened cogitating? **The absence of any established authority for ethics. Every writer on ethics attempts to speak with authority but the question is "why should anyone believe them"? What's ironic about this failure for MacIntyre? It's still continuing today in academic circles as though we were looking for someone to do what Kant could not.**
15. What strong conclusion about the belief in rights does MacIntyre come to? **A belief in rights – either negative or positive – is the equivalent of a belief in "witches and in unicorns". Moreover, there is no such a thing as "self-evident truths". They are all "fictions"**
16. Despite the divorce of ethics and politics in academic circles, in real life people continue to maintain the links. What do their ethical assertions amount to for MacIntyre? **A "moral incommensurability" that makes people engage as "protagonists" rather than discussants. The shrill and self-sufficient tone of "protestors" is for MacIntyre a symbol of political communication in the modern age. MORALITY HAS BECOME A MASK FOR POSITIONS.**
17. Who are the 'characters' of modern society for MacIntyre? **They are people like Rameau's nephew, people who adopt positions, characters without character.**

18. MacIntyre is particularly scornful of those modern aesthetes who pursue their own pleasure. What point is he making? **The seeking of happiness just leaves people bored and empty and victims of the therapist's couch.**
19. Therapists are one part of the refuse of 'character' in the modern state but who does MacIntyre really want to single out and why? **Bureaucratic managers who define their role in terms of 'efficiency'. MacIntyre argues that there is not a shred of evidence that these people really contribute to society. They 'masquerade' their failed attempt at social control as efficiency. MACINTYRE IS AVOCATING A REASONABLE APPROACH TO HUMAN PROBLEMS RATHER THAN A TECHOCRATIC APPROACH.**
20. What's MacIntyre's problem with the social sciences? **They fall into the Enlightenment trap of trying to discover "law like relations" whereas the best social scientific writings are rational generalizations that take into account empirical realities.**
21. MacIntyre on numerous occasions will praise empirical or historically grounded approaches. But this does not mean that he approves of British empiricism as it developed. **He points out that facts and theories go together as ways of understanding the world and that the emphasis on factual information in the eighteenth-century was a way of trying to understand and dominate reality by getting rid of an *essentialist* theory (Aristotle's by the way) that was to them increasingly "incoherent". To that extent, the Enlightenment is historically understandable. But when it tries to make a science of human nature, it is incomprehensible.**
22. What did the ENLIGHTENED MODERNS do that was such a mistake for MacIntyre? **By radicalizing the distinction between 'facts' and 'values' they divorced the human sciences from ethics. They threw out the entire Aristotelian or classical world-view that related to politics, citizenship, and ethics, substituting a "world-view that is at its best radically incoherent".**
23. Why is it impossible to develop a causal analysis of human nature in any scientific sense? **Such an explanation would need to relate "intentions, purposes, and reasons for action" in mathematically precise ways. Human behaviour, however, eludes the precision that would allow for the construction of 'laws'. Ultimately, you'd have to eliminate 'intention' completely from the human equation as well as other things like fears, beliefs and enjoyments, which simply is not possible. HUMAN NATURE CANNOT BE REDUCED TO THESE KINDS OF SCIENTIFIC 'FACTS' AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IS NOT 'PREDICTABLE' IN EVEN PSEUDO-SCIENTIFIC WAYS.**

24. What does MacIntyre think has been the legacy of a mechanistically focused social science that was but a “prophecy” in the eighteenth-century? **The civil servant who pretend to be experts and who are part and parcel of the tribe of bureaucratic managers who peddle efficiency as a commodity.**
25. Who does MacIntyre regard as the deluded prophet of this highly commodified modern society? **Max Weber. For MacIntyre the combination of liberal pluralism and inhuman bureaucracy is a direct legacy of the Enlightenment.**
26. What is the MODERN ORGANIZATION? **Nothing more than a set of bureaucratic ‘practices’ reinforced from organizational theorists, through management textbooks that reinforce the rise of professional *experts*. The latter follow the practice of divorcing facts from values in ways from which we all suffer.**
27. What is the most “salient fact” about the SOCIAL SCIENCES? **The lack of the discovery of any “law-like generalizations” whatsoever. Thus, there is no social scientific justification possible of bureaucratic organizations or their claims to leadership. MacIntyre is particularly hard on ECONOMISTS whose generalizations have “no predictive power whatsoever”.**
28. Are the generalizations of social science, if not predictive, at least probable? **According to MacIntyre, probability needs to be defined in terms of 1) scope, 2) counterfactuals. Moreover, if they were really probable, then there would not be so many conflicting theories in the social sciences.**
29. Why is Machiavelli a better model for social scientists than the heirs of Enlightenment? **He appreciates something very Greek and fundamental – i.e. the influence of ‘fortuna’ (FORTUNE) in human life. We can try to do the most reasonable things, and this will work more often than not, but we cannot escape the fact that things often do not work out the way that we planned them to. Contingencies happen. That’s a REAL FACT OF HUMAN LIFE. We can limit the ravages of fortune, but never master fortune itself.**
30. What can the history of INNOVATION, even in the physical sciences, tell us about predictability in human affairs? **Predictability is not very pronounced. If this is true of science, then just think how true it is of most of human life, says MacIntyre, where human beings are active participants in what they are trying to observe and quantify.**
31. Why is GAME THEORY not going to help us SOLVE THE UNPREDICABILITY PROBLEM? **There are always many different games going on simultaneously and, even if there were just one game, the players make it infinitely complex by predicting one another’s moves.**

32. What can we predict with some regularity? **We can predict 1) cultural routines, 2) statistical regularities (nothing to do with predictability itself) in social life.**
33. Why is human behaviour not predictable on an individual level? **Not only are there way too many variables but, in modern society we pride ourselves precisely on our ‘individuality’ and we reject attempts of others to peg us in terms of predictability.**
34. In terms of valid generalizations, how are these best discovered? **They are best discovered *inductively*, from experience combined with research on general patterns in particular societies. Social science should be ‘empirical’ therefore in the common sense meaning of the term. THE RESULTING GENERALIZATIONS WOULD HAVE MORE IN COMMON WITH THE PROVERBS OF FOLK SOCIETIES THAN IS COMMONLY REALIZED. They also have more in common with Machiavelli than with those social scientists who place emphasis on being ‘scientific’.**
35. What does all of this mean if we were to apply it to the modern bureaucratic organization? **It would mean that there would be a “high degree of unpredictability” as well as “multiple centers of problem solving and decision making” that would problematize the notion of an efficient organization run by experts.**
36. What should all of this tell us about the so-called *experts* in politics and business? **We should be suspicious of these ‘characters’ who have no special claim to truth. Even more, we should understand that they typically ACT AS EXPERTS (i.e. play a ‘role’) rather than have any CLAIM TO EXPERTISE. Modest claims of people in management positions can still be entertained, but more general ones need to be vetted NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE LIKELY WRONG OR MISLEADING (even if well intended) BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY DIVORCE FACTS FROM VALUES and can therefore do ENORMOUS DAMAGE TO WHAT’S LEFT OF COMMUNITY IN THE MODERN AGE.**
37. What’s MacIntyre’s positive assessment of Nietzsche? **Nietzsche recognized better than anyone that most modern claims to reason (i.e. Weberian) “conceal” or “disguise” power agendas. In terms of the “moral utterance” of modern societies, Nietzsche was disgusted by its hypocrisy. Also, for MacIntyre, Nietzsche illuminated the ways that the modernizing formula contained “broken fragments” of an older teleological world view.**
38. How is the anthropologist useful in deconstructing modern culture? **The anthropologist is adept at showing how cultural survivals and taboos last in a communities’ discourse long after their functional role has ended.**

39. What does the anthropologist have to say about community that MacIntyre wants to echo? **That cultural values have FUNCTIONALITY in terms of quite specific communities. Rules (or taboos) are not universal criteria of meaning, they have social and historical CONTEXTS.**
40. Nietzsche understood better than anyone that western values arose in a context. That was his “genuine insight” suggests MacIntyre. Kant’s categorical imperative is not universal but a product of a certain historical society. So what’s the huge and unwarranted mistake that Nietzsche makes? **He assumes that MORALITY IS ONLY A REFLECTION OF INDIVIDUAL WILL. He seeks to replace A REASON THAT HE FINDS LACKING with an IRRATIONALITY or ANTI-RATIONALITY-- a passion that he finds full of creative vitality. His analysis may be brilliant but his solutions are, for MacIntyre, “frivolous”.**
41. What has Nietzsche been transformed into by our modern emotive society? **He’s been co-opted simultaneously as an exponent of affirming self and an unmasker of opponents. He’s become a child of the self-indulgent 60s.**
42. Who is the bastard child of this caricature of Nietzsche? **Erving Goffmann who views life as nothing more or less than the PRESENTATION OF SELF in a contest of ROLE PLAYERS. This is a moral philosophy, and a very confused one, disguised as social analysis.**
43. Nietzsche goes back to Greek tragedy for a solution to the modern problem. How is his interpretation of Greek culture in the post heroic age wrong-headed for MacIntyre? **MacIntyre argues that Nietzsche is still caught in a highly individualistic/emotive cultural paradigm. He views Greek arete as a function of independent creators rather than as a PRODUCT of a particular community and context that reinforced CHARACTER.**
44. What are the two ways of approaching Nietzsche for MacIntyre? **Either to conclude that the Enlightenment project was a big mistake or to follow through the Nietzschean strand to its ultimate conclusions – pure unhypocritical individualism as the will to power. Ultimately, the Greeks will not speak with the same voice as Nietzsche.**
45. Are there any problems with MacIntyre’s own reading of the Greeks, since he’s so hard on Nietzsche’s? **Well, at the very least, it is a subtle and complex reading that focuses on Aristotle but doesn’t want to rely on him too exclusively, and tries to argue for a marriage of Greek philosophy and Greek tragedy. The Virtue Ethics Project of MacIntyre depends a lot on a particular reading of the Greeks because, in some ways, the Greeks might not have that much to say to us – especially as a society where only a few were considered rational, women were second class citizens, slaves had no personality, and outsiders were beneath contempt and incapable of virtuous citizenship.**

46. What do we know about the heroic Greeks or what can we deduce from the best scholarship according to MacIntyre? **The early or heroic Greeks were not isolated individuals but deeply communal actors with shared values of excellence, that included elements of friendship, courage and cunning.**
47. What's different about the notion of the VIRTUES among the Greeks as opposed to today? **The virtues were not principles held by the mind but actions performed in society, primarily civic actions.**
48. How were appropriate actions or virtues determined in Greek society? **With reference to one's place and one's responsibilities in the social order. Heroism, for example, had nothing to do with individual courage and everything to do with what was expected from the warrior. Without that social order, a man "would not himself know who he was".**
49. What's important or different about the idea of 'friendship' among the Greeks as opposed to today? **Friendships (and marriage says MacIntyre) were based on mutual reliance and fidelity, not on personal inclination.**
50. What's the snag; what's the end point; and what's the assessment of all these virtuous behaviours in ancient Greece? **Fortune is the snag; death is end point; one's character or integrity is what is at stake in the reckoning. Life resembles a GAME in which the RULES ARE DETERMINED BY THE GAME.**
51. Universality (in the modern sense) is missing from this game. The players cannot move outside of the game. However, MacIntyre wants to suggest that you can't simply say that Greeks were "particular kinds of human beings" in a "particular kind of social structure" or they might not have much to say to us moderns. How does MacIntyre attempt to show relevance? **What the Greeks show us is: 1) that that all morality is tied to a particular context and social structure, and 2) that a tradition is where values come from. We inherit the virtues as part of a specific tradition.*******
52. MacIntyre wants to make a great deal of the **agon** or contest in ancient Greece. What's so different about contests for them than for us? **The Greeks wanted to win as well, but their moralists show us that sometimes "losing is winning" in terms of what it shows us about character.**
53. MacIntyre is not always convincing but his point is that whatever we see in the behaviour of the ancient Greeks, it must by definition relate to community rather than individualism. Without the aid of modern ideas of man as a social construction, **the Greeks prove that character is formed with respect to roles and is essentially a social creation. When Nietzsche projected aspects of**

modern individualism backwards into this society, he deeply misconstrued its nature.

54. MacIntyre's argument is already complex but starts to get more complex. Why? **MacIntyre realizes that Greek heroic society, although it is connected to our present European societies by lineage, cannot offer us much advice about morality apart from showing us that it is a social construction. He wants to move to Aristotle who is more directly in the lineage towards a more modern society and whose ethics was once a part of Medieval society. But Aristotle doesn't work very well either because he speaks to a rigid social structure (thus fits in well with Medieval hierarchy) whereas our society is characterized by greater complexity and conflict. Thus, MacIntyre needs to bring in the Greek tragedians who have a broader perspective on the complexities of life and its tragic drama. Trouble is that Aristotle disowned any predecessors and you get in more difficulty when you broaden the debate to other aspects of Athenian culture. Then, for example, you might want to talk about the Sophists who seemed to regard virtue as 'relative'. See question 59 below.**
55. Where does MacIntyre rest the crux of his argument? **In a wider Greek model that includes the Greek tragedians as well as Aristotle. The latter, and especially the play *Antigone*, show a changing society in which the virtues are not always as united as Aristotle thought they must be. The wider Greek cultural environment allows for CHANGE, CONFLICT AND TRAGIC CHOICE AS DYNAMIC ELEMENTS IN A COMMUNITY THAT IS STILL BASED ON TRADITIONAL VALUES AND THAT STILL BREEDS VIRTUOUS CHARACTER.**
56. Why is the world of Athenian democracy a more relevant environment for us MODERNS? **It was possible for people to disagree about what was "just" while still recognizing that justice and other "virtue words" related to a real living community. Disagreements, sometimes leading to an incoherent vocabulary, did not in Athens lead to liberal pluralism or the emotive/universalizing definitions of virtue. The common assumption was ALWAYS THAT THE VIRTUES HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE CITY STATE. To be a good man, still meant being a good citizen, however difficult that might be.*******
57. Despite being more relevant to us, what feature of ancient Greek life did MODERNITY lose sight of? **The taboo on greed. For the Greeks, even in a commercial empire, even when they thought that personal prosperity was necessary to live a fulfilling life, AQUISITIVE INDIVIDUALISM WAS FROWNED UPON.**

58. What do we moderns lack to keep this COHESIVE DISCOURSE going that the Athenians did have? **They had a set of institutions that reinforced collective dialogue that included the theatre.**
59. In talking about the discussion of virtue in Athens, why are the Sophists a bit of a problem for MacIntyre and how does he try to get around it? **The sophists taught their students how to use ‘rhetoric’ because virtue was relative to time and space. MacIntyre points out that the “impulse” behind Sophism was to teach young aristocratic Greeks how to advance politically, but that this backfired because they ended up contradicting themselves by 1) affirming the relativity of virtue, but 2) conflating virtue with success and by implication making justice the interest of the stronger. The more dominant and persuasive Greek ethos was that virtue and success were not identical but that the pursuit of virtue was the only path to happiness.**
60. Why is Plato, Aristotle’s teacher, not representative of Greek thinking on virtue but, rather, someone who tried to solve the problem of virtue in a very un Greek way? **Plato attempted to save virtue from the confusions of people like the Sophists by making virtue – i.e. ‘justice’ – universal. Ethics is still related to the behaviour of the citizen in Plato’s thought because to be “excellent” as a man implies being “excellent” as a citizen. Nevertheless, by universalizing virtue, Plato took a major step in removing it from specific contexts. That universalizing theme, of course, also played a role in the *idealization* of virtue in Western thought and in pushing ethics into metaphysics.**
61. Both Plato and Aristotle (in the strong interpretation) believe in the unity of all the virtues. Both project an objective moral order. MacIntyre prefers a softer interpretation of Aristotle as modified by Sophocles. Why? **Sophocles shows that there will always be “rival claims” to what is just in particular situations. Sophocles shows us that we are in a sense caught up in a tragic drama where *conflicts* must be expected.**
62. How does this preferred moral stance in a modernized virtue ethics contrast with modern individualism? **A person is what his or her society has created him or her to be. But the existence of conflicting virtues and roles means that a person is not just that. A person has to demonstrate independent judgment (not simply a balancing between extremes in a stable community) but by making reasonable choices where there is no absolutely right choice. “The Sophoclean self differs from the emotiist self as much as does the heroic self, although in more complex ways. The Sophoclean self TRANSCENDS the limitations of social roles and is able to put those roles in question, but remains accountable to the point of death and accountable precisely for the way in which it handles itself in those conflicts which make the heroic point of view no longer possible.”**

63. But ultimately it is Aristotle and not Sophocles who is the touchstone for modern virtue ethics. Why? **1) He's the leading representative of a certain kind of tradition, 2) he makes the community, specifically the political city state, the locus of virtuous action, 3) he defines virtue as an action, a continual activity towards "excellence". 4) he sees such action as the essential business of life, 5) he sees happiness as an indirect product of virtuous action, 6) he effectively attacks those who would let their desires or interests dictate their actions, 7) he conclusively demonstrates that virtuous character is obtained through continual communal contributions and has nothing to do with abstract principles or rationally derived rules, 8) he understands that the virtuous 'dispositions' are internalized through interaction in the community, 9) he doesn't focus exclusively on ends or means but thinks that 'judgment' is demonstrated by relating the two properly together, 10) he recognizes that the 'spirit' of the laws is much more important to the functioning of community than the 'letter' of the laws, 11) even in a corrupt society, he positions virtue as a communal rather than an individualistic or private enterprise, 12) judgment is indispensable because any community is a context and circumstances must be taken into account, 13) therefore, he appreciates that character and intelligence can never be separated as they often are in Christian based ethics, 14) his methodology rejects pluralism in favour of shared tradition and experience.**
64. MacIntyre begins to lose it a bit when he goes on to suggest that **Aristotle's practical syllogism – i.e. a man without community cannot be a man at all – “can be construed as providing a statement of necessary conditions for intelligible human action and as doing so in a way that must hold for any recognizable human culture.”**
65. How is MacIntyre's emphasis on shared experience in community (so doable in a small city state) to be applied to a larger society? **MacIntyre suggests that the focus would have to be local , i.e. “networks of small groups of friends”. But the term 'friend' needs to be understood as engaging in “the common project of creating and sustaining the life of the city” and not our modern “emotional state”.**
66. Many fans of Aristotle would be satisfied with an ethical framework that ensures a certain amount of “flourishing” and “well-being” consistent with positive liberty. Why does MacIntyre reject that “general” assessment? **First, MacIntyre believes that this puts the onus on flourishing on the 'individual' which for him is morally unintelligible. Second, he suggests that different societies have different visions of what 'flourishing' means and that these different visions tend to be in 'conflict'. Allowing for too many pluralist visions would simply ensure that no coherent community of virtue would be possible.**

67. Does this mean that there necessarily will be conflicts within and between communities (including national communities) and that these are unavoidable? What are the drawbacks of virtue ethics? **Your answer goes here** _____

_____.

Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man

General Points

1. Why do you think Schiller composed this work as a series of “Letters”? **Letters allow him to draw ideas from “within” and to appeal to an intersubjective ‘self’ in ways that neither abstract principles nor “experience with the world” could discover.**
2. Frederick Von Schiller’s work is short but extremely important. Why? **Because it is one of the first writings that sets up the artistic or aesthetic temperament as an antidote to the ills of a materialistic or philistine (barbaric) society that was emerging during the late Enlightenment period. From this work, and others like it, many of the romantic notions of art and the separation of culture from a corrupt society emerge. Even the notion of the artistic type as separate and select can be discovered in the closing paragraphs of this work.**
3. But this work is much more than simply a romantic reaction to a materialistic and utilitarian society. How? **1) It provides a philosophy of aesthetics that is essentially Kantian but that gives aesthetics a central role in the cultivation of the individual and the social identity. 2) It suggests an ‘anthropology’ of aesthetic development that provides a fairly sophisticated, if not totally satisfactory, alternative to Rousseauian primitivism. 3) It develops a novel interpretation of the ‘play element’ in human culture. 4) It makes civilization and the cultivation of morality dependent, individually and institutionally, upon aesthetics. 5) It privileges aesthetic development over political freedom, making the latter subservient to the former.**
4. The title of this work may be misleading. It claims to be about “aesthetic education” but it is not about institutionalizing aesthetics in education. That would come later. What does Schiller mean by “aesthetic education”? **He means the development of humanity and civilization through the operations of the aesthetic sense.**
5. In what ways is this work Eurocentric? **It is Eurocentric in a number of ways. First, it adopts the enlightened theory of climate to suggest that the aesthetic sense emerges in the temperate zones where activity encourages activity and creation. Second, it condemns savage societies as “Troglodyte” without appreciating the “aesthetic” values of those cultures. Third, it views societies that were more closely dependent upon “nature” as incapable of giving to material things the privileged “indifferent” aesthetic form. Fourth, it views uncivilized societies as developmentally challenged in terms of aesthetics.**
6. But this work is also highly critical and ambivalent about European and, by implication, enlightened civilization. Why? **Schiller believes that the primitive**

- dependence on nature or sensual life has been replaced by an equally impoverished dependence on rationalistic abstraction. Both of these are extreme states of dependency – the one fearful, the other replete with hubris – that negate humanity’s true nature.
7. What is humanity’s true nature? What would a complete and balanced human look like? **Humanity’s true nature conforms to the dual nature of the sensual and the transcendent discovered by Kant. Reliance on either one or the other would be one-sided, since man is both nature and the lawgiver to nature. A complete humanity would be one in which both sides of human nature are unified, the physical recognizing the transcendent and visa versa. According to Schiller, this is achieved in the aesthetic state.**
 8. What for Schiller is the best historical example of an aesthetic civilization? **Ancient Greece, specifically the Athenian empire that created such wonderful art and architecture.**
 9. Ultimately, man’s (and woman’s) highest nature is, in the Kantian sense, a moral nature governed by the categorical imperative. The validity of the categorical imperative in a phenomenological world requires freedom of ‘will’. What does Schiller have to say about this categorical imperative of Kant’s? **He says that the moral sphere is so distinct from the sphere of sensation that the former could never impact the latter unless there was a “third state” where the realms of the ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ were initially united and the capacity for ideal reflection cultivated. That for Schiller is the sphere of the ‘aesthetic’ and it is INDISPENSIBLE, BOTH FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND FOR SOCIETY.**
 10. What is the fundamental problem with the European Enlightenment? **It moved too aggressively from the dependence on nature (sensual existence) to the worship of reason. Reason in this context does not develop its ideal potential but gets caught up in an attempt to control and dominate nature. Its characteristic philosophy is materialistic which conclusively shows that it has only been able to abstract the sensual stage, not to move past it. Schiller regards modern society as inherently barbaric precisely because it is materialistic. It does not affirm the true dignity of the human being but tends to corrupt it.**
 11. What two impoverished stages of society does the modern world separate into? **It relegates the poor and the weak within the savage/sensual/dependent stage while reinforcing the abstract/rational/self-interested materialism of the upper classes.**
 12. This system would appear to be ‘unjust’ and gives rise to the clamour for freedom. Why is political liberty never going to be the solution to this problem? **Liberty is defined in terms of the ‘dignity’ of each individual who should not only be consulted but also cultivated in and by society. But as long as most**

- individuals' aesthetic and moral nature remains undeveloped, it is senseless to talk about "liberty". The poor are chained by their needs; those in charge by their self-interest. In this 'modern' state of affairs, there is absolutely no understanding of what a developed human being is. Economic and political liberty would simply be a framework for people chained in different ways to an impoverished 'self' and a material existence.
13. What important, and essentially Kantian, distinction is Schiller trying to make here? **The distinction between 'negative' and 'positive' liberty. Negative liberty is the freedom from interference in advancing one's own self-interest. Positive liberty is realizing one's humanity as a transcendent and moral being.**
 14. How does Schiller define art? Hint is that this analysis becomes profoundly influential. **Art is a harmonious union of form (transcendence and universality) and content (determinate matter). As an ideal, these elements would be perfectly balanced and united so that they are reflexive with respect to each other. In practice, in human life, there is a tendency for one or the other to dominate. But art is "beautiful" to the extent that a union is realized.**
 15. What happens in the creation of genuine art? Hint is that this analysis of Schiller's also becomes very influential. **The negative impacts of sensation and rational abstraction are both suspended. The world of creativity separates itself both from the twin tyrannies of the real and abstract world and the 'complete' and 'holistic' human being momentarily emerges. This experience, of course, can be mentally reconstructed by the cultivated observer.**
 16. What kinds of created objects are 'rejected' as having any aesthetic character according to Schiller's definition? **Art that is too realistic and, therefore, lacks form. Art that is too abstract, and therefore lacks appropriate content.**
 17. What huge break in the definition of art is Schiller signaling here? **He is signaling a break between 'crafts' and 'art'.**
 18. Why does Schiller want to make this break philosophically permanent? **He wants to distinguish true and genuine art from that which is 'utilitarian'.**
 19. Schiller truly hates utilitarianism and sets up the distinction between artistic truth (truth as beauty) and utility that will inform most of romanticism. Why does he detest utility? **He thinks that it is conception of man and his happiness that is trapped in materialist sensation. He doesn't think that 'happiness' can be defined in such terms. He doesn't agree that modern civilization is 'happy'.**

