



SOURCES OF THE SELF

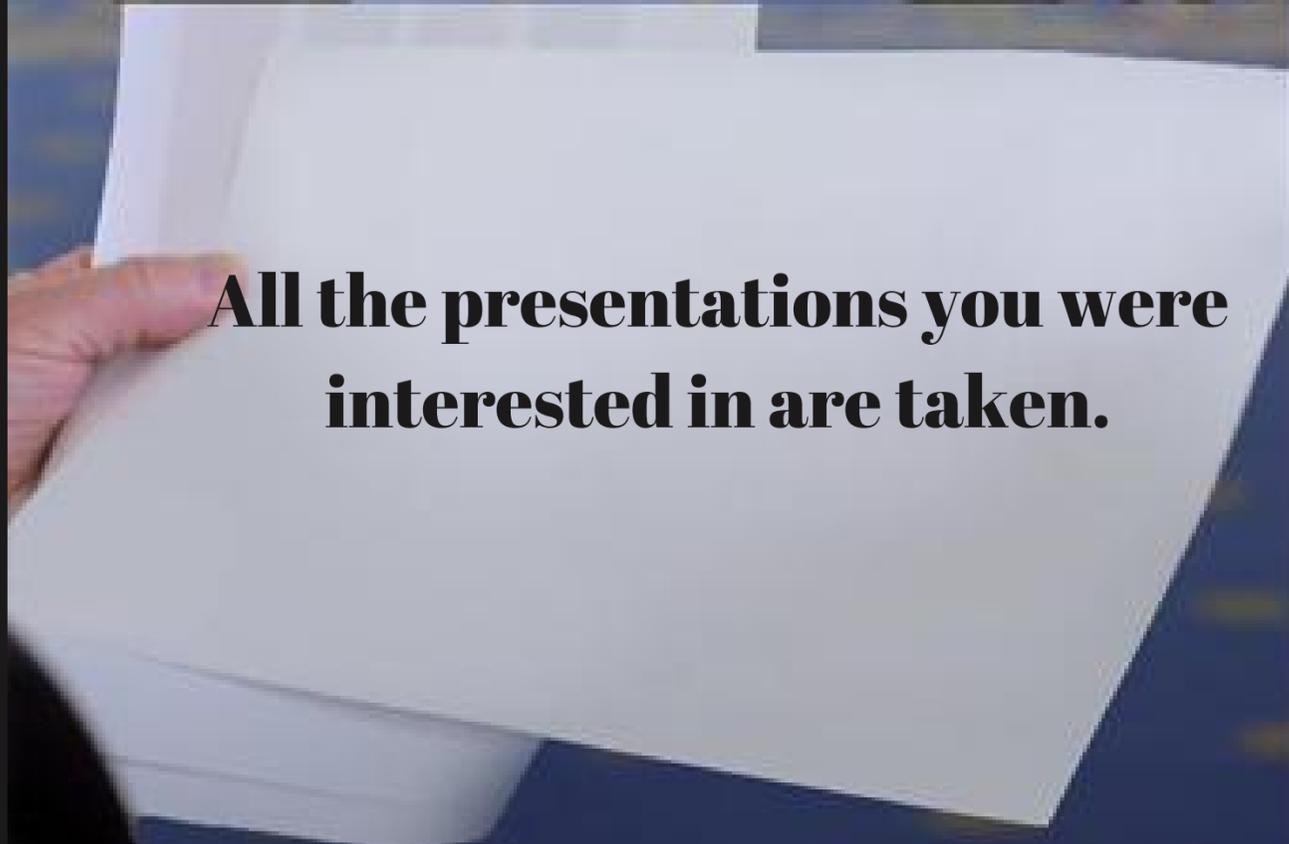
by Charles Taylor

PAGES 211-521 (PARTS III-V)