20. How does he describe the upper classes that are supposed to benefit from utilitarian happiness seeking? **He regards them as essentially ‘passive’ and ‘lethargic’, completely lacking in the active/creative principle that brings happiness.**
21. Schiller spends a lot of time arguing that ‘aesthetic’ cultivation is a **critical and indispensable stage on the path towards moral dignity and freedom.** He certainly would not want to be cast alongside the nineteenth-century proclaimers of “art for art’s sake”. But there are elements in his analysis that seem to contribute to that outlook. What am I suggesting? **I’m suggesting that Schiller’s description of the “play element” in art makes it very attractive in its own right. Also, Schiller sometimes seems to place ‘art’ or ‘aesthetics’ above morality by making it indispensable and by focusing on it.**
22. How does the critique of Rousseau further suggest that aesthetics is given a very privileged role in Schiller’s analysis? **Not only does Schiller criticize Rousseau for suggesting that morality is possible in an uncivilized society, but, despite all his own protestations against modern corruption, he defends the aesthetic qualities of ‘civilized’ politeness. He is certainly a ways from affirming the integrity of ‘dandyism’ but his analysis of fashion and appearance could be viewed as anticipating such developments.**
23. What distinction does Schiller’s concept of ‘playfulness’ obscure and even undermine? **The distinction between substance and superficiality. Play operates in realms like ‘fashion’ that may appear on the surface to be superficial but involve a huge cultural step.**
24. How has Schiller’s aesthetics effected something of revolution in moral discourse? **In most enlightened discourse, writers wanted to distinguish between substance and appearance, authenticity and fakery, morals and manners. Even when they viewed civilization and morality as compatible, they admitted the possibility of deception. Schiller, however, elevates “appearance” to “aesthetics” by making it the key distinction from a more vulgar reality.**
25. What new words does Schiller use to describe the development, not of the individual (that is negative) but of the whole personality (that is positive)? **He uses words like ‘culture’. It is interesting that now, culture becomes something that is superior to social reality and that speaks to the true nature of humanity that is not realized in modern material life. It is true that Schiller still wants to retain the connection with the phenomenological world and to link the ideal with the real. But words like ‘culture’ and ‘cultivation’ – words that were formerly horticultural – highlight the separation of the aesthetic temperament from the specific condition of life.**

26. What other horticultural image does Schiller draw upon? **When speaking of aesthetics and “beauty” as the middle state or equilibrium between ‘form’ and ‘content’, he suggests that “beauty plants us here”. The idea of humanity itself as a plant that needs to be cultivated, in the individual as well as in society, and through education rather than politics, is clearly developing in German thought.**
27. What could this emphasis on culture, beauty, and positive freedom through aesthetic development be obscuring here? **The political domination of most people, which needn’t really be seen as domination if most of the “people below” are incapable of aesthetic development (at least at this stage). Indeed, Schiller’s aesthetics not only echo Kant by separating intellectual from political freedom (and thereby arguably justifying political domination) but also making freedom contingent upon an aesthetic development that in “fact” is discovered “only in select circles” (p. 71).**

Specifics

1. What Kantian distinction does Schiller draw upon to start his series of letters? What words does he use to specify this distinction? **Schiller distinguishes between the “principles” of the understanding and the “sensations” attached to the world of “phenomena”. He tends to view this as a dialectical opposition between “feelings” and “analysis”.**
2. What is the function of “beauty and art” for Schiller? **To “extinguish” this opposition.**
3. Why is “beauty” under threat in late-eighteenth century society? **A materialist, utilitarian, and narrowly scientific society cannot appreciate art.**
4. What fundamental misunderstanding of the age also blocks an appreciation for beauty? **The preoccupation with political freedom obscures the fact that real mental and moral freedom can only develop “through beauty”. This is an argument that personal cultivation takes precedence over political arrangements.**
5. What huge positive contribution has been made by the infant political science of the eighteenth-century? **It “founds a state of nature” in “reason” rather than “necessity” which allows for freedom and moral choice. This is a freedom from the thrall of “existence” towards the real of the “possible” and the “ideal”. It offers the possibility of utopia.**
6. But what huge error does the rationalization of politics make with respect the humanity? **It prematurely “withdraws the ladder” of nature and substitutes the “moral man” for the “physical man”.**

7. Why is this a problem? **“The physical man is a reality, and the moral man problematical”**. The shift from the ‘real’ to the ‘ideal’ cannot be affected as this kind paradigm shift because it leaves flesh and blood behind. It poses a dichotomy between **“inclination”** and **“duty”** that is impossible to surmount.
8. What is the solution according to Schiller? The existence of a **“transitional stage”** or **“third character”** that unites the real and the ideal. This third character – the aesthetics of play – is the bridge towards the moral. It dialectically unites the world of change, necessity and appearance with the world of form.
9. What problem has Enlightenment rationalism and political science created for itself that Greek culture in the golden period avoided? **It has attempted to “subdue the empirical man” within the political state. It has too quickly dispensed with the “anthropology” of the “whole man” by equating him/her with the citizen. The man of “time” is “enobled to the man of idea”**.
10. Why must politics become an “art” rather than a “science”? The **“political and educating artist”** must recognize that he/she is dealing with **“material man”** and effect the transition to the ideal gradually. The political artist must realize that he is dealing with real **“objective”** people as well as potentially ideal **“citizens”**. If it attempts to replace **“objective man”** with **“subjective man”** at a single swoop, it will fail. Objective man will come back to bite the political scientists. Or, even worse, politics will be transformed into a despotic instrumentalism that will paralyze the moral development of the individual and actually prevent freedom. A potentially **“hostile”, self-serving and insipid “individuality”** will result.
11. Schiller adapts the theory of stadial progress to his aesthetic theme? What is the distinction he draws between ‘savage’ and ‘barbarian’ society? **A savage society is dominated by nature and has no art (very bad anthropology although he modifies that position later). A barbaric society is intent on ‘domination’ of nature and does violence to “the manifold in nature”. Thus, modern society can be viewed as barbaric to the extent that it does violence to man’s whole being, a theme that gets taken up in the critique of industrialization especially.**
12. Schiller initiates a cultural critique of the “present age” that will become increasingly common in the nineteenth-century. How does this critique involve another dichotomy in terms of “class” analysis? **Schiller claims that the “masses” are simply slaves to their increasingly “wild” appetites (i.e. savages in modern society) while the “civilized classes” have lost all their vitality and have become entirely “lethargic”. Their only ambition is to protect their “wretched property”**.

13. What is the ruling principle of this “present age”? A **“materialism” that privileges “egotism”**. What is the irony of modern reason and its materialist culture? **Instead of allowing us to transcend the physical, “the fetters of the physical close more tightly around us.” Thus, we waver between “perversion” of desire (upper classes) and “savagism”; the “unnatural” and the merely “natural”. The Enlightenment has effected the “abuse of reason”.**
14. What is the appropriate historical comparison for Schiller? **The vitality of Greek reason that combined spirit with the senses. The Greek mind understood humanity because it appreciated aesthetics and fueled the “imagination of the “inner man”**.
15. What political tragedy happened with the decline of Greek civilization and the polis? Note that Schiller sums up European history basically in a paragraph. **Political organization “degenerated into a common and coarse mechanism” that constantly fragmented the whole through ever increasing specialization and separation and, although he doesn’t use the word, alienation (i.e. “enjoyment was separated from labour”, laws from customs, state from church, means from end). The modern society is a mechanistic world of specialized means.**
16. What badly requires cultivation in this mechanistic and “miserable” modern world? **The whole person, personal spirit, and the “concrete individual life”.**
17. Schiller uses the traditional terminology of humours in a new way to focus on the “heart”. What has become of the heart in the politics of modern society? **It has become “cold” and “narrow” caught up in its own specialized and self-interested domain.**
18. Despite his admiration for the Greeks, Schiller does not advocate a return to that society. His theory of progress is more complex than would allow for any such return. How does he assess the “improvement” that has occurred? **He regards it as necessary for the “progress of the race”. The Greeks reached a maximum that they could not go beyond. In order to go ‘beyond’, abstraction and its attendant specialization was the “only road open”. But the usurpation of the “world of sense” by “pure understanding”, while it helps the species has a horrendous effect on the individual. Progress has sacrificed the individual and even “humiliated, mutilated” the weak. In a specialized world, Schiller argues we must reassert the “totality of our being” if we wish to progress further.**
19. Although “humanity” has been debased, Enlightened reason has made some important achievements. What? **It has ridded the world of superstition and fanaticism and elevated free enquiry to a status formerly unheard of. The search for truth has been liberated. But what new error has this Enlightenment occasioned? It has separated “understanding” or analysis from the entire**

- character of the individual. It has separated the head from the heart. The “improvement of ideas” has not led to the improvement of people.**
20. What can't restore the lost totality that was once found among the Greeks? **The state or political science can't do it, since it has been a prime cause of the fragmentation of personality. Reforming the state will never restore the lost unity because the state is the product of an artificial and separating reason.**
 21. Why are liberal principles potentially dangerous in the present state of society for Schiller? **The majority of the people are ‘savages’ (note the conjunction of bad anthropology and social classification here) who have lots of energy but no understanding beyond sense impressions.**
 22. What is the irony for Schiller? **The “Negro” could conceivably demonstrate a richer or better integrated humanity than even the “modern thinker”. Such statements qualify Schiller earlier dismissal of ‘savages’.**
 23. What is the solution that could reintegrate the divided selves of modern life? **The “art of the beautiful”. What is the problem with viewing art and the artist as solutions? Art, like politics, has been prostituted to a materialistic and egoistic age. This is getting close to saying that the “marketplace” has become the enemy of the “true and the beautiful”.**
 24. Schiller tries to create a new role for art and the artist as a “purifier” of modern society. What is it? **The artist now becomes the person who blends the ideal with the real, the necessary with the eternal. The artist becomes a teacher of humanity. But not by being ‘didactic’, which is analytical, but by giving matter an “incarnate form” through “beauty. The education is an ‘aesthetic’ education that shows how noble is this thing called man. Art stands as the conscience of the age. What historical examples does he use to show that art can provide an alternate model of human dignity in even the most corrupt age? **Roman statues in an age of luxury. Nero’s Rome in terms of architecture.****
 25. Schiller argues that multiplying the beautiful will offer “symbols of perfection” for mankind and enrich the heart of living people. It illuminates the divinity within mankind without completely abstracting the human from the natural world. How does Schiller deploy the Kantian distinction? **He argues that it is only in art that transcendence and phenomena are unified and diversity is added to the “unity of the Ego”.**
 26. What is in the driver’s seat in this relationship between the transcendent and the phenomenological? **Clearly it is the form or the transcendent that is the chief attribute of the human; but, and this is important for Schiller, it cannot dispense with the diversity of the world or the sensuous. Form and content are combined, unified, and a novel reality is constructed.**

27. Why can't you dispense with the world of phenomena? **Schiller suggests that humans are "instinctual" beings who live in the world of sense. It is only through the sensual that one can "awaken and develop "what exists virtually in man". But the phenomenal world ties the "spirit" down. The content of the physical world needs to be combined with the "formal instinct" or it will only produce "accidents".**
28. How does Schiller describe the achievement of art? **As illuminating the "eternal" in the "particular". What does art do for the spectator? It momentarily abolishes time. What do we experience when we contemplate true art? The unity of our nature.**
29. Schiller gives an entirely new role or function or "office" to **culture** as the mediator between change (sensation) and immutability (timelessness). How does he describe **personality** in the context of culture? **He says that "personality is permanence in change". What does culture enable? It enables the personality to "develop" by providing it with more "virtualities". How does it support true reason or morality? It provides greater and greater "independence" of receptivity for the "determining faculty". THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THESE POTENTIALITIES ARE NOT DEVELOPED ABSTRACTLY BUT SYNTHETICALLY.**
30. How has this relationship been "inverted" by modernity? **It has been inverted by constructing an analytical world that "stifles" and subverts "personality. If man or the citizen is only an abstract form, then "he has no form, and the personality vanishes".**
31. What is it that art does that nothing else can do with respect to the relation between the sensual world and the world of understanding? **It imposes "limits" that temper both impulses. The two impulses of action – towards sense and towards understanding – are limited by each other in art. As long as man "gives himself up" to one or the other "impulsions" he cannot accomplish his "destiny".**
32. What is the new, third instinct that brings both forces together? **The "instinct of play" unites the "double action of the two other instincts". To play or to "take recreation" is also an enjoyment that links "happiness to perfection". It gives "form to matter and reality to form".**
33. What does art have to do to effect this "consummation of humanity"? **It has to create "living forms". What's another word for this achievement rightly understood? Beauty. What is beauty in terms of art? A "happy medium between law and necessity" that is "emancipated from the pressure of both".**
34. Why is it a serious error to think that reducing art to "mere play" somehow lessens its value? **Schiller argues that a man is only a complete "person"**

- when he/she plays. Playfulness has a “great and deep meaning”, because it “irresistibly” carries us away and makes time stop. Playfulness achieves as close to human perfection as it gets when form and content are in equilibrium. Of course, there is no perfect equilibrium but there are approximations that can give us an inclination of perfection.
35. The intellect and feeling are combined in play and, in great art, their excesses are limited. But art will show its origins and oscillate from one side to the other. How will this be seen? **Some art will demonstrate a “gentle and graceful beauty” (intellectual) while other art will have an “energetic beauty” (feeling).** How can this understanding help us to appreciate the historical context of art? **In more energetic societies art will be “gigantic”, “extravagant” and “sublime”. In more analytical societies, art will be more “harmonic” and “polished”. Thus there are “two sorts of experimental beauty” that correspond to two different “instincts” and to different stages in human evolution. But the ideal and the next stage is the “harmonious energy of the sensuous and spiritual”.**
36. What does beauty do with respect to these two states of vitality and reflection, passivity and activity? **It “plants us” in a middle state that “weds the two opposed conditions of feeling and thinking”. This dialectic overcoming by beauty is for Schiller the “clue” to the whole “labyrinth of aesthetics”.**
37. Now Schiller wants to get more philosophical about how art works to combine contradictions in human nature. He talks about the passive and active states as “empty infiniteness” receiving “content”. How does he view use Kant? **He says that just as we need the concept of absolute space and time in order to determine “place” and “a representation of an instant”, relations that are clearly distinct must be rendered “reciprocal” if practical humanity is to operate.**
38. How does this Kantian insight relate to beauty? **If human nature is to develop then beauty needs to mediate the transition “from feeling to thought”. Thought may be superior, but without the content provided by feeling it is only an abstraction.**
39. Schiller thinks that the reader may argue that his analysis of beauty undermines the transcendent “freedom of the intellectual faculties” and even “oppress positively that “freedom”. How does he respond to that critique and affirm the role of art and beauty? **He says that, while an “infinite mind” would certainly be “free”, we as humans have “finite” minds. We can only achieve understanding, including an understanding of self, though limitation.**
40. How does he use Kant to make this distinction? **He says that the “transcendental philosopher” (i.e. Kant) has no problem with this. A good Kantian isn’t interested in knowledge separate from experience. A good**

- Kantian understands that each of these two “fundamental impulses” plays a role in creating knowledge.**
41. What else does a good Kantian affirm? **The notion of “the mind itself, -- its selfhood – is distinguished from these two motors”. Mind is neither matter nor form but combines both. Similarly, art is neither matter nor form but combines both. The artistic impulse mirrors the freedom of the mind. “the will preserves an entire freedom between them both.”**
 42. Kant’s philosophy underlines the freedom of the will as a ‘practical’ reality but certainly not as a metaphysical assumption. **Schiller emphasized the “will” as “power”. He says “there is in man no other power than his will; and death alone, which destroys man, or some privation of self-consciousness, is the only than that can rob man of his internal freedom.” SO SCHILLER’S IS A PHILOSOPHY OF THE FREEDOM OF THE SELF AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE FREEDOM OF THE ARTIST. THE ARTIST MIGHT BE INFLUENCED BY HIS OR HER SOCIETY, BUT FREEDOM OF WILL MAKES THE ARTIST APART FROM AND ABOVE A PARTICULAR SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. THIS IS AN ARGUMENT FOR THE ARTIST AS THE PERSON MOST TRUE TO HIS/HER INDIVIDUALITY. THIS IS AN ARGUMENT FOR ARTISTIC FREEDOM.*******
 43. Why is art the most important medium of communication in the modern age? **The failure of the Enlightenment is that it attempted to usurp the “priority of sensuous impulsion”. But all of human history has affirmed that the “sensuous impulse comes into play before the rational impulse”. Therefore, any attempted usurpation is bound to fail unless mediated. IN OTHER WORDS, WE CAN ONLY GET TO THE IDEAL BY THE ROUTE OF ART. OTHERWISE THE ANTAGONISMS BETWEEN SENSE AND REASON WILL END UP AS A NEGATION.**
 44. What is the peculiar character of the “aesthetic state”? What is the proper “state of mind” of the artist? **It is a state of unconditioned nothingness (but not a void) and total freedom. It should be indifferent to profit, not interested in discovering any truth (other than its own), not related to moral duty, not related to any character. It is akin to a second state of creation where all things are possible because unconditioned. It is the state of highest reality because it has no limits. It is a disposition of mind that “removes all limitation from the totality of human nature” and “must also remove from it every social expression of the same”. HERE IS THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT UNSULLIED BY SOCIAL CONTEXT OR CONTENT.**
 45. What does the aesthetic become for Schiller? **“A complete whole in itself” outside of time, humanity pure without impression.” THIS IS A NOTION OF ARTISTIC GENIUS IS IT NOT? SCHILLER GOES ON TO DESCRIBE THIS AS ‘HIGH INDIFFERENCE AND FREEDOM OF**

- MIND, UNITED WITH POWER AND ELASTICITY”. THIS SEPARATES THE ARTIST FROM SOCIETY DOES IT NOT? THIS IS HARDLY A DEFINITION OF THE ARTIST THAT WOULD HAVE APPLIED TO EARLIER PERIODS. MOREOVER, IT COMPLETELY SEVERS ART FROM THE CRAFTS.**
46. How does Schiller apply this model to the fine arts? **He says that different fine arts will have a greater or lesser affinity with sense (i.e. music) and imagination (i.e. poetry), but that ALL OF THE FINE ARTS WILL APPROACH THIS “DISPOSITION” AS THEY APPROACH “GREATNESS”. THE “PERFECT STYLE” CONSISTS IN KNOWING HOW TO REMOVE “SPECIFIC LIMITS” THAT GET IN THE WAY OF “ENOBLING THE MIND”.**
47. Eventually all great art subjects matter to the laws of form, thereby “elevating” the mind. “True aesthetic liberty” can only adhere to the “form”. “The form should do everything”. **“The magic circle of the artist” is similar to the “hands of the creator”.**
48. What is the major problem with artistic genius in the modern age? **Few people are equipped to appreciate it. The two kinds of people – those who focus on the moral and those who focus on the physical – lack the aesthetic temperament to judge art. Hence the importance of the critic, who does know.**
49. What impulse of eighteenth-century literature does Schiller want to explode? **It’s didactic, moralizing quality. THE AESTHETIC MUST COME FIRST AND THE MORAL SECOND. INDIVIDUALS CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO DEVELOP THEIR MORAL POTENTIAL UNLESS THEY ARE FIRST EDUCATED IN THE PROPER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORM AND MATTER. “SPIRITUAL MAN” DEVELOPS ACCORDING THE LAWS OF LIBERTY, AND THOSE LAWS ARE DEVELOPED MOST NATURALLY IN THE AESTHETIC REALM, WITH THE “SUBMISSION OF MAN” TO FORM.**
50. What astonishing assumption does Schiller make about the relationship between aesthetics and morality? **He suggests that once a person has developed a clear aesthetic sense, “profundity” and “elevated sentiments” will naturally follow. Schiller has already in effect separated aesthetics from didactic morality and made aesthetics function autonomously. Why he would assume a “transition” from the aesthetic to the moral realm is not absolutely clear to me. To an extent, it is fairly clear to what extent Schiller regards the “laws of the beautiful” as connected with our “spiritual nature”. It is even fairly clear why aesthetics is transitional to the extent that it deals with the “sphere of happiness” or enjoyment that relates matter to form while tending towards a destruction of the former. But why would anyone move to the next stage**

- inevitably? What if there is no next stage? Doesn't happiness conflict with duty in Kantian ethics? Isn't the moulding of the aesthetic self a complete and unified project in itself?**
51. In Letter XXIV, Schiller returns to an earlier theme, that of progressive “stages of development” in the history of humanity. Now, however, he is able to insert the role of the beautiful in the development of more liberated cultures. He interestingly qualifies his earlier Eurocentric assertions about ‘savages’ not having much of an aesthetic sense. But he still dismisses primitive societies as a “coddish condition”. He also strictures (in Letter XXVI) nomadic society as a “multitude” with “no individual humanity”. It’s certainly Europe that he prefers, and he describes it like Rousseau as a “fortunate zone” where activity draws out the aesthetic impulse. But that does not change the fact that he wants to seriously challenge some aspects of modernity, although certainly not in the manner of a Rousseau. He repeats his assessment of modern society as in some ways barbaric and suggests that **“reason mistakes its object and applies its categorical imperative to matter”**. **Thus modernity lacks the true understanding of form and content that aesthetics discovers. It cannot in this form of “reason” escape the pull and priority of “sensuousness” and ends up in a “utilitarian” cul de sac. The philosophy of materialism and egoistic individualism clearly for him impoverishes the human.**
52. Schiller again contrasts the impoverishment of modernity with the richness of Greek culture. What interesting example does he provide? **He talks about the “charming outline of humanity in Greek fable”**. **A very different interpretation from Adorno you might notice? Adorno thinks that Greek myth already highlights the dominating, property owning capitalist.**
53. Wherever the aesthetic spirit exists, mankind is on the way to escaping the confines of matter and moving towards form. What does Schiller say about the relationship between aesthetic and personal development? **He argues that the development of personality (of Ego) is dependent upon the aesthetic impulse. With a sense of beauty the dependence on nature begins to cease and the life of independent freedom begins. This is an interesting argument about the relationship between aesthetics and personality formation, but it is a bit undeveloped in these Letters.**
54. Now comes perhaps the most interesting part of the Letters (i.e. Letter XXVI) where Schiller identifies the initial causal mechanism that sets off the aesthetic impulse. What on earth could that be? **Making oneself beautiful, adorning oneself. This is what first makes a person an “independent thing”. Fashion is the first activity in the development of the fine arts. Because you have no restrictions with respect to the “art of appearance”. This is the first outpost of the “empire of the beautiful”**.

55. Why can realism never be art? **It doesn't appreciate the importance of adornment or of form. Realism reflects materialism and detracts from and imprisons, the will.**
56. Why are moralists like Rousseau totally wrong-headed when they object to the manners and fashions of polite society? **They fail to realize that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with taste and that so-called artificiality is really an assertion of the liberty of form. What is a problem is not the fashions or culture of modern times but their contamination by either a sensuous vulgarity (not a serious problem) and by a materialist culture of self-interested "desire" (a much more serious problem). Schiller argues that we need more, not less, of these manifestations of "taste".**
57. Why is Rousseau's solution of a simpler society not a consideration for Schiller? **Such a primitive "return" would offer no enlargement of possibilities and would not speak to man's destiny. Modern taste may appear "superficial" for those who seek "solidity", but the surface of things is one of the places that we "play" with forms. And there is absolutely nothing superficial about play.**
58. Preferring form to substance while combining both is the essence of 'embellishment' and the foundation of the fine arts. It distinguishes the "play" of humans from the "styled play" of animals and it shows that we are meant to be "emancipated in the realm of form" in "the supreme freedom of the beautiful". **Note how Schiller is making the 'beautiful' something more than a transitional stage here when he uses terms like "supreme freedom" to describe it. We are on the way, I think, to "art for art's sake" and "truth is beauty and beauty is truth".**
59. Both animals and humans "play", but for Schiller "aesthetic play" marks a qualitative difference. **The play instinct satisfies a "law, which speaks in his breast, although quite low as yet" in the move to adorn one's person. Gradually, form becomes ever more reliant on itself and its own laws, leading humans away from the realm of necessity.**
60. How is the historical genesis of love between men and women an important indicator of aesthetic progress for Schiller? **The civilized lover emancipates himself from the "fetters of selfish desire" and contemplates the "beauty" of the object of love. Love is further abstracted from sensual pleasure to the extent that it respects the "liberty" of the other. It wishes to "please her liberty". It brings two different and contrasting natures into union that is the "model of free alliance". Female "weakness becomes sacred" and, as an extension, all weakness becomes an occasion for generosity. Thus, Schiller praises the contribution of aesthetics (the aesthetics of love) to morality. Incidentally, he provides a thematic for the author of *Homo Ludens* (a very interesting book by Johan Huizinga that we might have usefully**

- complemented Schiller's work with). By the way, Huizinga takes issue with Schiller's notion of a play instinct and derives the higher functions of art to an *agonistic* principle of *agonism* (competition or contest as play). It is not clear that Huizinga really understands Schiller's argument, since the latter's so-called 'play instinct' is modified by social stages and the 'play instinct' alone cannot account for the higher forms of art.
61. Schiller sums up the theme with which he began these Letters by referring back to the role and function of the state. The political state can only subdue nature, it cannot create morality. The moral state, as an ethical idea, can outline the rationale for the subjection of the individual will to the universal or general will. But these two cannot inform one another or guarantee the social nature of man. **It is the aesthetic state or beauty that "creates harmony in the individual" and can bring "harmony into society". It is only the aesthetic that gives the individual a social character to the extent that is "communicated" and enjoyed and celebrated as a society (Schiller uses the word "race"). Beauty takes us outside of personal inclination; to the extent that it is shared, it defines the social. Otherwise, this thing that we call 'society' is just a mechanistic relationship of egoistic individuals. Good taste combines as it enobles; it moves society from the realm of necessity towards the ideal. A political utopia without 'taste' would be inconceivable.**
62. Schiller ends with some fascinating comments. What do they imply? **He suggests that the "idea of equality" only makes sense if individuals have cultivated their "aesthetic natures". He thinks it is individually achievable, but not easy to institutionalize socially. He argues that in practice it will only appear in "select circles" and constitute an "ideal" alternative to the material world. SCHILLER HAS DRAWN A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE WORLD OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE MATERIAL WORLD. HE HAS MADE IT THE PRESERVE OF A FEW RATHER THAN SOMETHING THAT CAN EASILY BE GENERALIZED. HE HAS MADE THE ARTIST, THE PATRON (TO THE EXTENT THAT HE/SHE IS A GENUINE PERSON OF TASTE) AND THE CRITIC THE ARBITERS OF A TASTE THAT CANNOT BE DEMOCRATIZED. HE HAS EFFECTIVELY CREATED A NEW AND HIGHLY ELITIST NOTION OF 'CULTURE' AND SEPARATED THE SAME FROM 'SOCIETY'. THERE IS AN INKLING AND UNDERCURRENT HERE, PERHAPS, OF THE ALIENATION OF THE ROMANTIC ARTIST FROM A CORRUPT SOCIETY.**

The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge

1. The title of this book is both provocative and misleading. Why and how? **It is provocative because it is right up front about ‘postmodernity’ being, not just being a fashionable mode in literature, but being a completely ‘new’ condition in which to situate knowledge wherein all “grand narratives” are, or should be, in the process of being rejected. It is misleading because it is not simply a “report”, although it may look like that in its stress on the shift to an information society and the need to refashion the university away from “disciplines” and the “search for the truth” into knowledge processing. But that theme masks a very revolutionary perspective that “problematizes” and undermines the integrated ‘systems’ run by ‘experts’ approach that dominates our technological/information society.**
2. What kind of approach does Lyotard want to take to knowledge construction? **He takes an approach that focuses on “discourse”.** How is this approach different from and in opposition to the discourse theory of Jurgen Habermas? **Instead of viewing discourse or argument as something that, at least in “principle”, leads to consensus, Lyotard wants to suggest that “language games” make any consensus building temporary. In our distinctly postmodern environment, they “localize” any discursive agreements.** How does Lyotard feel personally about this absence of any possibility of universality? **He welcomes it.**
3. What discourse has come to “dominate” knowledge production in the last 40 years? **Scientific discourse of a particular kind, i.e. that related to knowledge production in terms of computerized language.**
4. What is the probable effect of the “proliferation of information-processing machines”? **It will transform the way that knowledge is processed, communicated and used.** How do the new technologies relate to capitalism? **Knowledge production and communication increasingly will depend on its value as a “market commodity”.** What new stage of capitalist-technological society is emerging? **A society where knowledge is power and access to highly sophisticated databanks determines the extent of that power.**
5. What two institutions are becoming increasingly “outdated” with respect to this new “knowledge-based” economy (i.e. the *mercantilization of knowledge*)? **The nation state and the traditional university.** What new economic power conclusively demonstrates the vulnerability of the nation state and the altered position of the university? **The multinational corporation, whose impact makes nation states passive and pressures governments to make higher education conform to corporate values of instrumentality, functionality, and vendibility.**

6. What alternative to capitalism is becoming increasingly less relevant in the light of new technologies and their relation to decision making? **The socialist or communist alternative.** What are all possible alternatives being absorbed by? **The paradigm of a system based on the communication of information that is dedicated to no other value than the “optimization of its own performance”.** Who, for Lyotard, is the sociological theorist who best represents this systems approach in its modern form? **Niklas Luhman.** **Of course, in the earlier stages of development, the representative thinkers would have been Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons.** **But Luhman’s hypothesis of a system generating an increasingly “fine capacity for discrimination” aptly fits the new emphasis on computers and communication.**
7. For Lyotard, the *systems approach* is already guiding decisions of firms and government agencies towards a “computerization of society”. What is this explicit and implicit contradiction and inherent intellectual weakness? **It is based on a scientific “grand narrative” of accumulated progress in terms of rational efficiency that was “exploded” as early as the 1960s, not only by the philosophy of science but also by scientific practice itself.**
8. What in a nutshell was the problem identified by people like Thomas Kuhn and scientific practitioners? **Science does not develop ‘rationally’ or ‘progressively’ but by the imaginative exploration of ‘anomalies’ that leads to paradigm shifts.** **Ultimately, the more advanced science becomes, the less law directed it discovers nature to be and the less it can develop solutions in terms like “efficiency”.**
9. What have scientists “discovered” about the nature of their own knowledge? **Science does not progress cumulatively but by the “generation of new ideas”.** **THEREFORE, SCIENCE NEEDS DIFFERENCE AND MULTIPLE OPTIONS TO PROGRESS.** **SCIENCE AT THE FRONTIERS HAS BECOME POSTMODERN.**
10. What issue of “legitimization” has demoralized many scientists? **They can no longer claim absolute legitimacy or superiority for many of their statements?**
11. Lyotard does not believe that scientific discourse is as divorced from other kinds of Occidental discourse as many people seem to think? What do the language paradigms of the West tend to share? **They are both preoccupied with affirming “decidability” (Derrida) and asserting “authority”.** **They have an overall obsession with “legitimacy”.** **Once legitimacy is established, authority can be assumed and “power” can be exercised.** What can you assume about Lyotard’s approach given this interesting analysis of the obsession with “legitimacy”? **He is going to be opposed to any theoretical framework, such as that of Habermas that claims to be establishing universal rules or axioms of “legitimacy”.** **At the very least, he will view such agendas as a**

waste of time in the postmodern age; at the worst he will denounce these “totalizing” schemes as “terrorist”.

12. Scientific discourse is closer to other kinds of discourse than it often conceives itself. As a sub-set of discourse it conforms to the **language games** that characterize speech in general. Lyotard wants to tease out the basic kinds of language games that are used in **practical speech**. Why? **He wants to show how the rules of 1. denotative 2. performative and 3. prescriptive speech statements conform more to the “moves” in a “language game” that are capable of considerable modification and innovation. Language games are “agonistic” in the sense that they inherently “playful competitions”. A good analogy is a poker game with its “stakes”.**
13. Thus, as opposed to Habermas, the “rules” of language games for Lyotard do not privilege “consensus” but “variety” within a highly flexible communicative order. What is the implication for an analysis of the “social bond”? **All hopes of an absolute harmonization of the “needs and hopes of individuals or groups” and the universal “functions guaranteed by the system” are illusory because the communicative game contains too many variables.**
14. Habermas, and even Parsons before him, is optimistic about the potential fit between individuals and the collective. What is different and even “paranoid” about the *systems* theory of someone like Niklas Luhman (Habermas’s opponent)? **Modern systems theorists realize that that there is no easy fit; they simply make “systemic self-regulation” as a “sealed circle of facts and interpretations” their analytical core.**
15. In the light of the ever-increasing strengths and encroachment of the *system* and its *systems*, what posture have critics (i.e. like the members of the Frankfurt School) tended to adopt? **An extremely “pessimistic” view. They try to maintain the “principle of opposition” but, increasingly, they cannot find any social purchase for their belief as the Marxist scenario becomes less feasible.**
16. Another unrealistic approach (according to Lyotard) is offered by a hermeneutics that has its roots in Renaissance humanism, i.e. to affirm the human against the system. Why is this “out of step with the most vital modes of postmodernity”? **This traditional appeal to an organic society relies heavily on the concept of a ‘self’ (subjective or not) that can be understood and cultivated to realize its potential. But postmodernity decentres the self. It shows us that the self is simply a “nodal point” of communication with the ability to make “moves” in language games.**
17. What does the “social bond” become for Lyotard? **It becomes itself a “language game” or a “game of inquiry”.** How does this take on language games problematize both “communicative action” (Habermas) and systems theory

(Luhman)? **It shows that communication has to be more complex than manipulated versus full discourse. It shows that the system can never take into account the variety of moves that “addressees” and “referents” can make that “produces” knowledge. Every move on the part of the system, or those who represent it, will give rise to countermoves.**

18. Why does the system actually “require” the flexibility of players and language games? **Systems need “new” information to grow. A perfectly efficient system would be a static bureaucracy that would fossilize change and prevent that which goes under the name of “progress”. It is not, however, progress towards some kind of rational efficiency, but the production of “new ideas” that the system requires.**
19. What is the main difference between scientific language and other kinds of language? **It is highly “denotative” (but not only that) and 1) demands repeated access to the information, 2) makes statements that ‘experts’ must agree to be relevant. But it is not immune by any means to other kinds of language.**
20. What important difference between scientific “research” and “teaching” does Lyotard want to illuminate? **So-called ‘pure’ scientific research focuses heavily on “verification” and “falsifiability” in an overwhelming “denotative” paradigm. But scientific teaching and collaboration depends on a ‘community’ of senders and recipients (a kind of social bond) for whom all sorts of language games very much apply. In fact, the generation of scientific knowledge has a great deal more to do with the latter than with the former**
21. What astonishing kind of language statement has and does science make use of that *should not be part of its language game*? **The grand narrative or a ‘story’ of its development. Narratives are, in scientific terms, traditional language structures more closely related to myth than to science.**
22. Lyotard believes that all “grand narratives” – scientific or otherwise – are under censure in our postmodern age because they restrict freer “play” within language games. They restrict the flow of information and exclude potential players. But the narrative role and function provides “meaning” and an organization of knowledge that cannot easily be dismissed with. **So narratives survive, proliferate and combine at the “local level”. Local narratives replace grand narratives as ways of knowing and communicating information.**
23. What does most hegemonic scientific discourse obscure? **It obscures the fact that most of the development/progress/innovation in science is generated within these local narratives that the grand narrative of science dismisses as myth and superstition. Science, like western thought generally, pretends**

that it is rational, efficient and superior and has “legitimacy”. But it hides the fact that it is the “ideology” of particular communities.

24. How has science made a postmodern “move” away from **universal legitimization**? Modern science no longer needs universals. It has gone through its “legitimization crisis” and has come through the other end. How? **Modern, or should we say ‘postmodern’ science no longer requires the attribute and legitimization in terms of “the search for truth’. It recognizes itself as a language game whose rules are imbedded within that game. It “justifies” itself in terms of the development of “new ideas”. It uses axiomatic frameworks called ‘paradigms’ as temporary consensus to the extent that they generate those ideas. But it often produces new ideas by problematizing those paradigms and illuminating anomalies within them.**
25. What two non-scientific “grand narrative” does Lyotard believe requires the same kind of “debunking” as the “search for truth”? **The notion of some ideal humanity. And the notion of personal freedom, autonomy and self-actualization.** Why does Lyotard believe that both points of departure for legitimization are flawed? **There is no ideal community (Hegel) nor ideal self (Kant).**
26. How does Lyotard unpack the notion of humanity that has been so important for hermeneutics? **He describes it as an ideal “humanity”. This makes a universal unicity the hero of a grand narrative and justifies many of the pretensions of the state and political science. This narrative “hero of some idealized liberty”, says Lyotard, resembles the increasingly defunct “hero of knowledge” that used to inform science.**
27. The “search for truth” of course is a rationale for the modern university as envisioned by Wilhelm von Humboldt’s University of Berlin that was founded between 1807 and 1810. What assumption did von Humboldt make about this search for truth? **That it “coincided with the pursuit of just ends in moral and political life”. How did this application to higher education transform the grand narrative of the “people” as hero? It changed the hero of the saga from the undifferentiated and real people to “the spirit of the people”. Through higher education, the people were to “become spirit”. All of the disciplines were separate in focus, but linked in theory, to this “ideal”.**
28. Why does Lyotard have little patience for this vision of the university as specialization within idealization? **He suggests that this “speculative University” betrays its own “project of totalization”. He says that it is “one solution” in the legitimization of knowledge. It is a metanarrative that still operates in academic circles that is as “exclusive” as it is totalizing. And it is “immoral” to the extent that the “spirit of the people” prevents real people and groups from “self-actualization”.**

29. How does this vision of the university reinforce the totalizing character of the state? **It works hand in hand with the concept of the ‘state’ to make some “collective will” the determinant of “citizenship”.**
30. What about the other path of relevance, the one that leads towards the emancipation of self? What does Lyotard have to say about that kind of individual freedom to critique? **In this model, knowledge or truth is no longer the “subject” but is in service of the subject. Knowledge is no longer an end, but a means to an end. The subject or university professor has “freedom to critique” without interference (the intellectual premise, by the way, for tenure). Free inquiry not only to discover truth but also to uncover abuses made in the name of the truth.**
31. This freedom of inquiry and discourse may sound better than a now totally exploded idealism. It is certainly the path that Habermas wants to take. Why is it a problem for Lyotard? **It remains a totalizing agenda because it defines the self in terms of freedom and finds its reference point and legitimacy in an “autonomous collectivity”. It can relatively easily transform itself into tyranny, as the original Marxist emphasis on emancipation lent itself to Stalinism.**
32. Both the narrative of speculation and the narrative of freedom emphasize *ends* of action rather than *means* and subordinate the latter to the former. **This is simply not on for Lyotard, who views morality and emancipation in terms of the alternative moves available within the means. Thus, Lyotard wants to escape the legitimization process in order to place emphasis on strategies within language games. There is no unilateral denotative structure (speculation) or prescriptive (freedom) structure being invoked, just moves and stakes in the game.**
33. Why have the disciplines become a dead end and inhibiting factor as far as the production of knowledge is concerned? **They have become so intricate and compartmentalized that no one can master them all. Therefore, knowledge will be produced at the frontiers and intersections of those disciplines rather than within their core.**
34. What stands in the way of these new developments? **Outdated structures are being maintained as artificial power bases. Where these are eroding (as they are already) a “mourning” process is still in effect that gets in the way of embracing the game in postmodern times. An older generation is bemoaning the “crisis of the university”. Philosophers like Habermas are wasting considerable energy trying to shore up an Enlightenment that has already outgrown its legitimization crisis (at least as far as science is concerned). Habermas and others in the Frankfurt School are still preoccupied with a Positivism that had little to do with what is vibrant in modern science.**

35. It might be suggested that Lyotard's embrace of postmodernity is still subject to the critique of Habermas that postmodernity is inherently "conservative" to the extent that it props up structures and systems that oppress us. Lyotard understands that critique and has little time for the "tyranny" of systems. Why then is he still positive about trends in postmodernity? **First, his analysis of systems a la Luhman suggests that systems cannot be maintained without new information and new information cannot be generated by an efficiency ethic or without the relinquishing of power. Second, Lyotard argues that the only requirement for real (as opposed to theoretical) emancipation is the availability of information. Third, given the proliferation of computerized information by various sources, it will be difficult for those who 'manage' systems to maintain control. Lyotard is not completely naïve about power relationships and structural restraints in society, but he suggests that even the systems themselves will ossify in a modern world unless they allow for more players with more moves in the complex language games. They must even allow for the creation of "new rules". Formal systems have "internal limitations"; unless they allow for "paradoxicality" they cannot maintain themselves.**
36. It might be argued that Lyotard's analysis is not borne out by historical experience, in particular the history of a technology that has been dominated by so-called experts, arguably at the expense of real people (be they citizens or players). How does Lyotard respond to this argument? **In the first instance, he agrees. Indeed, he outlines a history of technology, where instruments have moved from prosthetic aids to scientific investigations to the most important of all commodities in the late modern period of capitalism and computers. What makes modern technology potentially tyrannical is its self-reinforcing emphasis on performativity that effectively allows a technological society to legitimize itself. Thus, now in addition to denotive and prescriptive games, technology creates a brand new game based on its own efficiency in terms of performativity. Performance justifies the power and authority of technological experts.**
37. Lyotard is also very clear about the effects that this performativity criterion works in terms of the inputs and outputs of higher education. **He suggests that the university is replacing "emancipationist humanism" with "professional training" and is producing two categories of graduates – a "professional intelligenza" and a "technical intelligenza" – who bear increasingly less of a resemblance to the students of old and who expect to be educated "a la carte" and continuously as necessary for the needs of the system.**
38. What happens the minute that "knowledge as an end" or "personal emancipation" ceases to be a function of the university. **It loses its franchise as the producer of knowledge and has to compete with a lot of extra university institutions for funding.**

39. What happens to university teachers as the new and more integrated (in social networks) university fills out its new mould? **Professors become dispensable; they can be replaced by videotapes and, especially, “data banks” that can deliver information in a more timely and strategic fashion. The emphasis increasingly is on the needs of the learning in terms of the requirements of the system rather than the knowledge of the teacher.**
40. But Lyotard is not all about gloom and doom from the tomb of the traditional university. What is the most potentially liberating aspect of these developments? **They privilege creative and collaborative problem solving because the competitive edge between knowledge creators and the frontiers of knowledge creation will demand ‘paradoxicality’ and ‘paralogy’. The traditional university may be in ‘ruins’ but the postmodern institute will emerge from those ruins.**
41. What is the net result of the legitimization crisis in knowledge? Just as science has been set free by this escape from universal *legitimization*, so too other discourses will free up their potential once the tendency towards determinism so characteristic of Occidental thought is shaken off. What will this freeing up of discourse mean for knowledge and the university? **It will mean a number of things. First, it will mean “interdisciplinarity” because the legitimacy and tyranny of the disciplines will be called into question. Second, It will mean a continual splintering off of faculties and institutes because these will be “problem based”. Third, it will necessitate the creation of new and vibrant ‘programs’ that stimulate the production of new knowledge. In general terms with respect to knowledge production, it will imply greater autonomy for those investigating social, political and ethical practice. It will require a freeing up of the ‘imagination’ that further implies far greater collaborative ‘brainstorming’ in order to maximize the possible moves in language games that generate new insights. It will mean that knowledge itself will be evaluated, as in science, increasingly by the new ideas that emerge from praxis, rather than by conformity to rigid structures. *******
42. As these necessary trends proliferate, what understanding (that is already happening in science) will become perfectly clear and will militate against the tyranny of technological systems based on efficiency? **To the extent that creative problem solving is institutionalized, it will become obvious that technological legitimization (i.e. in terms of efficiency) will fall victim to the fate of all previous legitimizations. IT WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS THAT THE CRITERIA OF PERFORMATIVITY IS DEEPLY FLAWED AND THE SYTEMS UPON WHICH IT IS BASED UNSUSTAINABLE. NEW KNOWLEDGE IS BASED ON EXPLORING PARADOXES AND ANOMOLIES, NOT ON ENHANCING EFFICIENCY CRITERIA. BUREAUCRATIC POWER MAY BE A HISTORICAL REALITY, BUT LIKE ‘NORMAL SCIENCE’, IT MUST END UP BEING AN EPISODE SINCE IT IS INTERNALLY CONTRADICTORY. AN**

ETHIC OF EFFICIENCY IS ANYTHING BUT EFFICIENT WHEN IT COMES TO GENERATING NEW IDEAS!!!

43. Lyotard returns to the theme that has dominated this little book. **He points out that all the recent developments in science suggest that it is not regularities but irregularities (possibility of moves) that are now the focus of the best and most innovative science. The postmodern norm is not predictability but unpredictability. The process of developing new ideas is not to limit the flow of information within regular bureaucratic channels but to allow it to flow within new directions. It will be difficult for bureaucratic power brokers to damn up these flows of information, partly because it would not be to their advantage to do so.**
44. So, the traditional university is a thing of the past and Lyotard refuses to mourn its demise. **But he does not believe that the bureaucratic technological society will outlive it very long either. The world of discourse is dividing into highly creative *fracta* or fragments of meaning or mini-narratives. Since a technological society is also a world of discourse, Lyotard thinks that it must follow that path. The world we live in is highly destabilized, but not the less moral or meaningful for all that.**
45. Lyotard ends this treatise with a *scathing* condemnation of the technological society of experts. **He roundly criticizes Niklas Luhman as its representative social theorist. He admits that it is a tyrannical system bent on *domination* and control of all communication in a self-referential cycle. HE EXTENDS THIS CRITIQUE TO UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS WHO ARE 'ARROGANT'. He argues that these people should be viewed as the real TERRORISTS of our age who issue mental death by excluding objectors.**
46. What kind of system do the technocrats advocate and why must it fail? **They advocate a "closed system" but only an "open system" that allows for "difference" can generate new knowledge.**
47. What's postmodern culture resemble when compared to the utopian visions of the technocrats? **A monster "formed by the interweaving of various networks of heteromorphous classes of utterances (denotative, prescriptive, performative, technical, evaluative, etc.)."**
48. What is all that it would take to tip the scales from a technocratic society to a postmodern and 'monstrous' (in the most positive way) one? **Universal access to information. Thus the web can become a place to communicate the most valuable commodity of our age – information. Computerization could serve the playful element in cultural combinations communicated through language games rather than oppressing it.**

49. What is Lyotard's concluding analysis of the debate between Habermas and Luhman? **Habermas's cause is a "good one" in attempting to remove the hegemony of 'systems' that dominate what is left of the lifeworld. But his solution suffers from all of the problems of the legitimizing rationales we have inherited from the Enlightenment. Consensus is not only an "outmoded" value but also a "suspect" one.**
50. What pattern is all social interaction now taking for Lyotard? **It is moving away from outdated universals towards intermittent groupings, temporary contracts, and political alliances. While these are 'ambiguous' we shouldn't mourn the loss of universals that made us less free while they pretended to promise a false emancipation. Emancipation comes from playing the game.**
51. We haven't talked much about Schiller here. If you read the essay at the end of the book entitled "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" you will see that the issue of aesthetics looms very large in Lyotard's analysis. Why then didn't he discuss it in *The Postmodern Condition*? **There could be multiple reasons for this, including the fact that this is a report on trends in higher education, the world of the practical, whereas fine arts for Lyotard is all about the world of the possible. Also, Lyotard's analysis of postmodern art is complex and he locates much of it in the high modern period. So teasing out the analysis of an art that explores the art of the possible before the disciplines get around to it might be difficult to explain in this context. But, and this is more important, Lyotard's discussion of paradoxes and anomalies is inherently aesthetic to the extent that it means that the viewer/thinker/writer is problematizing accepted paradigms.**
52. How do you think would Lyotard discuss Schiller? **You might have some interesting answers of your own. Here is a brief sketch of what I 'think' he might say. On the one hand, he might admire the significance that Schiller attaches to 'creative play'. I'm not sure what he would say about Schiller's location of play in the 'superficial' realm of manners and fashions – doesn't seem to be a Lyotard theme, certainly. For Lyotard artistic play seems to be a much more serious proposition (although he does understand playfulness) and he leans to the sublime rather than the superficial. And, for sure, Lyotard would have some very serious objections to Schiller. First, Schiller's notion of beauty falls into the trap, for Lyotard, of idealizing and abstracting humanity. Second, Schiller's blending of form and content traps art into a critical and highly elitist formula that privileges 'timelessness' and further undermines the full human potential for change. Third, Schiller's mystical unity of form and content suggests that form should dominate the formula, thereby limiting the number of moves that art can make. Fourth, Schiller does not want to explore the function of art in "problematizing" the given and shaking up the "manifold" and that is Lyotard's theme with respect to postmodern art.**

53. **Of course, for Lyotard, Schiller is part of all of those people who feel that they have to legitimize playfulness within an understanding of *Bildung* or appropriate cultivation and character development that makes art and fine arts and the humanities and hermeneutics intolerable to Lyotard. The concept of a holistic person puts character and morality into a trap. It justifies the hegemony of an institution – the university – that services elites and reinforces a very Occidental notion of the integration of reason and feeling. In any case, in the postmodern period, it culminates in the irrelevance of nostalgia, whether it be for ancient Greece or the traditional university.**

JULIETTE

The Marquis de Sade is the author *par excellence* of the so-called *black enlightenment*. He explores the dark side of human nature and advocates criminal behaviour without limits. The book *Juliette* is unusual, not the least because its ideal criminal type is a relatively young woman. While Juliette has a few stereotypical female attributes, she also has characteristics that place her into an entirely new category of the female, namely:

1. unconditional lust
2. intelligence and independence of mind
3. willingness to expose the hypocrisy and flaunt socio-cultural expectations
4. a superb sense of self and precise attention to self-interest
5. the ability to compete with and even harangue powerful male superiors

While Juliette's mentoring by like-minded males, and her willingness to use her female attributes and feminine wiles to get what she wants in a male dominated society are to be expected from a male author, Juliette sashays through the world as a champion of and apologist for vice – a bona fide revolutionary in her own right. The only thing that prevents Juliette from coming across as a more modern and liberated creation is de Sade's unfortunate tendency to use her as mouthpiece for his own theories. When Juliette is simply being herself and acting in character, she is entirely convincing as a liberated force of nature.

Juliette is a philosophical practitioner of dark reason in a universe where imagination constantly pushes at the limits of nature. She transcends the natural instinct for self-preservation by actively molding her body into a pleasure giving and seeking machine. All of her behaviour is governed by rational principles; she has a single goal – the progressive refinement of her own pleasure – and she pursues that pleasure rationally, in other words, “calmly, deliberately, lucidly”. Juliette eventually reaches an elite stage of development that totally inverts the traditional ethical order loving “evil for its own sake”. By substituting the energetic principle of vice over the “inert and passive” principle of virtue, she eventually becomes the complete *sovereign* of herself. Her only peer-to-peer alliances are with the like-minded individuals that she calls “friends”. And she is willing to dispense with those relationships when they no longer serve her purposes.

The Uses of Reason

Juliette's life narrative is a case of an enlightened understanding of rational self-interest taken to its logical and most disturbing extreme. The orthodox enlightenment deployed instrument of reason to illuminate physical and human nature but typically retained the link between the rational subject and some version of a moral community. De Sade is a typically enlightened writer and propagandist to the extent that he deploys reason as a weapon to attack traditional institutions and artificial values. Like most eighteenth-century French writers, his supreme target is the Roman Catholic Church, which for Sade had so contorted human institutions and values as to prevent enlightened progress. Similarly, de Sade attacks traditional political structures, particularly unenlightened European monarchies, arguing that it is only a matter of time before these relics of the past are destroyed by revolutionists. More rational societies, for de Sade, need to build their foundation on a materialist understanding of human beings as rationally self-interested and self-directing *individuals* perfectly capable of thinking for themselves. As was the case with the enlightened *philosophes*, de Sade was a propagandist for liberation. In many respects, therefore, de Sade was a true child of the enlightenment.

The orthodox Enlightenment, however, made some assumptions that de Sade wanted to challenge. Enlightened writers believed that instrumental reason led to economically and culturally improved *communities*. They assumed that rationally ordered societies of liberated individuals would be more polite, humane, fraternal and even loving. Enlightened writers as different as Adam Smith and Jean-Jacques Rousseau pointed to the individual's natural compassion as the social glue that prevented self-interest from destroying society. Pity was the ultimate safeguard that a rationally constructed society could also be a just and caring community. Most eighteenth-century thinkers also believed with Hume that the reason and civilization progressed in tandem, although some like Rousseau and Ferguson had serious reservations. Generally speaking, however, potential disruptions from the liberation of individualism and self-interest could be mitigated by combinations of public education, civilized manners and the liberation of love and affection in the private domain. The sentimental side of the enlightenment put a lot of stake in love as an antidote to selfishness. Although the conjugal relationships had its foundation in sexual attraction, the nuclear family constituted a sentimental relationship conducive to moral cultivation.

It was precisely this Enlightenment twinning of reason, morality and sentiment that de Sade set out to demolish. In the first place, he argued, there was no intrinsic connection between reason and virtue. That assumed relationship was just another dogmatic *prejudice* that needed to be challenged. Juliette's first teacher Madame Delbène scorned all these examples of "public opinion", suggesting that the only moral imperative that reason suggests (once social conventions are shown to artificial) is that human beings are self-interested:

We alone can make for our personal felicity; whether we are to be happy or unhappy is completely up to us, it depends solely upon our conscience, and perhaps even more so upon our attitudes which alone supply the bedrock foundation to our conscience's inspiration.

In fact, De Sade went so far as to redefine morality and conscience *solely* in terms of the imperative to personal self-interest. Reason was nothing more than a means or a tool for decoding and achieving that same self-interest. As for compassion, de Sade that this less a natural emotion than a social habit; cruelty had much more going for it as a natural propensity. The concept of love also needed to be unpacked by reason. Love was simply sexual attraction molded by pagan and Christian civilization to dubious ends.

Once one has posited reason in the individual rather than the general consciousness, any presumed link between self-interest and any social interest is bound to become tenuous. The social connection is only significant to the extent that it provides a given historical context for the pursuit of individual self-interest. If maximizing self-interest is the ethical *end*, then the rational *means* one uses has no moral character of its own and its success is measured solely in terms of its efficiency in directing us towards and achieving our personal goals. Given the present unenlightened (i.e. irrational) state of society, de Sade suggests, it makes perfect sense to manipulate these background variables by wearing social masks and, whenever possible, practicing *deceit*. Translating Machiavelli's description of power into personal politics, de Sade advocates cunning as an ethical imperative. The traditional distinction between a lie and the truth, like all social ordinances, is for de Sade merely "absurd myths lacking any reality save in the eyes of the fools who don't mind submitting to them". Reason and intelligence scorn all such fairy tales and self-deceptions.

The guilt that traditionally goes by the name of conscience is, for Sade, an irrational prejudice that would not merit serious consideration were it not for the fact that it has been inculcated in individuals by custom and habit. Analyzed intellectually, such guilty feelings are patently irrational because they interfere with the individual pursuit of happiness. A great deal of the frenetic activity in *Juliette* is designed to counteract the force of custom by actively inculcating new habits. Thus, everything that has been prohibited in social institutions must now not only be allowed, but actively pursued. Each and every backsliding towards old habits has to be aggressively checked, something that goes a long way towards explaining the otherwise strange combination of methodical transgression and emotional outrage against moral values that dominates so much of the text. De Sade's heroes and heroines seek to "pulverize" the old values, particularly those that have been promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church. For de Sade, God is both a ludicrous "phantom" that needs to be countered by "a substructure of reliable principles".

While the practitioners of the orthodox enlightenment utilized a comparative analysis to differentiate and expose the artificial and unprogressive aspects of an irrational civilization, de Sade's comparative critique was designed to demolish all traditional *traces* of good and evil altogether. For de Sade, the notions of good and evil were *superstitions* based on the fear of death and its aftermath. Such fears could easily be demolished by enlightened rationalism. De Sade argued that an empirical approach and a materialistic philosophy rendered the notion of a soul preposterous, especially one that was everlasting. What people called the soul was simply a *subtler* form of matter. Without the concept of a soul and all the supporting dogma of an afterlife, reason suggested that anything that results in happiness on earth should be permitted. All moral codes were, for de Sade, nothing more than religious residues. He argued *ad infinitum* that any serious cross-cultural perspective rendered the concepts of morality entirely *relative*. Child murder, for example, was approved of in many cultures and for patently utilitarian reasons. Any attempt to create a special or distinct categorical imperative made no sense to de Sade. He suggested that any distinction between morals and laws was largely spurious, because both were "brazenly man made". The ethical fabrications of *natural jurisprudence* were obvious social constructions that had precious little to do with "mother Nature". Finally, and this is where de Sade links up with Nietzsche and Foucault especially, European morality could be exposed as a *historical* rather than a *universal* construction. Both morality and the related criminal law were designed by the weak for protection from the strong. Such protection was largely illusory, however, because nature invariably prevailed -- the strong always had and always will have sufficient power to dominate the weak. Moral and legal values constitute additional means for the strong to consolidate and exercise their power.

De Sade's take on Western civilization clearly contains some extremely radical elements. In particular, he echoes Rousseau by arguing that morals and laws, in particular the laws of property, really amount to organized theft. It is well worth quoting de Sade at length on this issue, if only to see how one can draw different conclusions from shared enlightenment insights:

The powerful individual assented to these laws, which he knew very well he would never obey. And so the laws were made. It was decreed that every man would possess his heritage, undisturbed and happy; and that whosoever were to trouble him in this possession of what was his would be chastised. But in this there was nothing natural, nothing dictated by Nature, nothing of what she inspires, it was all very brazenly man-made, by men henceforth divided into two classes: those who yielded up a quarter of the loaf in order to be able, undisturbed, to eat and digest what was left; and those who, eagerly taking the portion proffered to them and seeing that they'd get the rest of the bread whenever they pleased, agreed to the scheme, not in order to prevent their own class from pillaging the weak, but to prevent the weak from despoiling one another -- so that they, the powerful, could despoil the weak more conveniently. Thus, theft, instituted by Nature, was not at all banished from the face of the earth; but it came to exist in other forms: stealing was performed juridically.

Additionally, both Rousseau and de Sade noticed the fact that civilized men and women often wear masks which they used to hide their self-interest. De Sade went so far as to describe a *utopia* where the “strong individual” never “dons masks” but “acts true to his own nature.” De Sade’s utopia was nothing like Rousseau’s condition of “equality”, however. It was a “Nature” where individuals were openly self-interested, where the strong not only enforced their will on the weak, but also realized all of their “potentialities” for power and domination. In a world and human nature designed for happiness, it seemed reasonable to de Sade that those who had the greatest access to serving their passions should exercise their *sovereignty*.

There are, of course, problems with de Sade’s perspective (although no more than most enlightened accounts). Since everyone in his ideal state of nature would be rationally pursuing their own sovereignty, it would be a place where “malevolent instincts” reigned supreme and a “continual state of insurrection” made personal goal setting difficult. Because each individual pursued his/her entirely legitimate criminality, the level of conflict would be interminable. Any attempt to codify behaviour (and even dark enlightenment’s must have a code) in a “citadel of force and hatred” is doomed to failure. De Sade tantalizingly offers the solution of a highly rationalized despotic state where experts in power manipulate the self-interest of seemingly equal, but effectively dominated, *citizens*. It is difficult to see how this prototypical totalitarian state reinforces de Sade’s view of Nature and human nature, however. More typically, de Sade’s analysis simply reifies and justifies whatever status quo dominates in society. De Sade’s continually but equally indefensibly asserts that those who wield socio-economic and political power are selected by Nature. Juliette is the ideal type of individual destined by Nature to exercise domination, while her virtuous sister Justine is Nature’s ultimate victim. The latter is freed from torture only to be struck dead by lightning.

Nature’s Optic

De Sade’s view of Nature is not at all transparent. He tends to use Nature interchangeably as the real and ideal, as an “is” and an “ought”, depending on his polemical purposes. This confusion is compounded by his inconsistent use of the terms ‘natural’, “unnatural” and “anti-natural”, with the obvious irony that what is considered unnatural in most societies accords far better with Nature’s scheme. In part, these problems can be overlooked by recognizing that de Sade is an enlightened propagandist rather than a pure philosopher. He is as interested in making converts to his cause as making precise distinctions.

But there is another difficulty for appreciating de Sade's attitude towards Nature. In his system, Nature retains a parallel and paradoxical relationship with religion. Like many enlightened writers, de Sade substituted "mother Nature" for Christianity as the primary source of values. Most enlightened propagandists retained God as the prime mover in a deist universe, thereby simultaneously deifying nature's laws while ignoring religious dogmatism. De Sade, on the other hand, called himself an atheist and ostensibly believed that he was one. But he was an atheist whose refusal to believe was a reaction of a particular kind to Christianity. This rebellion against Christian dogmatism arguably colored his attitude towards Nature.

In this context, the question of why de Sade considers God to be a "monster" and abomination is well worth exploring. De Sade repeatedly wants to take "revenge" on God and to commit sacrilege upon religion. Similarly, he alternates between wanting to dedicate himself to Nature's cause and seeking to "outrage" Nature, at the very least go beyond its limited agenda. The killing of the Christian God or "god of death" was not simply an intellectual exercise for de Sade because it began with an original rebellion against an unjust God. This remarkably conventional rebellion is articulated by Juliette's lesbian lover cum mentor Clairwil. Clairwil argues that the Christian god is not simply a harmless fable but a "cruel god". She reasons along the following lines:

1. The Christian God is unjust because he gives us passions and then punishes us for using them.
2. The Christian God's justice is horrible. He punishes people for mistakes made in a finite lifetime with infinite and terrible punishments.
3. The Christian God's religion is not life affirming but a "gloomy hell dogma" in which the greater part of humanity will suffer damnation after a life full of fear.
4. God is all knowing so he must be particularly cruel in creating individuals who will be "eternally unhappy".
5. God is not only partial with respect to the afterlife but also mean with respect to this one. He allows the vicious to prosper while the weak suffer.

For this enlightened rebel, God's treatment of a "frail and miserable and helpless creature" is not merely barbarous but positively "evil". When Clairwil views God's creation, she sees "evil, disorder, crime" reigning everywhere. If God created such a universe, she argues, then "evil is his essence."

Replacing God with Nature has distinct advantages. We no longer need to deny or repress the passions that Nature has given us, and that make us resemble other animals. In fact, the laws of nature can be interpreted to condone some of our most selfish and vicious passions. Nature is an arena where the strong dominate and feed off the weak. All the cruel feelings that humans exhibit must be condoned by Nature because they derive from our constitutions. In fact, de Sade goes so far as to suggest that our most vicious passions may be direct recommendations/imperatives of Nature. The more our passions wreak destruction, the more materials Nature has for rebuilding. Nature's *equilibrium* absolutely depends on continuous destruction. If death is necessary for new life, therefore, murder is a positive contribution.

Nature simultaneously absolves us of guilt (something de Sade's characters all have to wrestle with) and provides novel incentives to action. A clear-eyed analysis of Nature allows us to appreciate that the veneer of civilization masks savage instincts that may be modified but never suppressed. It is possible to read the criminal acting out of de Sade's characters as a form of imaginary liberation – a kind of early exploration of the heart of darkness that is the Id. But this seeming liberation has drawbacks of its own. If the Christian religion is destructive of human passions, Nature appears “indifferent” to them. Noircueil informs Juliette “from the standpoint of nature, and barring all else from consideration, all our acts are as one, none better, none worse than the rest.” They are neither good nor bad “intrinsically”. Moreover, if the universe created by God is evil – composed of *maleficent molecules* – then the natural universe without God must also contain traces of that same evil. As de Sade points out “it is necessary that everything that emanates from the womb of Nature, that is to say, from the womb of *evil*, returns thereunto; such is the universal law.”

This *indifferent evil* is something that de Sade struggles to deal with. He constantly attempts to make evil ethical, in other words to give what we think of as evil in nature a purpose. The criminal behaviour of his heroes and heroines is meaningless unless they can give it a meaning. This meaning has a distinctly *moral* character that is clearly an inversion of Christian morality. Thus, as Saint-Fond puts it, the rational criminal alternately attempts to: 1) act out to the utmost the desires that Nature has instilled in her; 2) fulfill Nature's supposed grand design by establishing the chaos from which she can recreate; and, most interestingly, 3) to enter into the heart of evil by rendering themselves as “vicious and wicked as possible,” and 4) to outrage Nature by going as far beyond its limits as possible. The evil imagination is a more “inspired architect” and “cunning artisan” than Nature itself. Juliette claims to have enough evil inside her “to have laid all Nature waste.” But, of course, these ideal fabrications of evil fail to go beyond Nature's limits, because, in the final analysis, Nature is completely indifferent to what we do. The solitary monad “lost and alone in Nature's wilderness” perpetrates a “thousand furtive horrors” to no avail.

In summary, therefore, de Sade simultaneously embraces and revolts against Nature. The criminal not only legitimizes the passions that come from Nature, but also defies that Nature by attempting to go beyond its dictates. While de Sade's natural philosophy is generally materialistic and even deterministic, he espouses the human freedom to at least attempt, however futilely, to defy Nature by imaginatively outraging it. Of course, if nature is indifferent or evil, the more logical course might be that of Kant – to practice a virtue that is antithetical to Nature. But de Sade's analysis of human nature and human history provided him with no confidence of any inherent morality in the pronouncements of virtue. As a result, his only consistent choice was the unsatisfactory path of criminal nihilism.

Human Nature

While de Sade cannot easily wrestle meaningfulness from Nature, he is on stronger grounds in discovering purposefulness in human nature. De Sade is a writer of considerable significance for us moderns not merely because he explores the dark side of human nature, but because he positively *affirms* it. The eighteenth-century analysis of the passions generally tiptoed around self-interest. But de Sade embraced self-interest as *selfishness* and made it the dynamic mechanism of his system. Picking up where Bernard Mandeville left off, de Sade argued that *all* of our motives, and therefore our actions, are selfish. The primary distinction between behaviours deemed virtuous or vicious is not one of selfishness or altruism because, ultimately, all actions can be reduced to selfishness. The appropriate distinction is between rational and irrational selfishness. The Christian religion, for example, breeds an irrational selfishness based on a fear of consequences in the afterlife. The Christian wants to make sure he or she gets to heaven. The rational pursuit of selfishness, on the other hand, is all about seizing happiness in this material existence.

Now, a rationalistic and selfish philosophical position need not necessarily lead to the relentless and criminal pursuit of personal happiness. One can take a classical Epicurean or prudential approach to happiness, or one can even view happiness largely in terms of the avoidance of pain through Stoic self-control. Alternately, one can adopt the more modern utilitarian position that egoism and community are compatible in formulas like the “greatest happiness of the greatest number.” De Sade exploded utilitarianism in ways that anticipate Freud, i.e. by demonstrating that individual instincts and social values are incompatible. De Sade was more sympathetic with the rational approach taken by classical philosophers, who he obviously respected more than their Christian successors. His characters even acquire some of the characteristics of the Stoic sage as they arrive at criminal perfection. But what makes de Sade a revolutionary and modern thinker is his emphasis on liberating, rather than controlling, the passions of the self. For the ancients, reason controls and directs the passions towards happiness. For de Sade, reason serves the passions. Happiness is a product of pleasurable sensations striking the nervous system. The differing degrees of pleasure and pain derive from the strength or violence with which external stimuli strike the body. The most rational approach is to increase pleasurable sensations.

De Sade is not a vulgar sensualist. He argues that there are two different kinds of “desires” that serve “two different kinds of needs” – the moral and the physical. By “moral”, of course, de Sade does not want to imply traditional ethics but to describe a kind of intellectual connection. Thus, Juliette has like-minded “soul mates” whose company she enjoys. These moral villains, if I may use the term, even take pleasure in educating one another in criminal refinement. Their lengthy philosophical conversations make up a substantial part of *Juliette* absolutely differentiating the novel from more pedestrian eroticism. Noircueil distinguishes between the “subtler mind” of Juliette and more “feeble-minded” women that he uses and discards as “pleasure-machines, sufficient to our purposes, but truly, their appalling insensibility depresses me.” The best-suited intellectual communions tend to be temporary, however, because the imperative of selfishness makes all alliances unstable and because the demands of the independent and developing self tends to leave significant others behind.

It is the refined and philosophical pursuit of sensual pleasure that provides de Sade’s main characters with their energy and dynamism. The pleasure pursued by these characters is overwhelmingly sexual. Other elementary needs, such as eating and drinking, are secondary. “Gluttony,” says Noircueil, “fares wonderfully well” for producing sperm (secretion) for discharging (orgasming) more “copiously.” The sexual impulse is not only the most powerful desire in human nature, but it is also the one that is capable of the greatest refinement. De Sade fixates on human sexuality as a rich vein of vitality and potential purposefulness. Moreover, de Sade’s “sexual metaphysics” actually improves upon Nature by exploiting the human capacity for controlling and directing natural impulses. For de Sade, there is “no more selfish passion than lust” and “all the passions require victims.”

The term *sadism* refers to inflicting pain upon oneself and others as a means of achieving and extenuating sexual release. In *Juliette*, Noircueil informs a fellow sexual devotee that pain is an external sensation that “conflicts with the body’s physical organization” thereby having a negatively violent impact on the “organic molecules composing us.” What makes this external-internal conflict sexually interesting is that its characteristics differ only in degree from those violent sensations that mix “harmoniously” with our “bodily fluids” resulting in the “commotion of pleasure”. Noircueil suggests by refining our attitude and habituating ourselves to painful sensations, humans can become “accustomed to receiving pleasures from those that produce a *poignant* sensation.” The primary advantages of habituating ourselves to inflicting pain upon other rather than ourselves are twofold: 1) we can increase the violence exponentially, and even to death; and 2) by so doing, we simultaneously exert our power or *sovereignty* over others.

Power and lust are the most exciting combination for de Sade and one that, at least in imagination, invariably tends towards the lethal. The “spectacle” of “causing a debauchery-object to suffer” is so very *piquant* that it eclipses all others. The greater the suffering of the victim, the greater the pleasure of the inflictor of pain; this explains why the victim should be subjected to “appalling death agonies” of a long duration. The greater the difference in power, the greater the sense of the abusers’ personal sovereignty. Finally, for the truly habituated debaucher, the more closely connected the victim, the more tender and innocent, the more deserving of compassion the object of power is, the more delicious the pleasure of witnessing her suffer. When de Sade argues that “all is permitted”, he really means it. Incest, child murder, fratricide and parricide are all allowed. Moreover, when these acts coincide with other more obviously rational interests of the agent, they are positively commanded.

Long before Simmel, Pareto or Foucault, de Sade offers an account of human relations in terms of power. But power in isolation was a “cold principle” for de Sade unless it also enflamed the “electrical fluid” or produced “an operation we term the *effects of the passions*.” Cold reason had its uses. In the present irrational state of society, crimes were best conducted in “full possession of judgment and right reason.” By proceeding “coolly, carefully, with such secrecy”, one avoided the “torch of Justice”. Moreover, by rationally or philosophically adopting the path of nihilism, the enlightened criminal internalized unwavering principles. But, ultimately, reason should be at the service of the libido and not the other way around. Juliette advises her colleagues in crime that the payoff for “ripened philosophy” and “strong principles” is “an unalloyed pleasure”.

At this point, the intelligent reader may be thinking that, by placing such an emphasis on the libidinous pursuit of pleasure, de Sade is caught in trap of his own design. Feelings are fickle and even sexual passion has some inherent limitations. It is not possible to fuck continually, even if de Sade’s characters constitute a production line of sexual couplings and discharges that is truly impressive. What is more, the peak period of sexual energy occurs at a point in the life cycle, diminishing significantly in old age. It would seem that any libido based philosophy needs to deal with cycles of diminishing returns. De Sade’s society didn’t benefit from Viagra or Cialis to maintain sexual productivity much less a concept of the self that is based on sexual activity. Substituting sexual fantasy for actual practice does not entirely remove the problem, since there is an intimate relationship between the mind and body. It is not surprising, therefore, that de Sade’s characters tend to be very concerned about their fecundity. Even Juliette, a self-described “whore” who can be “encunted” and sodomized by over a hundred men at a time, is concerned about her recuperative powers and the eventual advance of age. Many of her older male mentors constantly complain about what it takes to “stiffen their pricks”.

De Sade never reconciles these issues completely. Certainly, he maintains that human beings have the ability to “multiply impudicious joys beyond the limits imposed by that unkind Nature.” When individuals become jaded, they can always rely on cruelty and their refined imaginations to “find again that which our excesses have caused us to lose.” De Sade makes a valid point when he suggests that, ultimately, “human felicity lies in man’s imagination.” But de Sade's liberated individuals always seem to be poised on knife-edge of listlessness and disgust. Their rebellion against unnatural constraints is sustained by little more than their philosophy and it is exhibited in increasingly boring and repetitive combinations of couplings and atrocities. The pleasure they take from the evil they do progressively diminishes under the weight of an unremitting and guilt laden philosophy that commands them to do all possible evil. This philosophical rebellion eventually runs up against Nature itself. While the “hot passions” that come from Nature may be preferable to the “religion which come to us from man,” they are not inexhaustible. The ultimate fact of human nature may not be sexuality but death.

Before turning to de Sade’s fascinating attitude towards death, it is important to say something about the place of gender in his analysis of human nature. At the beginning of this lecture, I pointed out that Juliette is an original female character in terms of her liberated sense of self. To this interpretation there are many possible objections. It may be countered that Juliette’s depiction as a “whore” is stereotypical and that the code to which she subscribes as a member of the Solidarity of the Friends of Crime is fundamentally misogynist.¹ Other female but defective characters are more obviously feminist in the sense of being “votaries of their own sex” and “avengers” of male superiority. But Juliette is superior to all of them in her reasoning abilities and is man’s equal precisely because she evaluates them coolly and cynically rather than stereotypically. Juliette neither worships nor envies male “pricks”; she simply makes use of them. She will never be anyone’s wife, not because she hates men, but because she knows that all wives are “victims” and she has no intention of being a victim. Juliette has systematically purged herself of all romantic notions. She has achieved a high degree of personal sovereignty.

De Sade may be a chauvinist male but that does not make his analysis of the feminine any the less interesting. Unlike other enlightened writers, his assumption of female sensitivity is linked to the personal power of the different sex. His explicit argument that enlightened women like Juliette can make much better criminals than their male counterparts precisely because of these differences. As Juliette suggests to the robber Cordelli, women’s “organs are more finely constructed, their sensitivity profounder.” Cordelli unnecessarily endorses Juliette’s self-assessment, adding that women have a “much keener imagination” than men, suggesting a greater capacity for cruelty. Juliette recognizes and embraces the evil potential in her feminine psyche to the extent that she thrives as a villain in the world of men. At the same time, she is realistic enough to know that many other intelligent women in her time will be forced into the “preposterous chains of chastity and of wedlock.” To these she has some interesting advice:

¹ In itself the Solidarity of the Friends of Crime is a paradox – a mutual aid community in a society of selfish and estranged individuals.

Never lose sight of the fact that if Nature made you a cunt for men to fuck, her hand at the same instant created you the heart needed to betray them.

The Pleasure in Dying

Death is omnipresent in *Juliette* and not confined to the victims. In fact, all the characters in the novel ultimately will become the victims of Nature. That fact is what makes Nature evil and not merely indifferent. It makes perfectly good sense to think of De Sade's tome as a meditation on death. Sade initially directed his revolt against a religion that gave us greater reason for fear than optimism about the afterlife. The replacement of religion with a materialist philosophy was salutary to the extent that it eliminated superstitious anxieties. The instruction of Nature gave life a possible meaning in terms of pleasure seeking. But Nature's greatest lesson – reconstruction from the ruins of biological decay -- offered no cause for personal joy beyond the present moment. De Sade's heroes and heroines are caught in the wearying and mechanical attempt to intensify and maximize these moments. Although De Sade attempted a revolutionary paradigm for enlightened individuals – arguably the first attempt at constructing a “superman” – his worldview is permeated by traces of all the gods of death. In a world without limits, death is the one barrier that no one can ignore.

De Sade finds it relatively easy to demolish the Christian god of love. Doing what pleases the ego transforms our material bodies into “church where Nature asks to be revered.” However, it is only through our death that Nature lives. Nature “speeds him towards the grave.” The individual who reads Nature's “indelible script”, therefore, must be “strong and hard” in embracing death. Just as it demonstrates sentimental imbecility to pity others, it is similarly irrational to pity oneself. Madame Delbène tells the young Juliette that the genuine philosopher of pleasure also must know “how to suffer uncomplainingly”. The depraved Cardinal Albani recommends the philosophical principles of the Stoic philosophers. Although stoicism “deprives us of some pleasures,” it “instructs us in how suitably to die.”

Life as a “road passing from naught to naught” and culminating in “annihilation” remains a “terrible fate” for the eighteenth-century mind. It provides small comfort for the ego to know that one will become “fertilizer” in Nature's “perpetual flux”. Death renders man something less than Nature's child or even her servant; humans are Nature's “froth, her precipitated residue.” Fittingly, it is in the final book of *Juliette*, that de Sade attempts to come to grips with a subject that has obsessed him throughout and that provides the ultimate problem to the pleasure principle. The final statement on death fittingly comes from the expert in its execution, Madame Durand. On the wreckage of the doctrine of the afterlife, Durand offers an “original” perspective on death as “nothing more or less than a voluptuous pleasure.” Durand's logic is that, since the principle of life is pleasure, and since life and death are one system, then it stands to reason that there is “a pleasure in dying.” With the aid of *reflection* and *philosophy*, it should be possible to:

Convert into very voluptuous ideas all death's ridiculous frights, and that sensual excitement may even bring on thoughts of death and induce in one an eager expectancy of death.

One's own death becomes the ultimate playground.

De Sade merely touches upon the voluptuousness of death in *Juliette*, hardly “collapsing everything and everyone into a collective suicide” as Albert Camus suggested. But death worship would become a staple of literary rebellion, most notably in the writings of Charles Baudelaire. The reasons why de Sade did not choose to explore the death wish any more than he did, while admittedly somewhat speculative, are worth exploring. Consider the following. First, de Sade's brand of egotism has its foundation in self-preservation. While such an ego can be artificially refined, there is considerable difficulty in getting it to accept its own annihilation much less to actively embrace it. Second, despite being grounded in egotism, de Sade's sexual system is heavily weighted towards toward the *social*. Systematic lust requires a society of potential victims. Focusing on one's own death is difficult when one has acquired the habit of indulging in the deaths of others. Third, de Sade's system privileges power as the primary dynamic social relationship. Power in de Sade's universe is defined overwhelmingly in terms of the *survival* of the fittest. Deliberately not surviving would involve a completely different power dynamic and personal aesthetics.. Fourth, and perhaps most important, de Sade's virulent attack on religion suggests that he never got over his own fear of death and the afterlife. It is one thing to be a literary or imaginative rebel and quite another to internalize one's own rebellion.

De Sade continues to exert an enormous influence on literary rebels, especially in their desire to shock their readers out of complacency, to expose society's hypocritical values, and to transgress conceptual barriers. But I think there is a chasm between de Sade and his modern admirers that is reflected in his attitude towards death. De Sade may appear to be totally modern when he says asserts that “selfishness is the law of Nature.” His shock value for contemporaries is precisely that he liberates the *self* (in the imagination) within a context that is profoundly social. His preoccupation with death is remarkably in tune with his eighteenth-century Catholic French environment – a cultural world that informed the young De Sade not only that he would die, but also that only his death gave life significance. That an impressionable and imaginative person like de Sade should feel tormented when he realized that materialism deprived death of any meaning should not be so surprising. A crisis of meaning acutely felt by someone with psychotic tendencies leads in predictable directions. The tendency to objectify others, to quantify variables, to stereotype relations and blur distinctions (i.e. natural and social phenomena), are well-documented psychotic tendencies.²

² Cornelius Casoriadis, *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, ed. David Ames Curtis, (Stanford: University Press, 1997), p. 208.

Concluding Remarks

If we read too much into de Sade, if we make him too relevant, we run the risk of missing out on what arguably was his most profound contribution to modernity. De Sade is far more interesting as a literary propagandist of the liberated *imagination* than, say, a champion of individualism or the dark “other of reason”. His central characters derive their greatest pleasure, not from the relatively mechanical coupling, but from conversations in which they “fabricate ideal lubricities whose existence, unfortunately, is impossible.” Ultimately, it is the ability to “erect phantoms” that demarcates human beings from Nature. Only human creativity is capable of reaching the “sublime”. And in those “enchanted moments” of creativity, the human dominates all three kingdoms of nature.

De Sade is a materialist in only a very limited sense. There is something about the subtler matter of the mind that permits the construction of ideals, next to which all material realities pale. Privileging evil over good is a meaningful transgression; not merely because evil is the law of Nature, but also because evil provides a much bigger canvas for the imagination. By definition, evil has “no limits”. The imagination must be free to think even the unthinkable.

Juliette is a work of fiction and imagination. One misses the entire point of *Juliette* unless one realizes that de Sade is presenting us with a sexual *dream*, a term that he actually uses in the concluding sentence. The “imagination is the cradle where pleasures are born,” he tells us, and without “embellishment” all that remains of sexuality is the “physical act, dull, gross and brutish.” The odd mixture of reason and imagination in *Juliette* is only partly the product of a troubled mind. It also reflects the eighteenth-century mind’s struggle to escape the limitations of reason.

Juliette and Philosophy in the Bedroom

The following is a lecture that I wrote on de Sade's *Juliette*, the work that I wanted us to read for this class. Unfortunately, it was unavailable and so we did *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, not a bad substitute by any means. But, you get the benefit of the lecture if you are at all interested.

JULIETTE

The Marquis de Sade is the author *par excellence* of the so-called *black enlightenment*. He explores the dark side of human nature and advocates criminal behaviour without limits. The book *Juliette* is unusual, not the least because its ideal criminal type is a relatively young woman. While Juliette has a few stereotypical female attributes, she also has characteristics that place her into an entirely new category of the female, namely:

1. unconditional lust
2. intelligence and independence of mind
3. willingness to expose hypocrisy and flaunt socio-cultural expectations
4. a superb sense of self and precise attention to self-interest
5. the ability to compete with and even harangue powerful male superiors

While Juliette's mentoring by like-minded males, and her willingness to use her female attributes and feminine wiles to get what she wants in a male dominated society are to be expected from a male author, Juliette sashays through the world as a champion of and apologist for vice – a bona fide revolutionary in her own right. The only thing that prevents Juliette from coming across as a more modern and liberated creation is de Sade's unfortunate tendency to use her as mouthpiece for his own theories. When Juliette is simply being herself and acting in character, she is entirely convincing as a liberated force of nature.

Juliette is a philosophical practitioner of dark reason in a universe where imagination constantly pushes at the limits of nature. She transcends the natural instinct for self-preservation by actively molding her body into a pleasure giving and seeking machine. All of her behaviour is governed by rational principles; she has a single goal – the progressive refinement of her own pleasure – and she pursues that pleasure rationally, in other words, “calmly, deliberately, lucidly”. Juliette eventually reaches an elite stage of development that totally inverts the traditional ethical order loving “evil for its own sake”. By substituting the energetic principle of vice over the “inert and passive”

principle of virtue, she eventually becomes the complete *sovereign* of herself. Her only peer-to-peer alliances are with the like-minded individuals that she calls “friends”. And she is willing to dispense with those relationships when they no longer serve her purposes.

The Uses of Reason

Juliette’s life narrative is a case of an enlightened understanding of rational self-interest taken to its logical and most disturbing extreme. The orthodox enlightenment deployed instrument of reason to illuminate physical and human nature but typically retained the link between the rational subject and some version of a moral community. De Sade is a typically enlightened writer and propagandist to the extent that he deploys reason as a weapon to attack traditional institutions and artificial values. Like most eighteenth-century French writers, his supreme target is the Roman Catholic Church, which for Sade had so contorted human institutions and values as to prevent enlightened progress. Similarly, de Sade attacks traditional political structures, particularly unenlightened European monarchies, arguing that it is only a matter of time before these relics of the past are destroyed by revolutionists. More rational societies, for de Sade, need to build their foundation on a materialist understanding of human beings as rationally self-interested and self-directing *individuals* perfectly capable of thinking for themselves. As was the case with the enlightened *philosophes*, de Sade was a propagandist for liberation. In many respects, therefore, de Sade was a true child of the enlightenment.

The orthodox Enlightenment, however, made some assumptions that de Sade wanted to challenge. Enlightened writers believed that instrumental reason led to economically and culturally improved *communities*. They assumed that rationally ordered societies of liberated individuals would be more polite, humane, fraternal and even loving. Enlightened writers as different as Adam Smith and Jean-Jacques Rousseau pointed to the individual’s natural compassion as the social glue that prevented self-interest from destroying society. Pity was the ultimate safeguard that a rationally constructed society could also be a just and caring community. Most eighteenth-century thinkers also believed with Hume that reason and civilization progressed in tandem, although some like Rousseau and Ferguson had serious reservations. Generally speaking, however, potential disruptions from the liberation of individualism and self-interest could be mitigated by combinations of public education, civilized manners and the liberation of love and affection in the private domain. The sentimental side of the enlightenment put a lot of stake in love as an antidote to selfishness. Although the conjugal relationships had its foundation in sexual attraction, the nuclear family constituted a sentimental relationship conducive to moral cultivation.

It was precisely this Enlightenment twinning of reason, morality and sentiment that de Sade set out to demolish. In the first place, he argued, there was no intrinsic connection between reason and virtue. That assumed relationship was just another dogmatic *prejudice* that needed to be challenged. Juliette’s first teacher Madame Delbène scorned

all these examples of “public opinion”, suggesting that the only moral imperative that reason suggests (once social conventions are shown to artificial) is that human beings are self-interested:

We alone can make for our personal felicity; whether we are to be happy or unhappy is completely up to us, it depends solely upon our conscience, and perhaps even more so upon our attitudes which alone supply the bedrock foundation to our conscience’s inspiration.

In fact, De Sade went so far as to redefine morality and conscience *solely* in terms of the imperative to personal self-interest. Reason was nothing more than a means or a tool for decoding and achieving that same self-interest. As for compassion, de Sade considered this less a natural emotion than a social habit; cruelty had much more going for it as a natural propensity. The concept of love also needed to be unpacked by reason. Love was simply sexual attraction molded by pagan and Christian civilization to dubious ends.

Once one has posited reason in the individual rather than the general consciousness, any presumed link between self-interest and any social interest is bound to become tenuous. The social connection is only significant to the extent that it provides a given historical context for the pursuit of individual self-interest. If maximizing self-interest is the ethical *end*, then the rational *means* one uses has no moral character of its own and its success is measured solely in terms of its efficiency in directing us towards and achieving our personal goals. Given the present unenlightened (i.e. irrational) state of society, de Sade suggests, it makes perfect sense to manipulate these background variables by wearing social masks and, whenever possible, practicing *deceit*. Translating Machiavelli’s description of power into personal politics, de Sade advocates cunning as an ethical imperative. The traditional distinction between a lie and the truth, like all social ordinances, is for de Sade merely “absurd myths lacking any reality save in the eyes of the fools who don’t mind submitting to them”. Reason and intelligence scorn all such fairy tales and self-deceptions.

The guilt that traditionally goes by the name of conscience is, for Sade, an irrational prejudice that would not merit serious consideration were it not for the fact that it has been inculcated in individuals by custom and habit. Analyzed intellectually, such guilty feelings are patently irrational because they interfere with the individual pursuit of happiness. A great deal of the frenetic activity in *Juliette* is designed to counteract the force of custom by actively inculcating new habits. Thus, everything that has been prohibited in social institutions must now not only be allowed, but actively pursued. Each and every backsliding towards old habits has to be aggressively checked, something that goes a long way towards explaining the otherwise strange combination of methodical transgression and emotional outrage against moral values that dominates so much of the text. De Sade’s heroes and heroines seek to “pulverize” the old values, particularly those that have been promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church. For de Sade, God is both a ludicrous “phantom” that needs to be countered by “a substructure of reliable principles”.

While the practitioners of the orthodox enlightenment utilized a comparative analysis to differentiate and expose the artificial and unprogressive aspects of an irrational civilization, de Sade's comparative critique was designed to demolish all traditional *traces* of good and evil altogether. For de Sade, the notions of good and evil were *superstitions* based on the fear of death and its aftermath. Such fears could easily be demolished by enlightened rationalism. De Sade argued that an empirical approach and a materialistic philosophy rendered the notion of a soul preposterous, especially one that was everlasting. What people called the soul was simply a *subtler* form of matter. Without the concept of a soul and all the supporting dogma of an afterlife, reason suggested that anything that results in happiness on earth should be permitted. All moral codes were, for de Sade, nothing more than religious residues. He argued *ad infinitum* that any serious cross-cultural perspective rendered the concepts of morality entirely *relative*. Child murder, for example, was approved of in many cultures and for patently utilitarian reasons. Any attempt to create a special or distinct categorical imperative made no sense to de Sade. He suggested that any distinction between morals and laws was largely spurious, because both were "brazenly man made". The ethical fabrications of *natural jurisprudence* were obvious social constructions that had precious little to do with "mother Nature". Finally, and this is where de Sade links up with Nietzsche and Foucault especially, European morality could be exposed as a *historical* rather than a *universal* construction. Both morality and the related criminal law were designed by the weak for protection from the strong. Such protection was largely illusory, however, because nature invariably prevailed -- the strong always had and always will have sufficient power to dominate the weak. Moral and legal values constitute additional means for the strong to consolidate and exercise their power.

De Sade's take on Western civilization clearly contains some extremely radical elements. In particular, he echoes Rousseau by arguing that morals and laws, in particular the laws of property, really amount to organized theft. It is well worth quoting de Sade at length on this issue, if only to see how one can draw different conclusions from shared enlightenment insights:

The powerful individual assented to these laws, which he knew very well he would never obey. And so the laws were made. It was decreed that every man would possess his heritage, undisturbed and happy; and that whosoever were to trouble him in this possession of what was his would be chastised. But in this there was nothing natural, nothing dictated by Nature, nothing of what she inspires, it was all very brazenly man-made, by men henceforth divided into two classes: those who yielded up a quarter of the loaf in order to be able, undisturbed, to eat and digest what was left; and those who, eagerly taking the portion proffered to them and seeing that they'd get the rest of the bread whenever they pleased, agreed to the scheme, not in order to prevent their own class from pillaging the weak, but to prevent the weak from despoiling one another -- so that they, the powerful, could despoil the weak more conveniently. Thus, theft, instituted by Nature, was not at all banished from the face of the earth; but it came to exist in other forms: stealing was performed juridically.

Additionally, both Rousseau and de Sade noticed the fact that civilized men and women often wear masks which they used to hide their self-interest. De Sade went so far as to describe a *utopia* where the “strong individual” never “dons masks” but “acts true to his own nature.” De Sade’s utopia was nothing like Rousseau’s condition of “equality”, however. It was a “Nature” where individuals were openly self-interested, where the strong not only enforced their will on the weak, but also realized all of their “potentialities” for power and domination. In a world and human nature designed for happiness, it seemed reasonable to de Sade that those who had the greatest access to serving their passions should exercise their *sovereignty*.

There are, of course, problems with de Sade’s perspective (although no more than most enlightened accounts). Since everyone in his ideal state of nature would be rationally pursuing their own sovereignty, it would be a place where “malevolent instincts” reigned supreme and a “continual state of insurrection” made personal goal setting difficult. Because each individual pursued his/her entirely legitimate criminality, the level of conflict would be interminable. Any attempt to codify behaviour (and even dark enlightenment’s must have a code) in a “citadel of force and hatred” is doomed to failure. De Sade tantalizingly offers the solution of a highly rationalized despotic state where experts in power manipulate the self-interest of seemingly equal, but effectively dominated, *citizens*. It is difficult to see how this prototypical totalitarian state reinforces de Sade’s view of Nature and human nature, however. More typically, de Sade’s analysis simply reifies and justifies whatever status quo dominates in society. De Sade continually but equally indefensibly asserts that those who wield socio-economic and political power are selected by Nature. Juliette is the ideal type of individual destined by Nature to exercise domination, while her virtuous sister Justine is Nature’s ultimate victim. The latter is freed from torture only to be struck dead by lightning.

Nature’s Optic

De Sade’s view of Nature is not at all transparent. He tends to use Nature interchangeably as the real and ideal, as an “is” and an “ought”, depending on his polemical purposes. This confusion is compounded by his inconsistent use of the terms ‘natural’, “unnatural” and “anti-natural”, with the obvious irony that what is considered unnatural in most societies accords far better with Nature’s scheme. In part, these problems can be overlooked by recognizing that de Sade is an enlightened propagandist rather than a pure philosopher. He is as interested in making converts to his cause as making precise distinctions.

But there is another difficulty for appreciating de Sade's attitude towards Nature. In his system, Nature retains a parallel and paradoxical relationship with religion. Like many enlightened writers, de Sade substituted "mother Nature" for Christianity as the primary source of values. Most enlightened propagandists retained God as the prime mover in a deist universe, thereby simultaneously deifying nature's laws while ignoring religious dogmatism. De Sade, on the other hand, called himself an atheist and ostensibly believed that he was one. But he was an atheist whose refusal to believe was a reaction of a particular kind to Christianity. This rebellion against Christian dogmatism arguably colored his attitude towards Nature.

In this context, the question of why de Sade considers God to be a "monster" and abomination is well worth exploring. De Sade repeatedly wants to take "revenge" on God and to commit sacrilege upon religion. Similarly, he alternates between wanting to dedicate himself to Nature's cause and seeking to "outrage" Nature, at the very least go beyond its limited agenda. The killing of the Christian God or "god of death" was not simply an intellectual exercise for de Sade because it began with an original rebellion against an unjust God. This remarkably conventional rebellion is articulated by Juliette's lesbian lover cum mentor Clairwil. Clairwil argues that the Christian god is not simply a harmless fable but a "cruel god". She reasons along the following lines:

1. The Christian God is unjust because he gives us passions and then punishes us for using them.
2. The Christian God's justice is horrible. He punishes people for mistakes made in a finite lifetime with infinite and terrible punishments.
3. The Christian God's religion is not life affirming but a "gloomy hell dogma" in which the greater part of humanity will suffer damnation after a life full of fear.
4. God is all knowing so he must be particularly cruel in creating individuals who will be "eternally unhappy".
5. God is not only partial with respect to the afterlife but also mean with respect to this one. He allows the vicious to prosper while the weak suffer.

For this enlightened rebel, God's treatment of a "frail and miserable and helpless creature" is not merely barbarous but positively "evil". When Clairwil views God's creation, she sees "evil, disorder, crime" reigning everywhere. If God created such a universe, she argues, then "evil is his essence."

Replacing God with Nature has distinct advantages. We no longer need to deny or repress the passions that Nature has given us, and that make us resemble other animals. In fact, the laws of nature can be interpreted to condone some of our most selfish and vicious passions. Nature is an arena where the strong dominate and feed off the weak. All the cruel feelings that humans exhibit must be condoned by Nature because they derive from our constitutions. In fact, de Sade goes so far as to suggest that our most vicious passions may be direct recommendations/imperatives of Nature. The more our passions wreak destruction, the more materials Nature has for rebuilding. Nature's *equilibrium* absolutely depends on continuous destruction. If death is necessary for new life, therefore, murder is a positive contribution.

Nature simultaneously absolves us of guilt (something de Sade's characters all have to wrestle with) and provides novel incentives to action. A clear-eyed analysis of Nature allows us to appreciate that the veneer of civilization masks savage instincts that may be modified but never suppressed. It is possible to read the criminal acting out of de Sade's characters as a form of imaginary liberation – a kind of early exploration of the heart of darkness that is the Id. But this seeming liberation has drawbacks of its own. If the Christian religion is destructive of human passions, Nature appears “indifferent” to them. Noircueil informs Juliette “from the standpoint of nature, and barring all else from consideration, all our acts are as one, none better, none worse than the rest.” They are neither good nor bad “intrinsically”. Moreover, if the universe created by God is evil – composed of *maleficent molecules* – then the natural universe without God must also contain traces of that same evil. As de Sade points out “it is necessary that everything that emanates from the womb of Nature, that is to say, from the womb of *evil*, returns thereunto; such is the universal law.”

This *indifferent evil* is something that de Sade struggles to deal with. He constantly attempts to make evil ethical, in other words to give what we think of as evil in nature a purpose. The criminal behaviour of his heroes and heroines is meaningless unless they can give it a meaning. This meaning has a distinctly *moral* character that is clearly an inversion of Christian morality. Thus, as Saint-Fond puts it, the rational criminal alternately attempts to: 1) act out to the utmost the desires that Nature has instilled in her; 2) fulfill Nature's supposed grand design by establishing the chaos from which she can recreate; and, most interestingly, 3) to enter into the heart of evil by rendering themselves as “vicious and wicked as possible,” and 4) to outrage Nature by going as far beyond its limits as possible. The evil imagination is a more “inspired architect” and “cunning artisan” than Nature itself. Juliette claims to have enough evil inside her “to have laid all Nature waste.” But, of course, these ideal fabrications of evil fail to go beyond Nature's limits, because, in the final analysis, Nature is completely indifferent to what we do. The solitary monad “lost and alone in Nature's wilderness” perpetrates a “thousand furtive horrors” to no avail.

In summary, therefore, de Sade simultaneously embraces and revolts against Nature. The criminal not only legitimizes the passions that come from Nature, but also defies that Nature by attempting to go beyond its dictates. While de Sade's natural philosophy is generally materialistic and even deterministic, he espouses the human freedom to at least attempt, however futilely, to defy Nature by imaginatively outraging it. Of course, if nature is indifferent or evil, the more logical course might be that of Kant – to practice a virtue that is antithetical to Nature. But de Sade's analysis of human nature and human history provided him with no confidence of any inherent morality in the pronouncements of virtue. As a result, his only consistent choice was the unsatisfactory path of criminal nihilism.

Human Nature

While de Sade cannot easily wrestle meaningfulness from Nature, he is on stronger grounds in discovering purposefulness in human nature. De Sade is a writer of considerable significance for us moderns not merely because he explores the dark side of human nature, but because he positively *affirms* it. The eighteenth-century analysis of the passions generally tiptoed around self-interest. But de Sade embraced self-interest as *selfishness* and made it the dynamic mechanism of his system. Picking up where Bernard Mandeville left off, de Sade argued that *all* of our motives, and therefore our actions, are selfish. The primary distinction between behaviours deemed virtuous or vicious is not one of selfishness or altruism because, ultimately, all actions can be reduced to selfishness. The appropriate distinction is between rational and irrational selfishness. The Christian religion, for example, breeds an irrational selfishness based on a fear of consequences in the afterlife. The Christian wants to make sure he or she gets to heaven. The rational pursuit of selfishness, on the other hand, is all about seizing happiness in this material existence.

Now, a rationalistic and selfish philosophical position need not necessarily lead to the relentless and criminal pursuit of personal happiness. One can take a classical Epicurean or prudential approach to happiness, or one can even view happiness largely in terms of the avoidance of pain through Stoic self-control. Alternately, one can adopt the more modern utilitarian position that egoism and community are compatible in formulas like the “greatest happiness of the greatest number.” De Sade exploded utilitarianism in ways that anticipate Freud, i.e. by demonstrating that individual instincts and social values are incompatible. De Sade was more sympathetic with the rational approach taken by classical philosophers, who he obviously respected more than their Christian successors. His characters even acquire some of the characteristics of the Stoic sage as they arrive at criminal perfection. But what makes de Sade a revolutionary and modern thinker is his emphasis on liberating, rather than controlling, the passions of the self. For the ancients, reason controls and directs the passions towards happiness. For de Sade, reason and the passions form a symbiotic system. Happiness is a product of pleasurable sensations striking the nervous system. The differing degrees of pleasure and pain derive from the strength or violence with which external stimuli strike the body. The most rational

approach is to increase pleasurable sensations in the most clear-headed and self-centred way possible.

De Sade is not a vulgar sensualist. He argues that there are two different kinds of “desires” that serve “two different kinds of needs” – the moral and the physical. By “moral”, of course, de Sade does not want to imply traditional ethics but to describe a kind of intellectual connection. Thus, Juliette has like-minded “soul mates” whose company she enjoys. These moral villains, if I may use the term, even take pleasure in educating one another in criminal refinement. Their lengthy philosophical conversations make up a substantial part of *Juliette* absolutely differentiating the novel from more pedestrian eroticism. Noircueil distinguishes between the “subtler mind” of Juliette and more “feeble-minded” women that he uses and discards as “pleasure-machines, sufficient to our purposes, but truly, their appalling insensibility depresses me.” The best-suited intellectual communions tend to be temporary, however, because the imperative of selfishness makes all alliances unstable and because the demands of the independent and developing self tends to leave significant others behind.

It is the refined and philosophical pursuit of sensual pleasure that provides de Sade’s main characters with their energy and dynamism. The pleasure pursued by these characters is overwhelmingly sexual. Other elementary needs, such as eating and drinking, are secondary. “Gluttony,” says Noircueil, “fares wonderfully well” for producing sperm (secretion) for discharging (orgasming) more “copiously.” The sexual impulse is not only the most powerful desire in human nature, but it is also the one that is capable of the greatest refinement. De Sade fixates on human sexuality as a rich vein of vitality and potential purposefulness. Moreover, de Sade’s “sexual metaphysics” actually improves upon Nature by exploiting the human capacity for controlling and directing biological impulses. For de Sade, there is “no more selfish passion than lust” and “all the passions require victims.”

The term *sadism* refers to inflicting pain upon oneself and others as a means of achieving and extenuating sexual release. In *Juliette*, Noircueil informs a fellow sexual devotee that pain is an external sensation that “conflicts with the body’s physical organization” thereby having a negatively violent impact on the “organic molecules composing us.” What makes this external-internal conflict sexually interesting is that its characteristics differ only in degree from those violent sensations that mix “harmoniously” with our “bodily fluids” resulting in the “commotion of pleasure”. Noircueil suggests by refining our attitude and habituating ourselves to painful sensations, humans can become “accustomed to receiving pleasures from those that produce a *poignant* sensation.” The primary advantages of habituating ourselves to inflicting pain upon other rather than ourselves are twofold: 1) we can increase the violence exponentially, and even to death; and 2) by so doing, we simultaneously exert our power or *sovereignty* over others.

Power and lust are the most exciting combination for de Sade and one that, at least in imagination, invariably tends towards the lethal. The “spectacle” of “causing a debauchery-object to suffer” is so very *piquant* that it eclipses all others. The greater the suffering of the victim, the greater the pleasure of the inflictor of pain; this explains why the victim should be subjected to “appalling death agonies” of a long duration. The greater the difference in power, the greater the sense of the abusers’ personal sovereignty. Finally, for the truly habituated debaucher, the more closely connected the victim, the more tender and innocent, the more deserving of compassion the object of power is, the more delicious the pleasure of witnessing her suffer. When de Sade argues that “all is permitted”, he really means it. Incest, child murder, fratricide and parricide are all allowed. Moreover, when these acts coincide with other more obviously rational interests of the agent, they are positively commanded. Whether these are physical acts or conceptualizations in the imagination is something of an open question, but the point is that the imagination is always involved and related to personal power or *sovereignty*.

Long before Simmel, Pareto or Foucault, de Sade offers an account of human relations in terms of power. But power in isolation was a “cold principle” for de Sade unless it also enflamed the “electrical fluid” or produced “an operation we term the *effects of the passions*.” Cold reason had its uses. In the present irrational state of society, crimes were best conducted in “full possession of judgment and right reason.” By proceeding “coolly, carefully, with such secrecy”, one avoided the “torch of Justice”. Moreover, by rationally or philosophically adopting the path of nihilism, the enlightened criminal internalized unwavering principles. But, ultimately, reason should be at the service of the libido and not the other way around. Juliette advises her colleagues in crime that the payoff for “ripened philosophy” and “strong principles” is “an unalloyed pleasure”.

At this point, the intelligent reader may be thinking that, by placing such an emphasis on the libidinous pursuit of pleasure, de Sade is caught in trap of his own design. Feelings are fickle and even sexual passion has some inherent limitations. It is not possible to fuck continually, even if de Sade’s characters constitute a production line of sexual couplings and discharges that is truly impressive. What is more, the peak period of sexual energy occurs at a point in the life cycle, diminishing significantly in old age. It would seem that any libido based philosophy needs to deal with cycles of diminishing returns. De Sade’s society didn’t benefit from Viagra or Cialis to maintain sexual productivity much less a concept of the self that is based on sexual activity. Substituting sexual fantasy for actual practice does not entirely remove the problem, since there is an intimate relationship between the mind and body. It is not surprising, therefore, that de Sade’s characters tend to be very concerned about their fecundity. Even Juliette, a self-described “whore” who can be “encunted” and sodomized by over a hundred men at a time, is concerned about her recuperative powers and the eventual advance of age. Many of her older male mentors constantly complain about what it takes to “stiffen their pricks”.

De Sade never reconciles these issues completely. Certainly, he maintains that human beings have the ability to “multiply impudicious joys beyond the limits imposed by that unkind Nature.” When individuals become jaded, they can always rely on cruelty and their refined imaginations to “find again that which our excesses have caused us to lose.” De Sade makes a valid point when he suggests that, ultimately, “human felicity lies in man’s imagination.” But de Sade's liberated individuals always seem to be poised on knife-edge of listlessness and disgust. Their rebellion against unnatural constraints is sustained by little more than their philosophy and it is exhibited in increasingly boring and repetitive combinations of couplings and atrocities. The pleasure they take from the evil they do progressively diminishes under the weight of an unremitting and guilt laden philosophy that commands them to do all possible evil. This philosophical rebellion eventually runs up against Nature itself. While the “hot passions” that come from Nature may be preferable to the “religion which come to us from man,” they are not inexhaustible. The ultimate fact of human nature may not be sexuality but death.

Before turning to de Sade’s fascinating attitude towards death, it is important to say something about the place of gender in his analysis of human nature. At the beginning of this essay, I pointed out that Juliette is an original female character in terms of her liberated sense of self. To this interpretation there are many possible objections. It may be countered that Juliette’s depiction as a “whore” is stereotypical and that the code to which she subscribes as a member of the Solidarity of the Friends of Crime is fundamentally misogynist.¹ Other female but defective characters are more obviously feminist in the sense of being “votaries of their own sex” and “avengers” of male superiority. But Juliette is superior to all of them in her reasoning abilities and is man’s equal precisely because she evaluates them coolly and cynically rather than stereotypically. Juliette neither worships nor envies male “pricks”; she simply makes use of them. She will never be anyone’s wife, not because she hates men, but because she knows that all wives are “victims” and she has no intention of being a victim. Juliette has systematically purged herself of all romantic notions. She has achieved a high degree of personal sovereignty.

De Sade may be a chauvinist male but that does not make his analysis of the feminine any the less interesting. Unlike other enlightened writers, his assumption of female sensitivity is linked to the personal power of the different sex. His explicit argument that enlightened women like Juliette can make much better criminals than their male counterparts precisely because of these differences. As Juliette suggests to the robber Cordelli, women’s “organs are more finely constructed, their sensitivity profounder.” Cordelli unnecessarily endorses Juliette’s self-assessment, adding that women have a “much keener imagination” than men, suggesting a greater capacity for cruelty. Juliette recognizes and embraces the evil potential in her feminine psyche to the extent that she thrives as a villain in the world of men. At the same time, she is realistic enough to know that many other intelligent women in her time will be forced into the “preposterous chains of chastity and of wedlock.” To these she has some interesting advice:

¹ In itself the Solidarity of the Friends of Crime is a paradox – a mutual aid community in a society of selfish and estranged individuals.

Never lose sight of the fact that if Nature made you a cunt for men to fuck, her hand at the same instant created you the heart needed to betray them.

The Pleasure in Dying

Death is omnipresent in *Juliette* and not confined to the victims. In fact, all the characters in the novel ultimately will become the victims of Nature. That fact is what makes Nature evil and not merely indifferent. It makes perfectly good sense to think of De Sade's tome as a meditation on death. Sade initially directed his revolt against a religion that gave us greater reason for fear than optimism about the afterlife. The replacement of religion with a materialist philosophy was salutary to the extent that it eliminated superstitious anxieties. The instruction of Nature gave life a possible meaning in terms of pleasure seeking. But Nature's greatest lesson – reconstruction from the ruins of biological decay -- offered no cause for personal joy beyond the present moment. De Sade's heroes and heroines are caught in the wearying and mechanical attempt to intensify and maximize those moments. Although De Sade attempted a revolutionary paradigm for enlightened individuals – arguably the first attempt at constructing a “superman” – his worldview is permeated by traces of all the gods of death. In a world without limits, death is the one barrier that no one can ignore.

De Sade finds it relatively easy to demolish the Christian god of love. Doing what pleases the ego transforms our material bodies into “church where Nature asks to be revered.” However, it is only through our death that Nature lives. Nature “speeds him towards the grave.” The individual who reads Nature's “indelible script”, therefore, must be “strong and hard” in embracing death. Just as it demonstrates sentimental imbecility to pity others, it is similarly irrational to pity oneself. Madame Delbène tells the young Juliette that the genuine philosopher of pleasure also must know “how to suffer uncomplainingly”. The depraved Cardinal Albani recommends the philosophical principles of the Stoic philosophers. Although stoicism “deprives us of some pleasures,” it “instructs us in how suitably to die.” This recourse to Stoicism is ironic in a ‘philosophe’ whose ideal of self-control is pushing the limits of pleasure.

Life as a “road passing from naught to naught” and culminating in “annihilation” remains a “terrible fate” for the eighteenth-century mind. It provides small comfort for the ego to know that one will become “fertilizer” in Nature's “perpetual flux”. Death renders man something less than Nature's child or even her servant; humans are Nature's “froth, her precipitated residue.” Fittingly, it is in the final book of *Juliette*, that de Sade attempts to come to grips with a subject that has obsessed him throughout and that provides the ultimate problem to the pleasure principle. The final statement on death fittingly comes from the expert in its execution, Madame Durand. On the wreckage of the doctrine of the afterlife, Durand offers an “original” perspective on death as “nothing more or less than a voluptuous pleasure.” Durand's logic is that, since the principle of life is pleasure, and since life and death are one system, then it stands to reason that there is “a pleasure in dying.” With the aid of *reflection* and *philosophy*, it should be possible to:

Convert into very voluptuous ideas all death's ridiculous frights, and that sensual excitement may even bring on thoughts of death and induce in one an eager expectancy of death.

One's own death becomes the ultimate playground. It certainly pushes the known limits of pleasure and provides the greatest challenge to the imagination.

De Sade merely touches upon the voluptuousness of death in *Juliette*, hardly "collapsing everything and everyone into a collective suicide" as Albert Camus suggested. But death worship would become a staple of literary rebellion, most notably in the writings of Charles Baudelaire and Georges Bataille. The reasons why de Sade did not choose to explore the death wish any more than he did, while admittedly somewhat speculative, are worth exploring. Consider the following. First, de Sade's brand of egotism has its foundation in self-preservation. While such an ego can be artificially refined, there is considerable difficulty in getting it to accept its own annihilation much less to actively embrace it. Second, despite being grounded in egotism, de Sade's sexual system is paradoxically weighted towards toward the *social*. Systematic lust requires a society of potential victims. Focusing on one's own death is difficult when one has acquired the habit of indulging in the deaths of others. Third, de Sade's system privileges power or *sovereignty* as the primary dynamic social relationship. Power in de Sade's universe is defined overwhelmingly in terms of the *survival* of the fittest. Deliberately not surviving would involve a completely different power dynamic and personal aesthetics. Fourth, and perhaps most important, de Sade's virulent attack on religion suggests that he never got over his own fear of death and the afterlife. It is one thing to be a literary or imaginative rebel and quite another to internalize one's own rebellion.

De Sade continues to exert an enormous influence on literary rebels, especially in their desire to shock their readers out of complacency, to expose society's hypocritical values, and to transgress conceptual barriers. But I think there is a chasm between de Sade and his modern admirers that is reflected in his attitude towards death. De Sade may appear to be totally modern when he says asserts that "selfishness is the law of Nature." His shock value for contemporaries is precisely that he liberates the *self* (in the imagination) within a context that is profoundly social. His preoccupation with death is remarkably in tune with his eighteenth-century Catholic French environment – a cultural world that informed the young de Sade not only that he would die, but also that only his death gave life significance. That an impressionable and imaginative person like de Sade should feel tormented when he realized that materialism deprived death of any meaning should not be so surprising. A crisis of meaning acutely felt by someone with psychotic tendencies leads in predictable directions. The tendency to objectify others, to quantify variables, to stereotype relations and blur distinctions (i.e. natural and social phenomena), are well-documented psychotic tendencies.²

² Cornelius Casoriadis, *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, ed. David Ames Curtis, (Stanford: University Press, 1997), p. 208.

Concluding Remarks

If we read too much into de Sade, if we make him too relevant to post-modernity, we run the risk of missing out on what arguably was his most profound contribution to modernity. De Sade is far more interesting as a literary propagandist of the liberated *imagination* than, say, a champion of individualism or the dark “other of reason”. His central characters derive their greatest pleasure, not from the relatively mechanical coupling, but from conversations in which they “fabricate ideal lubricities whose existence, unfortunately, is impossible.” Ultimately, it is the ability to “erect phantoms” that demarcates human beings from Nature. Only human creativity is capable of reaching the “sublime”. And in those “enchanted moments” of creativity, the human dominates all three kingdoms of nature. It could be argued that, ultimately, de Sade preferred “deliberation” to “demonstration”.

De Sade is a materialist in only a very limited sense. There is something about the subtler matter of the mind that permits the construction of ideals, next to which all material realities pale. Privileging evil over good is a meaningful transgression; not merely because evil is the law of Nature, but also because evil provides a much bigger canvas for the imagination. By definition, evil has “no limits”. The imagination must be free to think even the unthinkable.

Juliette is a work of fiction and imagination. One misses the entire point of *Juliette* unless one realizes that de Sade is presenting us with a sexual *dream*, a term that he actually uses in the concluding sentence. The “imagination is the cradle where pleasures are born,” he tells us, and without “embellishment” all that remains of sexuality is the “physical act, dull, gross and brutish.” The odd mixture of reason and imagination in *Juliette* is only partly the product of a troubled mind. It also reflects the eighteenth-century mind’s struggle to escape the limitations of reason. De Sade’s obsession to link reason with sexual passion is a transitional state on the path to the irrational.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE BEDROOM (1795)

1. The Marquis de Sade is above all else an educator. What kind of an educator is he? **He is an educator who is interested in *disabusing* readers of false notions, especially those inculcated by religion or by socialization. He is an educator who is interested in affirming the role of the passions in all their negative and destructive potential. He wants to explore the passions to their logical conclusion, unencumbered by moral principles. He is a genealogist who wants to show how Christian and moral principles are masks for vicious passions. He is a propagandist of the individual, for the completely unfettered individual.**
2. In the brief introduction to *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, the author says that de Sade engages in a “withering criticism” of all social restraints. Such statements

- are understandable, but why might you want to qualify them? **De Sade believes that those with intelligence and power always will dominate others and create social environments in which they can do this. In fact, a great deal of de Sade's agenda is showing his 'supermen' and 'superwomen' how to deceive and manipulate others. Moreover, the cultivation of de Sade's principles implies/reflects a process of socialization.**
3. What is the primary goal or end of human nature for de Sade? **To obtain happiness through pleasure, particularly the most intense pleasure of sexuality.** How is this not simply or straightforwardly a following through of the impulses of nature? **De Sade is clear that what also is needed is to enlarge the sphere of pleasure through intelligence and imagination. So there is a *paradoxical* following of but also improving on Nature. De Sade's attitude towards NATURE is complex, simultaneously worshipful but always overreaching towards what might be considered UNNATURAL. Madame de Sant-Ange, for example, calls herself an "amphibious creature".**
 4. What is the primary literary mechanism that de Sade employs? **The chat or the dialogue between mentor and mentee. "We have to talk". So the education in de Sade's principles is itself a socialization process and the resulting social roles are maintained through, admittedly loose, bonds of 'friendship'. Of course, one needs to pay attention to relationship of the author to the reader. If the socialization takes place within the work, rather than as a reflection of society, can we really speak about a socialization process?**
 5. How does de Sade affirm "strange tastes" with respect to sexual relations? **He says that they come from nature and that we can't critique anything that comes from that divine source. But what's really important to him is 'stretching' all of those feelings to the point of PERVERSION and HERESY. So, he doesn't simply want to affirm nature does he? In fact, you could argue that he wants to "offend" nature.**
 6. Early on in *Philosophy in the Bedroom* de Sade sums up his approach to education in the pursuit of pleasure. How does he sum it up? **As a combination of "dissertation" and "demonstration".** What soon becomes rather obvious about all this? **The quality of REPETITION. Interestingly, this is one of the least repetitive of all de Sade's works, but it is still repetitive. Why all the repetition? Is there a pedagogical function? If so, what is it?**
 7. Why is it problematic to classify de Sade's writings as "pornographic"? **Pornography implies sexual titillation. But de Sade's writing are repetitive to the point of being mechanical. Even without the repetition, they have more of a 'shock' value than a tease value. This quality further illuminates their pedagogical rather than pornographic role.**

8. What does sexuality need to be ruled by? **IT NEEDS TO BE RULED BY “COLD REASON”. THAT’S WHY IT CAN’T EVER BE A SIMPLE CASE OF PORNOGRAPHY. SEXUALITY IS ANALYZED BY REASON AND MUST CONFORM TO REASON. SEXUALITY IS NOT ITS OWN MISTRESS. EVEN IN THE FORM OF WHAT SEEMS TO BE COMPLETE ‘LIBERTINAGE’, SEX IS A SUBJECT GOVERNED BY REASON. SEX NEVER TRUMPS REASON IN DE SADE’S SYSTEM.**
9. Early on in *Philosophy in the Bedroom* de Sade sums up his agenda. What is it? **To disabuse people of intelligence of all principles of “religion” and “virtue”. He’s paranoid about all the “seeds” of virtue that he thinks need to be exterminated, especially in “young hearts”. So, de Sade’s principles can also be summed up as BINARY OPPOSITES to conventional principles: i.e. “irreligion, impiety, inhumanity, libertinage”.**
10. Why does one need to get rid of every last seed of virtue? **In order to have a canvas on which to paint the lessons of “reason” and the stirrings of “imagination”.**
11. Eugenie is the mentee who comes to get “instruction” from Madame de Saint-Angie. They go into a delightful “boudoir” or bedroom. Boudoirs in the 18th Century were also places where ladies of fashion entertained close friends in the morning, so they were not simply places to sleep or fuck. They had a role analogous to the salon, but much more intimate. What does Madame de Saint-Angie want to do to a very willing Eugenie, who is more of a device than a person? **She wants to give her genuine “enlightenment”. This is an enlightenment that goes way beyond the conventional enlightenment in terms of dismantling “superstition”.**
12. In what way is Eugenie’s sexuality put in its proper hierarchical place by Dolmance and Madame de Saint-Angie? **They affirm the rule of “cool reason”; Dolmance claims the right to ‘tutor’ Eugenie; the latter has to pay attention to the “lessons” being taught; despite all the attractions of this young nubile body, the instructors put the “lecture” before the demonstration.**
13. In what ways is sexuality expanded and enlarged in these discussions? **Eugenie is taught about the pleasures of the anus as well as the cunt; she learns about ‘frigging’; she faces mirrors so that “attitudes and postures” can be repeated in a variety of ways.**
14. What major lesson does de Sade want to teach about sexuality that illuminates his paradoxical approach to human nature? **He wants to completely sever sexual pleasure from conception. PLEASURE is to be the divine object of contemplation. GIVING ONESELF pleasure, of course, is key. But it’s more complex than that. Pleasure becomes “holy”. PLEASURE itself becomes an “idol” and women, especially, are required to give themselves**

- over to the pleasure of men as part of NATURE'S DICTATE. Female 'rights' do not allow them to circumvent this role. The concept of nature and natural is being used in very interesting ways that are not at all easy to disentangle.
15. De Sade's idolization of pleasure has a decidedly "patriarchal" flavour to it. How is this borne out in the discussion? **The significance of the womb is undermined and, to the extent that preference is given, it is to the male contribution.** What fascinating sexual proclivity do the characters discuss? **The daughter-father connection.** What power relationship does de Sade want to undermine? **The influence of the "mother".** He effectively advises women to "loathe" their mothers. Of course, the attitude of de Sade to "liberated" women can appear very progressive; but his antipathy towards "virtuous women" and women's "rights" is palpable. There's pathology worth exploring here.
 16. What is the most appropriate role and function for a woman in de Sade's scheme of things? **The "whore".** There's a dichotomy here that is very Catholic (France) – the temptress (Eve) versus the Virgin Mary. De Sade wants very much to debase virtuous women. All women should "surrender" to men as "whores".
 17. But it would be a mistake to think of these "whores" simply as sexual objects and victims of patriarchalism wouldn't it? **Yes, because if "rational" or intelligent women embrace this role, they can become "FEMALE PHILOSOPHERS" in their own right.** De Sade calls them "authentic philosophers". He has a vision of sexual female philosophers that doesn't simply put them on a par with men, but, because of their sexual power, puts them above men.
 18. How must the doctrine of religion, morality and even "female rights" end up by transgressing the sexual potential and liberty of women? **It must end up making them "slaves" of social prejudice, of their families, or of an abstraction that has no connection with their real power.** Genuine female liberation is linked to their "wantonness".
 19. By surrendering to men and willingly serving men's pleasure, what can women achieve? **Liberty to experience their own pleasures, for now "every man has got to serve your pleasures".**
 20. What lip service should women play to social conventions? **While they should "fuck" to their heart's content, in the current climate they need to practice "discretion".** They need to worry, not about their virtue but about their "reputation". De Sade, of course, believes that he lives in a sexually repressive and guilt ridden society.

21. What new doctrine of the “body” does de Sade preach to women? **“Your body is your own, yours alone.” Women should “profit” from its use, both in terms of pleasure and in terms of getting what they want from men.**
22. How do social views about marriage and female virtue limit women’s progress towards freedom? **They force sexually inexperienced women into male controlled relationships.**
23. What is marriage for de Sade? **An “absurd union” completely contrary to natural impulses.** What is the only justification for monogamy and what does de Sade have to say about it? **He says that legitimate inheritance is the only reason for chastity in marriage, but that 1) preventative measures (i.e. contraception) and 2) practicing oral sex and fucking in the anus, and 3) the inability to disprove legitimacy make this no problem whatsoever. In any case, for de Sade THERE IS NO SPECIAL BOND BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN THAT SHOULD MAKE A BIOLOGICAL CONNECTION OF ANY IMPORTANCE. FOR DE SADE, EVERYONE IS AN ‘INDIVIDUAL’ WITH NO SPECIAL CLAIMS ON ANYONE ELSE.**
24. De Sade wants to get rid of traditional virtues as “counterfeit divinities” and to appeal to this thing that he calls NATURE. What’s the problem? **Well, for one thing, there is this “impersonal thing” that we call Nature and that makes God a joke. Then there is this highly “personal thing” that we call human nature. To the extent that human nature is a part of nature, it can be interpreted as “natural” or a component of nature’s “scheme”. But to the extent that man’s personal pleasure or happiness is irrelevant to nature’s plan, a human being seems apart from nature. De Sade’s writings can be read as a not always successful attempt to deal with this “tension” between nature and human nature using reason. HE RESOLVES THIS TENSION BY CLAIMING UNILATERALLY THAT ALL IMPULSES COME FROM NATURE, INCLUDING THOSE ONES REFINED BY THE IMAGINATION.**
25. What clue does Dolmance give to the acute tension experienced by an eighteenth-century philosopher pushing the analysis of Nature to its logical conclusions? **He “angry” with Nature’s god for creating a world in which there is “pain” and “evil”. Nature’s laws are hardly benign – they depend on “essential injustices”. To embrace nature, now bereft of an “idiotic” and “contemptible” God, you must logically embrace injustice. IT IS INTERESTING THAT DE SADE WANTS TO FOCUS ON THOSE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE NATURAL THAT HAVE BEEN REPRESSED BY SOCIALIZATION.**
26. Dolmance’s anger towards God is the anger of the philosopher as *rebel*. In what way? **De Sade is in rebellion against a “horrible” and “appalling” God who has created man and nature as a mixture of good and evil.**

27. De Sade's is the predecessor of Nietzsche in his genealogical account of religion. How does he portray Christianity? **He portrays it as an organized fraud, where the "henchmen" of a pretended Son of God create a superstitious "romance" that simultaneously pleases people's pretensions and puts them in a position of power.**
28. Religion's otherworldly utopia and cult of "charity" has a very dark side for De Sade. What is it? **It makes people feel 'guilt' about the supposed evil that is in them; it forces people to deny the impulses of their nature; it contorts and distorts the individual in ways that torment tranquility.**
29. Why are Christian charity and its modern philosophical manifestation in "benevolence" fictions for de Sade? **Actions that are performed under these names are really just misguided "duperies". In the first place, most people practice them merely to gain recognition or a reputation for virtue. In the second place, such actions are misguided because they fail to appreciate that society needs to force the poor and unfortunate to "fend for themselves" rather than to look to their superiors for relief. Here, clearly is a political agenda that suggests that the poor should be kept in their place. THIS IS 'REAL POLITIC' RATHER THAN AN ENLIGHTENED UTOPIA. THERE IS NO HEAVENLY CITY ACCORDING TO DE SADE AND NO APPROXIMATION OF IT IN TERMS OF THE HUMAN CITY.**
30. What is NATURE totally INDIFFERENT to according to de Sade? **It is totally indifferent towards "good and evil". What is good and evil a product of according to de Sade? Cultural manners and Climate.**
31. Anger towards God and religion is intense, but he has another "creative agent" in the form of Nature. What's the problem with Nature? **Well, human nature is all about the rational pursuit and expansion of pleasure (intense sensory pleasure, not confined to utilitarian pleasure). Nature's law is pleasure in the sense of "LOVE THYSELF". "Nothing has more of the egoistic than her message" and it is sacred. But from a larger point of view nature is perfectly indifferent to our pleasure. Sexual pleasure only serves procreation, for example. Pleasure ends in the grave. BUT DE SADE CAN SPEAK OF "CHEATING PROPIGATION OF ITS RIGHTS" BY DIVORCING SEX FROM PROCREATION AND INTENSIFYING THE FORMER IN TERMS OF SOPHISTICATED AND DIVERSITY.**
32. What philosopher does de Sade's description of us as pleasure/power seeking individuals remind you of? **It is very Hobbesian, especially in paragraphs like the following: "Are we not all born solitary, isolated? I say more: are we not come into the world all enemies, the one of the other, all in a state of perpetual and reciprocal warfare?"**

33. How does de Sade get around the accusation of the “unnaturalness” of some of his prescriptions? **He suggests that nothing can be unnatural if nature allows it to occur in our heads.**
34. How does de Sade deal with the fact that the maximization of sexual pleasure and power could lead to social or biological catastrophe? **He says nature doesn't care. More interesting, he suggests that “indifference” is misleading because nature actually “requires destruction” in order to have room to rebuild and recombine elements. This, in effect, means that “ALL IS PERMITTED” and maybe even condoned. Crime is just a reflection of manners and climate. In “the universal agent's eye” what is branded criminal may even be considered “meritorious”.**
35. But when de Sade gets into the joys of Sodomy, we get a sense of just how far he wants to wander from Nature or a simple human nature. What does he say about the power of imagination? **“The imagination is the spur of delights; in those of this order, all depends on it, it is the mainspring of everything; now, is it not by means of the imagination one knows joy? Is it not of the imagination that there come the most piquant joys?” THE KEY IS THAT THE IMAGINATION MUST BE FREE: IT CANNOT HAVE ANY PREJUDICES OR GUILT TO PREVENT IT FROM MAXIMIZING JOY****IT HAS TO BE ABLE TO ENTERTAIN EXTREMES EVEN ATROCITIES.** Now, here's a question for you. Is de Sade trying to set free the imagination? If so, are some of his visions of sexual and criminal “atrocities” more devices for freeing up the imagination than prescriptions for action? Is he more of a libertine of the mind than a libertine of practice? If so, where's the line? Could de Sade even provide a line? How does he expect to be read? What does this line of Eugenie suggest “What I ask you is this: what have you fancied, and then, having fancied, what have you done?”
36. In other words, are there limits to the IMAGINATION? **For de Sade it must always be “bent towards the inconceivable”.** What is the connection between INTELLECT and IMAGINATION for de Sade? **He clearly thinks that intellect is necessary and that imagination is the “track the intellect follows”.** Where does the “inconceivable” bend towards? **The sexual/criminal act.** What example of a criminal taboo does de Sade provide? **Incest.** Note that it was not at all uncommon for enlightened philosophes to contest the issue of incest or to argue that it was “natural”.
37. Is intellect and imagination combined evenly in everyone? In other words, is de Sade a democrat when it comes to his libertinage? **No it is not the same in everyone. “Tis to the man of genius only there is reserved the honor of shattering all the links and shackles of ignorance and stupidity”.** Note that the intellectual “shattering” task falls more to men than women; but women can be superb practitioners of libertinage because **THEY ARE MORE OVERTLY SENSUAL BEINGS. *******

38. What paradoxical attitude does de Sade have towards “blasphemy”? **On the one hand, blasphemy is meaningless since religion is meaningless. On the other hand, it is a taboo. Breaking taboos arouses the imagination. When combined with sensual activities, it can be an aphrodisiac.**
39. Even when coupled with blasphemies and other imaginative refinements, sexual excesses are short lived. How does de Sade deal with post coital depression? Remember that the eighteenth-century deals with this generally by combining sexual “love” with “friendship”. **This is an interesting issue. The ‘ladies’ clearly know that once men come they have a tendency to be disinterested and even contemptuous. Once sex is achieved, men and women can even become predators upon one another suggests Madame de Saint-Ange. THIS IS A PROBLEM IN DE SADE’S PHILOSOPHY OF RADICAL SEXUAL INDIVIDUALISM. DE SADE SUGGESTS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THOSE WHO ARE “FRIENDS IN EVIL”.**
40. For de Sade, these male and female “wolves” are superior to and prey on a hypocritical and idiotic society. What does this imply? **It makes it unclear but unlikely that de Sade wants/expects a general transformation of society. These superior individuals resemble Brad Stocker’s vampires in their ability to turn society to their own advantage. But they do need to have some honour/friendships among themselves that are difficult to sustain. Moreover, they need to keep their beliefs “secret” from the general society. There is an inherent elitism in this system that makes it difficult to view de Sade as a proponent of sexual liberty.**
41. De Sade appears to suggest that “secrecy” will always be “indispensable to men in society”. He writes some great lines that resemble but invert Rousseau: **“Condemned to live amidst people who have the greatest interest in hiding themselves from our gaze, in disguising the vices they have in order to exhibit nothing but virtues they never respect, there should be the greatest danger in the thing were we to show them frankness only; for then, ‘tis evident, we would give them all the advantages over us they on their part refuse us, and the dupery would be manifest.”*******
42. So far, we’ve witnessed de Sade as a philosopher of an enlarged and extremist sexuality but we haven’t cashed in on his famous name. What does the term ‘sadistic’ convey? **A penchant for cruelty. De Sade argues that nature and human nature is “cruel” and catastrophic not kind and orderly. Infants are born cruel and have to be socialized to control the instinct to cruelty.**
43. De Sade inverts Rousseau. Instead of compassion being natural to man, cruelty is natural to humans. What does this mean if you invoke nature’s law? **We have a duty to be cruel. To be kind is to be ‘artificial’ and is a ‘corruption’ of our natures.**

44. What does he consider to be a huge and unexplored well of pleasure, especially when connected with sex? **THIS SELF SAME CRUELTY.** How does this relate to his elitist system? **You can only practice a degree of cruelty towards your inner circle of “wolves”, “libertines” and “voluptuaries” but ALL IS PERMITTED TO EVERYONE ELSE UPON WHOM YOU CAN FEEL FREE TO PREY LIKE VAMPIRES.** A great deal of de Sade’s writing is a description of what you can do to socially irrelevant and intellectually inferior others! This certainly includes parents and children towards whom a considerable degree of potentially erotic aggression can be felt. *****
45. How do children resemble shit for de Sade? **They are products of our own bodies over which we have complete proprietorial rights. Hence, the legitimacy of abortion. Hence also the possibilities of incest, not only as ‘natural’ in the enlightened sense, but also as fodder for imaginative eroticism.**
46. Why is female cruelty much more delicious than male cruelty for de Sade? **For de Sade, women are closer to nature than men because of the “excessive sensibility of women’s organs”. Therefore, their cruelty, which is perfectly natural, is more “active”, “delicate” and capable of “refinement” than men. Women are “ferocious” and “ruthless” if “charming” criminals.**
47. We now begin to explore sexuality “beyond the possible”. There’s not much on Showcase or triple X movies that de Sade hasn’t anticipated, and the eighteenth-century technology was adequate to the task with its **India rubber dildos** and preference for the shrine of the **asshole**. When de Sade countenances sodomy, he engages in an interesting discussion of Nature and the natural that is in some ways very contemporary. What does he say? **“Yes, natural, so I affirm it to be: Nature has not got two voices, you know, one of them condemning all day what the other commands, and it is very certain that it is nowhere but from her organ that those men who are infatuated with this mania receive the impressions that drive them.”**
48. But what is the big paradox of Nature? **Nature is equally interested in creation and destruction – both are absolutely necessary to her purpose.** Eighteenth-century thinkers often talked about the economy of nature’s law but de Sade talks about its “excesses”. What particular excess does he want to exploit? **The fact that sexuality is way more powerful and extensive than would be required to reproduce the planet. THUS, HE ARGUES THAT “PROPAGATION WAS NEVER ONE OF HER LAWS” BUT SIMPLY SOMETHING THAT NATURE ‘TOLERATED’.** Not an entirely convincing argument to be sure, but how does de Sade attempt to square it. **By suggesting that the extermination of the entire human species would not bother nature as simply bit.** What’s his final and concluding argument? **Nature produces ‘gays’ whose “predilection for the behind” has absolutely nothing to do with procreation. De Sade**

suggests that it is problematic to build universal arguments on the basis of “breeders” alone.

49. On page 285, de Sade finally comes to grips with LOVE as a passion that he cannot abide. How does he deconstruct love? **First, he says that it is based on “desire”. Second, he argues that its characteristic consequence is “madness”. Finally, he concludes that it deprives us of our “reason”. Thus, love for him is problematic precisely because it is so irrational and he is a philosopher of reason. This irrationality is dangerous, but fairly easily exploded as a temporary problem, by sexual promiscuity. Here’s a great quote: “O voluptuous young women, deliver your bodies unto us as often and as much as you wish! Fuck, divert yourselves, that’s the essential thing; but be quick to fly from love. There is none but physical good in it, said Buffon, and as a good philosopher he exercised his reason on an understanding of Nature. I repeat it, amuse yourselves; but love not at all; nor be any more concerned to make yourselves loved; to exhaust in lamentation, waste in sighs, abase oneself in leering and oglings, pen billets-doux, ‘tis not that which you must do; it is to fuck, to multiply and often change your fuckers, it is above all to oppose yourselves resolutely to enslavement by any one single person, because the outcome of constant love, binding you to him, would be to prevent you from giving yourself to someone else, a cruel selfishness which would soon become fatal to your pleasures”.** **OPPOSITION OF SENSUAL PLEASURE AND LOVE**
50. De Sade must, however, find some social relationship worth preserving in this Hobbesian universe of sexual predators and he finds it in FRIENDSHIP. But it is friendship of a certain kind isn’t it? **Friendship is based on utility: “We shall respect the former, very well, provided they remain useful to us: let us keep our friends as long as they serve us; forget them immediately we have nothing further from them...nothing is more an EGOIST than Nature” LET’S NOT FORGET THAT THIS IS A PHILOSOPHY OF INDIVIDUALISM.**
51. Why are the laws of society ultimately inimical to individual liberty? **They are designed to safeguard the whole, to protect the weak, not to liberate the individual. But they were not designed to prevent the great and enlightened criminals from taking their pleasure.** What does extreme and enlightened pleasure need? **VICTIMS**
52. De Sade is often looked upon as either a literary or a philosophical rebel? What would de Sade’s world look like if it took political shape? Later on, I’m going to suggest that de Sade’s approach is **anti political** in significant ways? We do, however, have a document created by the character Le Chevalier that provides a framework for political discussion by the other characters. It’s not exactly clear how de Sade wanted readers to respond to this document for a new French republican state. On the one hand, it is a code designed, not for the imaginative

and liberated few, but a real community. It moves progressively from fairly conventional recommendations towards more philosophically radical ones. Some central elements of de Sade's philosophy do emerge, but not in ways that are completely coherent. It seems that de Sade is torn between composing something that could potentially be enacted, 'preaching' his particular philosophy, and yet distancing himself from anything that resembles the old essentially Christian paternalism. Here are the main recommendations: **Generally, Le Chevalier wants what he views as a return to a more classical worldview that is not so sexually repressive. But he wants to combine that with an enlightened, utilitarian and rational modern society. The combinations don't always jive and it's not clear if and when de Sade is speaking through Le Cavalier. Here are some of the specifics of the document:** 1. get rid of all religious imperatives and related superstition; 2. reinvigorate the code of civic humanism (since some social code will be necessary); 3. perhaps revitalize paganism (to the extent that it is more in touch with nature than monotheistic oppressive religions); 4) reward and reinforce a patriotism that is connected to utilitarian ends; 5) institutionalize perfect freedom in matters of conscience; 6) reduce manners to "humanity, fraternity, benevolence" without attempting to universalize any of these as imperatives that might oppress individuals of a "chillier temper"; 7) get rid of cruel laws and, especially, capital punishment; 8) making the law code more utilitarian; 9) decreasing property rights that perpetuate unfair inequalities; 10) eliminating many of the practices by which the "rich enchain the poor"; 11) foster political divisions; 12) permit sexual differences to the point of encouraging "lechery" and sexual variety that distract men from other power plays; 13) allow males to have access to all females ("proprietary right of enjoyment"; 14) legitimize adultery, soften the prohibitions against incest ; 15) decrease the oppressive power of the family, and, interestingly: 16) focus on commerce rather than conquest. The lengthiest digressions in the manifesto concern the male appropriation of females and rendering offspring wards of the state. There is also a long digression on capital punishment and violence in general, which Le Chevalier (de Sade?) viewed as perfectly natural, particularly in a vital unrepressed republic. It's not clear exactly what legislation he was recommending here other than punishments for violent crime should be lenient. What's interesting is the philosophy of Nature as simultaneously constructive/destructive that made punishments of violence contradictory to nature's law. But all of this ends up making his classical/utilitarian political combination less practical. And, what begins as something reasonable, becomes increasingly politically problematic. In any case, de Sade's primary spokespeople disown the document, and by implication, politics as a vocation.

53. Whatever the confusions with the document per se, the point that the **true mentor Dolmance** wants to make is that **we absolutely have to rid ourselves of all sense of pity for, or political responsibility towards, others. Le Chevalier retains too much paternalism, too much "perfidious sensibility". He has too much**

- “love for mankind” remaining. The political impulse is still grounded in the ‘social’ rather than the ‘personal’. Le Chevalier, for example, is too struck by the unfairness of property distribution. He is not yet a confirmed criminal of sensuality. He cannot push his imagination to the limits. The true political posture of the confirmed egotist is political and social “APATHY”. Dolmance sums it up as follows: “As absolutely null, that is how I view it, my dear; whether it does or does not share my enjoyment, whether it feels contentment or whether it doesn’t, whether apathy or even pain, provided I am happy, the rest is absolutely all the same to me.”**
54. Why is republicanism ultimately a dead end as far as de Sade is concerned? **It ignores the fact that what individuals seek is “DOMINANCE” over others; in other words, republicanism runs counter to “HUMAN NATURE” which is all about “POWER”.*****AND POWER IS INTENSELY PERSONAL.**
55. What important psychological principle does de Sade want to emphasize? **Self-love, egotism or what he calls “amour-propre” is invariably “tyrannical”. Moreover, this tyrannical attitude is indispensable to a “vigorous imagination”. Power, not affection, is the instinctive stance of the individual towards others. The political man does not have personal power. He is too concerned about what others think.**
56. How does de Sade “demonstrate” this fundamental truth? **By showing how much pleasure Dolmance and the others get out of abusing Madame de Mistival.**
57. What does the political arena generally become for the truly confirmed and fearless voluptuary? **Nothing more than a side show. It can’t compare to watching Madame de Mistival yell “Aie! Aie! Aie!” while she almost bleeds to death.**
58. What seismic shift in consciousness does this political treatise and ensuing discussion demonstrate? Hint: it’s not confined to de Sade. **There is a shift from the public to the private arena. The public arena of citizenship is being usurped by a focus on private life and private emotions as more real and substantial. There is also a complex shift happening from a focus on masculine character to a focus on female characteristics. In the case of de Sade, these developments are taken in a completely different and darker direction than sex-marriage-friendship triad being pushed by other writers. But the interest in sexuality and focus away from the political into the personal arena certainly runs parallel.**

Horkheimer and Adorno on *Juliette*

1. What are the set of assumptions and preoccupations that Horkheimer and Adorno share? **As members of the Frankfurt School they still cling to a Marxist interpretation of the Enlightenment as the route of the bourgeoisie towards domination of material life. As scholars who have lived through Fascism, they want to understand why capitalism entered into what they view as a “barbaric”, instead of liberatory stage. This perspective and this obsession colour their interpretation of the Enlightenment and its aftermath.**
2. What is the primary characteristic of Enlightenment for Horkheimer and Adorno? **It makes abstract reason the sole adjudicator of experience. It forces experiential particulars (lived experience) into an abstract system. It allows ‘matter’ to become intelligible only according to a “hierarchical organization of concepts”. It links ‘facts’ inescapably to ‘principles’. In summary, the Enlightenment is the abstract systematizing of all experience.**
3. What is the goal of this systematizing for Horkheimer and Adorno? **The goal is to dominate and control ‘nature’? What must this control inevitably include? Human nature as well as the natural world. What trick on experience must Enlightenment reason play in order to accomplish this goal? It must reduce the possibilities and potential of experience.**
4. Enlightenment reason forces facts and principles to coincide. What facts does it necessarily exclude? **The unexpected.**
5. What does the Enlightenment end up doing for Horkheimer and Adorno? **It ends up by defining (and impoverishing) experience in terms of a “laboratory experiment”. Anything that doesn’t conform to its science is a “rationalization” and is thereby of no value.**
6. What relatively impoverished “principle” can Enlightenment reason be reduced to for Horkheimer and Adorno? **Self-preservation, which when writ large becomes “mastery of nature”.**
7. Horkheimer and Adorno focus on Kant. They do not deny that Kantian philosophy is not simply about systematizing knowledge but also about achieving an authentic and autonomous life for free subjects. But they suggest that the main current of the Enlightenment is to put abstract reason in the judgment seat. What is the overridingly negative terminus of this development for Horkheimer and Adorno? **The “forcing” of “facts” to fit the “system”, to place the world of experience into the Procrustean bed of “calculation”.**
8. How do Horkheimer and Adorno relate this interpretation of Enlightenment to the concept of “manufacturing”? **With the Enlightenment “knowledge” is**

- manufactured and manufacturing becomes the definition of useful knowledge. H & A jump to a vision of Hollywood that manufactures images that conform to the norms of manufactured knowledge and that further “govern” the “apprehension” of knowledge. In other words, knowledge is manufactured within a closed and self-referential system.**
9. What are the implications for society? **No understanding of society is conceivable outside of the understanding of society as a system of rational calculation.**
 10. What hugely important “fact” of individual and social life gets buried within this process of systematization? **Death. The ‘system’s’ focus is on self-preservation. To the extent that death is understood by the system, it is only as a statistic. The ‘ratio’ between life and death is measured solely in terms of the preservation of the system. And the ‘system’ becomes the substitute for life or lived experience.**
 11. Why do many human emotions, intuitions and desires become irrelevant after the hegemony of Enlightened Reason? **They have little meaning in a “scientific” sense because they can’t be interpreted in terms of the self-preservation of the “system”. They only have interest to the extent that they can be “manipulated” on behalf of the “system”.**
 12. What happens to that part of Kant that speaks of “freedom” and “utopia” with the progress of Enlightened Reason? **It becomes increasingly irrelevant and is even dismissed as “dogma”.**
 13. In summary, what does Enlightenment science become? **Technical practice that no longer needs philosophy.**
 14. What do Horkheimer and Adorno have to say about Enlightenment morality or ethics? **They end up being a feeble attempt to replace an “enfeebled religion”. MORALITY HAS NO CLEAR PLACE IN REASON. ENLIGHTENED MORALITY IS REALLY LITTLE MORE THAN A “REVULSION” AGAINST POSSIBLE “BARBARISM”.******
 15. What is Enlightenment morality a reflection of? **The sense of decency and ideal of mutual love among the bourgeoisie.** But where does the core rationale of Enlightenment systematizing naturally lead for Horkheimer and Adorno? **Towards a totalitarian system which is “brutally efficient”, “liberates” the individual from the need for “morality”, and makes “self-preservation” the only determinant of action.**
 16. Who are the **true heirs of Enlightenment reason** for Horkheimer and Adorno? **The technological “experts” and the “cartel-lords” whose “science has**

- become the inclusive concept of the methods of reproduction of the subjected mass society”.
17. Who is the Enlightenment philosopher who, for Horkheimer and Adorno, illuminates this core tendency in the Enlightenment and who liberates all individuals from the need for morality? **The Marquis de Sade.** How does de Sade redefine Reason? **As a mechanism that has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with morality.**
 18. Once the rule of morality is subverted, what does reason become? **It becomes two things. First, it becomes a technique for pursuing one’s individual interests. Second, it becomes a technology of power over others.**
 19. What is Enlightened liberalism or humanity for Horkheimer and Adorno? **It is a “short intermezzo” that keeps “domination” at bay in the absence of an exploded religion that makes people fear eternal punishment.**
 20. Why does **terror** become an ever-possible instrument of systematization? **In the absence of fear of what happens after death, and in the absence of an interest in humanity, terror is one obvious instrument of control. It can become part of the planning process. To the extent that the “system” becomes inherently tyrannical, of course, it has less need of a terror that is inefficient.**
 21. What do all of de Sade’s writings reflect? **A reorganization of life that is deprived of morality or any ultimate goal other than pleasure.**
 22. How do the writings of de Sade reflect the failure of the Enlightenment Project? **They reflect nothing more clearly than “a purposeless purposiveness”.**
 23. What is the only consideration that a truly totalitarian system needs to take into account? **The “interests or the passions of those who govern”.**
 24. How does this reflect the failure of Enlightened Reason? **It shows that Reason can provide no goals of its own. And since reason has made morality nothing more than a dogmatic *rationalization*, all that’s left is individual desire, and, especially the desire for self-preservation reinterpreted as “power”.**
 25. How does de Sade’s *Juliette* lay out this new reality? **His character Francavilla argues that political control is not about “legitimacy” but the “subjugation” of others. Does this subjugation have anything to do with morality? None whatsoever. Individuals can do whatever they wish, just as long as they “worship no other god than you”.**
 26. How is this Enlightenment *mythological*? **It pretends to be “objective” but it reinvests vitality into purely “subjective” desires. It liberates the subject in ways that “destroy” the original conception of reason. IN OTHER WORDS,**

REASON EVENTUALLY DISPENSES WITH MORALITY, LIBERATES IRRATIONAL 'DESIRE', AND EVEN EQUATES THOSE DESIRES WITH REASON OR MAKES THEM THE MATTER OF REASON.

27. How do Horkheimer and Adorno describe this trajectory of Reason? **As the "fusion of society and self". Also, as "pure reason" become "unreason". Also as the "antiauthoritarian" principle transformed into "domination".** Why do Horkheimer and Adorno suggest that this was inevitable? **Because ultimately the Enlightenment "possesses no argument against the perversion of its proper nature".** What is for H & A the culmination of this development? **The "harnessing" of the Enlightenment to the "dominant mode of production"?**
28. What is perhaps the key ingredient towards the domination of the scientific and the technological? **Skepticism towards any other values or beliefs than self-preservation. This permits 'scientism' to progress towards ever increasing domination of the human.**
29. What does de Sade's character Juliette accomplish in her attack upon the Catholic religion? **Skepticism towards and rejection of all value systems other than her (and everyone's) self-interest.** What does she end up denying? **Civilization and civilized values.** What weapons does she use? **Reason.** What do all her actions tend towards? **Regression.**
30. Despite the tendency towards regression, Juliette remains Enlightened. In what way? **Not only does she use reason proficiently but also her reason allows her to be in complete "self control" and completely instrumental in her actions. This is "rational self-interest" without the bourgeois attention to morality.**
31. What kind of behaviour does this example of rational self-interest encapsulate? **Criminal behavior. A rational criminal demonstrating consummate "planning".**
32. To the extent that Juliette and her pals embody a new kind of technological/systematic virtue, what is it? **A studied "indifference" to any emotions other than those of criminal desire.** In a somewhat diluted form, what do H & A think the ethical stance of the individual is in a technological society? **Apathy that, unlike in Juliette, has now become totally habitual. Note the connection that H & A make between apathy and the "bourgeois philosophy" of Stoicism.**
33. And the upshot of all Juliette's actions is? **"The transvaluation of all values, the 'courage to do what is forbidden' without any moral revelations. All Christian and human virtues are thrown out.** Who ends up being affirmed and in what way? **The powerful are affirmed in their cruelty. Notice that Juliette is extreme, but the new technological society of the market reflects this same**

- cruelty towards the weak in the worship of the market. Juliette and her friends echo this sentiment by arguing that benevolence towards the poor is inefficient.
34. What nineteenth-century philosopher also worships at the shrine of power for H & A? **Nietzsche. Note how H & A want to bring together tendencies in Enlightenment and Post-Enlightenment philosophy to make their argument. Arguably, Nietzsche's philosophy is an attack on the Enlightenment and not its mythological culmination. But in H & A's argument Nietzsche's attack on Christianity becomes an attack on civilization and humanity.**
 35. What does a rational analysis of Nature suggest for de Sade? **That the powerful always dominate the weak, and that it is natural to seek and exercise power over others. To live according to nature means to oppress others. VIRTUE BECOMES A VICE BECAUSE IT EXHORTS US TO LIVE UNNATURALLY. THE IDENTIFICATION OF REASON WITH NATURE INVERTS THE TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY AND SETS FREE THE 'WILL TO POWER'.**
 36. De Sade goes after Rousseau's *compassion* or pity. What's the problem with compassion in the technological system? **It "mediates" between the individual and the social, the general and the particular, in ways that prevent the system and the individuals who control it from maximizing their power. What is ultimately the "true" bourgeois virtue? Efficiency. What is compassion in a world based on efficiency? Weakness.**
 37. What is the unmediated relationship between the general and the particular in the technologically efficient system? **The general has no superiority over the particular except in the interest of power and efficiency. The general reveals itself in the particular.**
 38. What does this mean in terms of self-interest? **It means that self-interest or self-preservation become they key elements in a world where access to power is highly unequal. What is debunked in this new social-self relationship? Charity or love. What happens to the love between the sexes for de Sade? There is no longer any premium for love over sexual connection, in fact de Sade is interested in debunking 'love' just as he debunked 'religion'.**
 39. Of course, compassion and love do not simply go away, do they? How do H & A account for their persistence in systematized society? **They suggest that compassion (and by implication love) become "distortions" that further strengthen the distinctions between the weak and the poor and that end up merely perpetuating the system.**
 40. How is Juliette a refined child of the "new age"? **She spurns compassion and other directed emotion totally. She is cool and collected; she has made**

- herself “indifferent” to such emotions that neither serve nature nor the system. Even her blasphemies of Christian compassion can be viewed primarily as “diversions” – playing with “taboos”.
41. But what is fascinating for H & A about Juliette’s **transgressions** despite the fact that they are supposed to be reflections of the individual desire for power? **H & A ARE STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT EVEN THE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOURS HAVE THE ELEMENT OF ‘INDIFFERENCE’ ATTACHED TO THEM. SOME OF THE NAUGHTIEST BEHAVIOUR IN *JULIETTE* APPEARS AUTOMATIC, PERFORMED BY AUTOMOTONS.*******
 42. How do H & A put it? **“The formalization of reason is only the intellectual expression of mechanized production. The means is fetishized, and absorbs pleasure”. HERE THE AUTHORS ARE MAKING A CONNECTION BETWEEN REASON AND MECHANIZATION THAT THEY SEE EXHIBITED IN DE SADE’S ORGIES. IT’S AN IMPORTANT ARGUMENT. DO YOU AGREE?*******
 43. Why is fetishization absolutely imperative in the technological society? **Because the worship of nature proves unsatisfying. Once a need (i.e. sexual) is met, natural pleasure is achieved. In order to be self-sustaining, pleasure seeking has to be fetishized and constantly pursued. Thus, the tension in de Sade that allows for no (or relatively little) relaxation. All of the relaxation in de Sade is spent building up a rationale (and presumably lubrication) for more offences. The sexual escapades and sexually-related criminal activities have the character of assembly line production for H & A.*******
 44. How does de Sade relate to the notion of **repressive desublimation** (Eric Fromm) in later capitalist society? **The obsession with sex and transgression takes the place of a real lifeworld; it acts as a form of release that reinforces the system; its obsessiveness and continual titillation mirror the never-ending machinery of the technological system.**
 45. Everyone is captured by the system, even those who dominate it. Thus, Juliette becomes a sex-machine for the penetration of males. Most people, of course, can’t dominate. What happens to them? **If they must have pleasures, these are doled out with the system in mind. Thus, the idea of celebration and social festival is replaced by RE-CREATION. The tribal festival is transformed into a vacation. Thus, H & A try to show how, even when it comes to pleasure and release, everything contributes to the efficiency of the system. And the technological system is something that they clearly want to blame on the Enlightenment.**
 46. What does the increasingly technological system want to rid itself of for H & A? **From any of the formerly stratified or patriarchal relationships that might**

- get in the way of increased functionality. HENCE JULIETTE'S HATRED FOR PARENTS.** It also wants to rid itself of alternate relationships to functional ones. **Thus 'love' as tenderness or friendship is exploded as a 'dangerous' relationship.**
47. Juliette is extreme. In terms of a more 'normalized' and 'normalizing' technological society, who are the new Juliettes? **In their own words, these are "sex educators, psychoanalysts, and hormone physiologists" who bring "hygiene to his sexual life". Juliette is still reacting to the "taboo" but sex therapy is part of the normalizing process.**
 48. But 'normalizing' the natural also intensifies **darker desires** that are associated with nature prior to its submersion within technological efficiency. What **black obsession** do de Sade's writings suggest for H & A? **The obsession with women AS NATURE, as representing something uncontrollable and wild. The obsession with the difference between men and women and the desire on the part of males to subjugate the latter. There are, of course, lots of sections in de Sade where the sexual difference is affirmed and women are designated as "whores". But isn't de Sade's analysis of women more complex and interesting than is emphasized here? One need only mention the writings of C. Paglia to suggest that de Sade is interested in female liberation of a kind.**
 49. So, women are close to nature and therefore need to be feared and dominated by men? What group parallels women as close to nature, particularly in terms of their historical exclusion from technological society? **Jews.**
 50. Historical oppression of women and Jews renders them symbolically closer to nature. Why must this be a problem? **The technological society simultaneously encourages an obsession with and a hatred of Nature – the desire to be nature but to outrage her. This is clearly in the ambivalence towards Nature of de Sade. It means that these groups will be targeted intermittently.**
 51. What does the natural "power" and social "weakness" of women and Jews encourage? **Hatred and a desire to dominate. Cruelty to both categories is embedded in highly rationalistic systems.**
 52. What above all else is Fascism for H & A? **It is the desire to dominate carried to an extreme, but it is even more than that. Fascism is the now twisted love of society perverted into a hatred of and cruelty towards men. It even takes the form of cruelty towards oneself in the form of a sacrificial desire for immolation.**
 53. De Sade and Nietzsche were rebels of the imagination rather than social architects of terror. Why for H & A are they nevertheless partly responsible for reason's descent into the barbarism that was Fascism? **Both of these writers encourage a return to nature viewed in terms of domination and even cruelty. Both of**

- them are enemies of civilization viewed as a mediation between weak and strong. Both of them encourage strong outbursts of conscious and subconscious repression without the safety net of human compassion and affection offered by a lifeworld. Both of them “immortalize a contradiction” by equating domination with happiness and the suffering of many with the pleasure of the few.
54. Here are the best lines in the book: “It is as if the final result of civilization were a return to the terrors of nature. That fatal love which Sade highlights, and Nietzsche’s ashamedly unashamed magnanimity which would go to any extreme to save the suffering from humiliation: cruelty as greatness, when imagined in play or fancy, deals as harshly with men as German Fascism does in reality. Whereas, however, the unconscious colossus of actuality, anti-individualistic capitalism, proceeds blindly on its course of annihilation, the rebellious though deluded individual is fulfilled by that same fatal love. And so that same icy and perverted love, is directed against men – who are misused as things. Sickness becomes a symptom of recovery. In the ecstasy of sacrifice delusion recognizes its own humiliation and becomes equal to the enormity of domination that in real life it is powerless to overcome. In the shape of dread, imagination seeks to resist dread. The Roman proverb which held that harshness is true pleasure expresses the insoluble contradiction of order, which transforms happiness into a travesty of happiness when sanctioning it, and manufactures it when proscribing it. In immortalizing this contradiction, Sade and Nietzsche made it a concept.”
55. H & A, relying partly on *Philosophy in the Bedroom* argue that de Sade’s philosophy ends up representing a “social phenomenon” rather than an “intellectual” or “spiritual” one. They suggest that it culminates in the “anarchical rule” of the “generality”. This they get from the speech on the Republic. **Obviously they’ve misread this. Their misreading is understandable given their agenda, but it seriously confuses rebellion in the imagination with a socio-political agenda. De Sade’s recommendation of “apathy” or “indifference” would have been much more accurately germane to their argument.**
56. What for H & A did the “dark writers” of the enlightenment **not** do? **They did not identify the ‘system’ or its efficiency with ‘value’ or ‘morality’.** What they showed was that reason could at least equally well promote what was considered vice and immorality. In other words, there was no inherent contradiction to reason in proclaiming ‘criminality’. They conveyed the “shocking truth” and the contradiction of reason.
57. But what is de Sade’s exhortation of “cruelty” at the very least predictive of? **It is predictive of totalitarian regimes, including those institutionalizing pogroms.**

58. After all this work showing that de Sade and Nietzsche were patrons of cruelty, justifiers of terror and predictors of totalitarianism, H & A end up by making a puzzling but positive statement about Nietzsche. What is it? **That they much prefer these writers to those ‘positivists of science’ who pretend that capitalistic/technological society is moral. Unlike the “moralistic lackeys of the bourgeoisie” at least de Sade and Nietzsche highlighted the systemic problem unflinchingly. Bourgeois sentiment, in other words, has obscured the structural problem that de Sade and Nietzsche reveal.**
59. Does John Dwyer have a problem with this admittedly fascinating interpretation and what is it? **It seems to me that this is a particular and selective reading of de Sade and Nietzsche and one with an agenda. The agenda is to show how Enlightened reason *must* not only systematize but lead to an inhuman and ultimately totalitarian system. They also want to expose the barbarism of domination that they see at the heart of the Enlightenment and that leads to Fascism. This argument is extremely teleological and it blames the Enlightenment for all of the ills of the modern world. That is not to say that there are no insights here but that one needs to read writers like de Sade and Nietzsche on their own terms, not on the terms of the members of the Frankfurt School.**

Story of the Eye

General Points

1. The *eye* is not only in the title but is the dominant symbol in Bataille's text. What other images does the concept incorporate? **Eggs, which in their raw state resemble eyes. Similarly bull's balls.**
2. Why the *eye* and similar images? **The reality or world that we see with our eyes is highly normalized by society. Bataille arguably wants us to shake up what we see; he wants to make our "aching" eyes "gape" with flashes of "lightening".** What could that possibly mean? **Bataille wants to shake up normal and normalizing realities in order to allow us to conceive of something other than the rational limits that have been imposed upon us. He wants to provide images of erotica and "monstrosity" to give us the power to re-imagine our reality and ourselves.**
3. When we allow ourselves to become "wild" and "restless", what happens to conventional time and space? **Time stands still and becomes "endless"; space becomes "immense".** What happens experientially for us? **We cease to be merely *subjects* and take back some of our primordial *sovereignty*.**
4. What is the character of human thinking and behaviour when our nature or sovereignty is restored? **It is *excessive*; it seeks to break limits or boundaries; it feels both the *fear* and *excitement* related to taboos; it is anything but rational or mechanistic.**
5. Bataille clearly was inspired by de Sade. Where does he differ from the writer of the black Enlightenment? **De Sade is a philosopher of reason; his approach to the *criminal* is the product of an appreciation that reason bears no relation to morality; he wants to carry *cold* reason to a logical conclusion. Bataille, on the other hand, is the enemy of cold and mechanistic reason. He is a philosopher of excitement, surprise and intuition. The world that he wants to restore to us is a "different world" that is *felt* rather than *thought*.**
6. How is Bataille's concept of sovereignty different from that of de Sade's? **He does not so much seek to dominate Nature but to liberate human nature. Liberated humans are forces of Nature.**
7. How does Bataille describe the restoration of human sovereignty? **He describes it as the DELIGHT "at going beyond all limits".**
8. But Bataille is stuck in the world created by reason. He cannot simply advocate a return to power. What is his agenda? **He uses literary techniques to negate the power of rationalism. He shocks us into a return to *ecstasy* by taking us by**

- surprise. He exposes the limits of reason with characters that deliberately *transgress* them.
9. What is the key for Bataille to escape from reason and return to sovereignty? In other words, why write this as a novel rather than a work of philosophy? **It is the imagination. His character suggests that you have to *accept* or *feign* imaginary alternatives in order to reconstruct *meanings*. You have to think *as if* life conformed to your *desires*. The stimuli to a new and sovereign awareness are ideas that represent desires that are *violent, monstrous, gruesome, forbidden, terrifying*.**
 10. If imagination does not take its direction from reason, what must be its foundation? **The senses. Bataille's work is all about reinvigorated senses that have become dulled by reason and to revitalize humans who have lost their vitality and become "weary".**
 11. Bataille's work encourages a return to the natural, at the very least in terms of imagination. What often happens to some of his characters when they make this jump? **Like Michelle, they "shriek" and "snarl" and become "inhuman". The danger is always one of going to far and passing the barrier of the human into the animal world. They are absorbed by nature rather than acting sovereign to it.**
 12. Bataille's characters talk about achieving a *geometric incandescence*. What happens when this is achieved? **Life and death "coincide", as does "being and nothingness". How is this approach to death different from that of de Sade? De Sade is a rationalist and a materialist. The only way that he can incorporate death into his system is in terms of the *pleasure principle*. But Bataille's characters understand *death* as "the sole outcome of my erection" and can embrace *nothingness*.**
 13. What image of liberation does Bataille see as the end point of embracing the sensory imagination? **A "melting"**
 14. Bataille's characters seek liberation, but from what? **From their "unbearable personal vision" connected too closely to the bourgeois world of "dressed people". Human society has become for them the "nightmare" from which *hallucinatory nightmares* are a technique of release and reattachment to feelings of primordial "fear" but also "joy".**
 15. What is a good way to describe the significance of Bataille's *eye*? **He wants us to see with *eyes wide open*. What kind of eyes does he want us to have? The huge eyeballs of a calf or cow.**
 16. Eyes and eggs resemble one another. In the cooked state, eggs resemble buttocks, facilitating the shift into sexual arousal, excitement and climaxes that take one

- momentarily out of the socially conventional world. That's all pretty straightforward, but why do you think does "the word egg" get "dropped from our [i.e. the characters'] vocabulary"? **Precisely because of its significance as a liberating "obsession". To the extent that it represents liberation, the egg becomes a sacred object. Its meaning transcends the conventional world. Eyes, eggs and balls become symbols of mystery and sacred objects in rights of transgression.**
17. Why is the bourgeois world of "decency" totally incapable of genuine awareness? **They have "gelded eyes". They can't see the "crack" leads to "immensity".**
 18. How does this blinkered vision relate to the bourgeois individual's appreciation of sexuality? **They can only appreciate sexual practices that are highly repetitive and insipid. You might want to ask yourself whether Bataille's approach to sex escapes the mechanical interpretation that H & A attach to de Sade's descriptions.**
 19. Bataille has a chapter on the *open eyes of the Deadwoman*. What do you think he is getting at? **Death is alien, death is ridiculous, and nothing about death can be measured "by the common standard". But that makes death the antithesis and perfect antidote to reason. Death is immensely meaningful without being reasonable. That's one reason why the characters feel closer to Michelle in death than they did in life.**
 20. What is the consummate enemy for Bataille? **Apathy or boredom.** Why is bourgeois society completely and utterly "boring"? **It seeks to normalize everything, including sex. Its "orgasms", according to Bataille, are "normal climaxes".** What does Bataille compare the organisms of his liberated characters to? **The "laughter" of "savages". Simone bangs her head "violently" during sex.** What do all desires need to be to avoid the trap of bourgeois boredom? **Violent.**
 21. The escapades with Sir Edmund and the butchered priest clearly reprise the theme of taboos and blasphemies in de Sade. Do you see any difference in the descriptions? **Bataille's descriptions also rely on inversions of traditional taboos. But as the treatment of holy wine and urine could suggest, Bataille is less interested with blasphemy per se (although this would certainly attract the attention of his French readers!) and more with the striking imagery of bodily fluids (i.e. the host as sperm and the wine as urine). In other words, Bataille is not interested in arguments or transgression for its own sake. He wants to make his readers pay attention to their bodily functions.**
 22. The novel culminates in a orgiastic mélange of eyeball, urine, vagina, and cum shot (that parallels the end of many porno movie scenarios). There is a mixture of sex and horror. So, how does this differ from, say, a porno snuff film? Why, if filmed, would this be the scene from an art film? **Lots of things to consider**

here. First and foremost, the vision of Michelle's dead eye makes sure that the viewer considers the relation between life and death in ways that are more profound than simply sexual sadism. Second, the stream of images (including the stream of urine) bombasts the senses in an artful, uncontrived fashion. Third, "horror" is a trigger of awareness. Fourth, what does the author mean by saying that the scene was a *dreamy* vision characterized by "a disastrous sadness". What's the sadness all about?

Specifics

1. Chapter 1 is called "The Cat's Eye". Why? **Could it be that cat's and traffic cat's eyes allow you to see in the dark? Bataille's is a vision that uses the black and forbidden aspects of human nature to "see" or arrive at a more "meaningful" understanding.**
2. Simone and "I" begin a "love life". Is it a love life; does the term *love* really apply? **Love does apply here. It is a very "intimate" relationship and unlike some of the relationships described by de Sade, it is never threatened by self-interest. Also unlike de Sade's friendships, which are more of the mind than the body, it stays fundamentally "driven" in the sexual sense. At times, it goes beyond sex, as in the embrace on the beach early on in the novel. It is a genuine "romance" but certainly not of a conventional kind.**
3. Why can't Simone and "I" ever talk about their love? How does this relate to Luhman's discussion of romance? **It would lose any authenticity if one of the parties attempted to put into words. The characters *understand* one another. "We understood one another". They "defy modesty" together with very little need for anything other than commands.**
4. Why are these two characters soul mates? **They both instinctively crave an "upheaval" of the normal. How does Michelle fit in? She is described as the "purest and most poignant" of their friends. At one level, they clearly love her. But at another they are willing to abuse her for their own ends. They are closer to her in death than life. Thus she acts as a device for their own growth in understanding.**
5. What's a major difference between Michelle and the other two central characters? **The latter have "will power" which Michelle does not. They never completely "abandon" themselves, but Michelle becomes an "abandoned body", a distracted mind, and a suicide. Michelle is "intoxicated" by scenes of pleasure but incapable of initiating them.**
6. How do we know that Bataille wants to shake up all his readers' senses? **In the very first chapter, he has *plopping raindrops*, thunder, lightening, and a *frenzy* of sexuality complete with puddle wallowing and punctuated by "cries of rage". Wakey, wakey, my dear readers.**

7. What do you need to be able to truly experience your life? **You need to rid yourself of social conventionality. Here the prime representative is Simone's mother who is either ignored or abused. The symbolism of 'pissing on the parent' should be obvious.**
8. What are 'normal' people for those who defy mental conventions? **They are people who can only look with "dismal eyes" upon behaviours that they cannot understand.**
9. What is the symbolic significance of the wardrobe in which Michelle gets locked? **It is a "bridal wardrobe"; it represents the conventional path for girls; but it becomes a pissoir and prison – a veritable horror chamber -- for Michelle. Soooo, she is deprived of the conventional path but incapable of the will to an alternate self-development. How is Simone different from Michelle? She deliberately rejects the roles of "a housewife and mother!".**
10. Bataille goes after the senses again in Chapter 2, always pushing towards the brink of "horror" as the path of self-awareness. What are the sensual images that he invokes? **Those of smell, namely the "stench of blood, sperm, urine, and vomit".**
11. What does the drunken debauchery scene of schoolboys and schoolgirls imply? **That human nature is not rational and orderly. That without social conventions human beings would be much more aggressive, sexual and excessive beings.**
12. Why is the parental return one of "joy" rather than shame? **It allowed the children to "wipe out the last shreds of reason". Human nature triumphs over rationality. Parental authority is shown to be a social sham.**
13. Why doesn't "I" kill himself, although he clearly thinks about it? **In a world characterized by the existential dilemma, he chooses to create/find a meaning for himself.**
14. How is sexuality transformed for "I" and "Simone" after their initial breakthrough? **Sexual desire needs to be stimulated by extremes and limit breaking. Desires necessarily become "warped". Thus, Simone and "I" want to create a *nightmarish and sacrilegious* threesome with Michelle. Note that Simone takes the lead here and throughout the novel. Is there significance in that? What's the implication about women and nature?**
15. What does the female cunt become for Bataille that might help you to answer the previous question? **A place of "flood", "storm", "volcanic eruptions".**

16. The planned nightmare occurs in Chapter 4. Why is this chapter called “The Sunspot”? What does the sun do? **The sun allows you to see things more clearly. Ironically, here it is the night and foul deeds that bring clarity to the main characters. *Teeth chattering* and *lips foaming* trip the characters into an unconventional reality. It is these “moments” that become “immense”. What does Michelle’s dementia reveal for the main characters? The “wildness” that is in human eyes.**
17. The sanatorium scene is not only nightmarish but something else. What does Bataille want to suggest? **This is the “chaotic and dreadful landscape of my imagination”. It is the subterranean psyche that Bataille is really mining here for insights into human nature. The real environment as well as the plot is “a personal hallucination”.**
18. What is the relationship between the personal psyche and human society for Bataille? **Both are ‘nightmares’, but the latter has become artificial, wearying, and totally “joyless”.**
19. Simone falls off her bike. “I” thinks he’s fucking her lifeless corpse. There is fear and barred teeth in the coupling. But there is a talk of love and even a heroic rescue. What the hell is going on? **Just want to mention that this is a ‘different’ and unconventional love relationship. Pay attention to the dynamics. Pay attention to the relationship of the author towards the readers as well as the characters.**
20. What is the paradox of the escape from the sanatorium? **Naked human beings with only shoes riding bicycles (machines). Wild human nature tied to technology. “Nude body” versus “awful scraping of steel”. Interesting isn’t it that the technology 1) becomes a sexual aid, and 2) almost kills Simone in the process. Make of this what you will.**
21. Eggs and eyes permeate and penetrate Chapter 6 on “Simone”. The symbolism here is complex. I will only mention three points. **First, eggs represent birth as well as eyes and buttocks. The descriptions and discussions of “terminating” the eggs refer to “death”. So, the relationship between life and death is underlined. Second, the “reflection” on the eggs is meant to move analysis away from the “rational” towards “the more and more unreasonable”. Third, the cunt is the locus of pleasure, but also of birth that leads to death. Overall, the “entertainment” with the eggs is a meditation on the human condition. Why do you think this is the “one of the most peaceful eras” of “I’s” life? What is going on when he’s not engaged in this kind of “reflection”?**
22. Can you think of an explanation for the breaking of the eggs and the flushing away of the eggs? **Humans demonstrate their sovereignty and joy in an otherwise meaningless world by *playing* with excess and wasting resources.**

This is a very different attitude from the one generated by capitalist economics – the rational economic man -- where resources are *saved* and *invested*.

23. How do we know that Marcelle will never be able to join in the exciting threesome that “I” hopes for? **Marcelle’s first words upon being rescued by “I” are “Now we can get married”. Marcelle can’t have a conventional reality but she can’t escape convention either. The only way that she can be a part of the major relationship, therefore, is in death. Her death was a “catastrophe” and life itself is a “catastrophe” for those who are really aware.**
24. Unconventional love is a major theme of this book. How is “I’s” love for Michelle unconventional? **He loved Michelle without “mourning” her death. In conventional love, one must mourn death.**
25. Why would a bourgeois condemnation of such attitudes/distantiation be utterly misplaced? **Bourgeois mourning is not love, it is a social convention and utterly contrived.**
26. What are the symbols that Bataille attaches to death that makes mourning irrelevant and the relationship between life and death highly intimate? **The symbols include: a frail world, changing into light, and absorption in the starry universe. But what can’t such personally meaningful moments (or “peaceful eras”) change? The pull of the senses, the violent agitations of the body, the restless desires that must be constantly pursued and refined by the imagination. Thus, if Michelle were alive, “I” would “start all over again, for instance by dunking her hair, head down, in a toilet bowl”.**
27. Death is highly meaningful as an antidote to reason and an invitation to the void. But it simultaneously an “absurdity”. What is the problem with a preoccupation with death for Bataille? **It makes even a limited “understanding” difficult. We need to create our own meanings, our own “joys”, and even experience “love”. But “I” has none of these resources when confronted with the death of Michelle. In the face of death “gestures have no carrying power, like voices in a space that is absolutely soundless”.**
28. Any desire for a return to the bosom of the university must be avoided. Simone, “I” and the Englishman revitalize themselves by pursuing their desires without limits. What’s the function of Sir Edmund in the new triangle? **He’s a literary trope in French literature – the overly analytical and anal Englishman who needs to get his emotions second hand from French experts. He may also be a representation of the Marquis de Sade (think about it). In any case, his “ingenuity” allows Simone and “I” to engage in new relationships that restore their life vitality in the aftermath of the loss of Michelle. Sir Edmund becomes the voyeuristic third “spectator” who kindles some good**

performances. These get more and more irrational without being interesting. In my opinion, the novel begins to decline here.

29. What image becomes fully developed in the last few chapters that might be worth exploring? **The image of the sun.** What is interesting about it? **As mentioned before, the sun reveals things that might not otherwise be seen. The glaring sun coincides with some of the most violent episodes, and reveals the “blackness” and dark sexual energy of the bull, and by implication, the psyche of humanity. The bright hot sun is juxtaposed to the darkness of the confessional; the place where one confesses one’s most secret desires and seeks absolution. The bright hot sun “suffocates” and its heat exposes the smell of corruption, assaulting the senses of readers in the precisely the way that Bataille wants to assault their senses. But the sun is also an “unreality” that takes one into a world of dreams and visions. Its light and heat are described several times as “liquefying”. Bataille blurs the distinction between reality and dreams; the horns that gore the matador belong to a dream without clear transitions. A metaphor perhaps for human life.**
30. What’s the “morose” conclusion? **The author seems to suggest that all this “jerking off” and sexual excess reflects both the “unharmonious” spasms of the body and the universe. Even the most “bizarre” activities are ultimately “absurd”.**
31. The final sections are dominated by Sir Edmund and Don Aminado. Sir Edmund is described as a “black monster”; Don Aminado as an “unspeakable creature”. We can understand why Sir Edmund is a “black monster” and that is not necessarily a condemnation. Why is Don Aminado condemned by the characters? **He represents consummate Catholic repression. Although he cannot even control his own sexual impulses, he is willing to condemn them in others. His hypocrisy is matched by his arrogance, since he believes that he will enter the kingdom of heaven. He is not able to face life and death on its own absurd terms.**
32. What is the significance of the scene involving the fly on the Don Aminado’s very dead eye? Why does Simone “tremble”? Why are “I” and Sir Edmund unperturbed? **I’m not sure, what do you think?**
33. Finally, can you think of a reason why the “I” in this novel is never given a name? Who is the “I”?