60 minutes + 15-30 minutes of Q&A

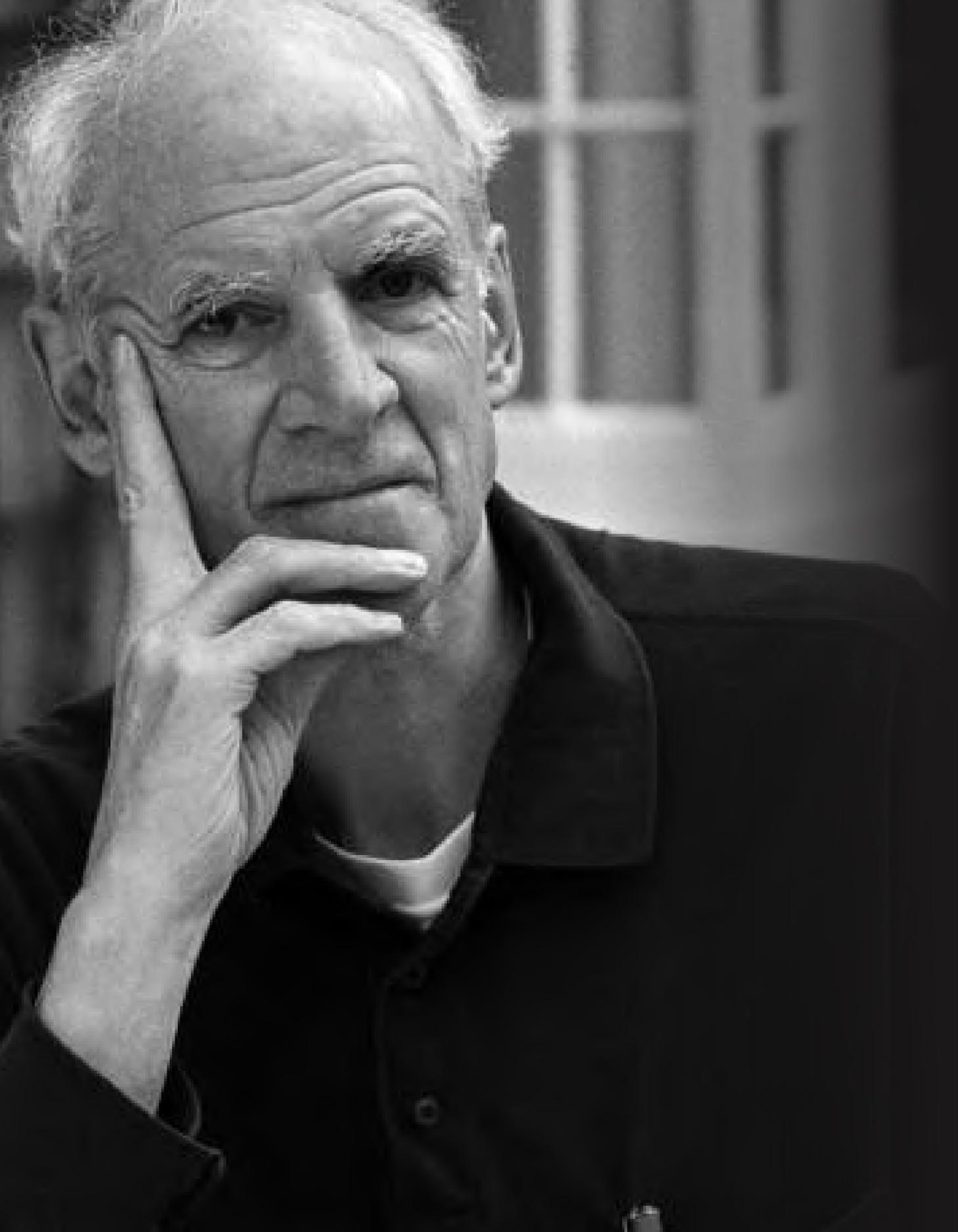
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All the presentations you were interested in are taken.





CHARLES TAYLOR

(b. 1931)

Canadian, Roman Catholic Philosopher who set out to develop “philosophical anthropology.” He is known for his critique of naturalism and his affirmation of “communitarianism,” which affirms the importance of social institutions in the development of personal identity in contrast to classical liberalism (Locke, Hobbes, etc.). Notably, he lost the 1965 election to the future prime minister, Pierre Trudeau.

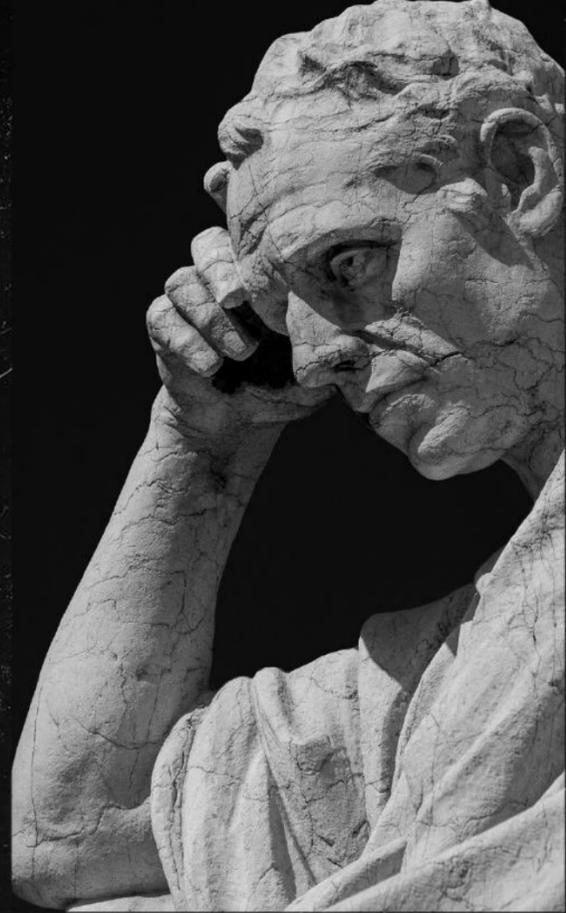
SOURCES
— OF —
THE SELF

The Making of
the Modern Identity

CHARLES
TAYLOR

MODERN SELF

Taylor provides an overview of the modern idea of “self” in Western culture, focusing on the influence of history, philosophy, and the culture at large. While “individualism” is certainly a consequence of modern selfhood, Taylor affirms several positive aspects of the modern self as it relates to morality and other positive contributions to Western culture.



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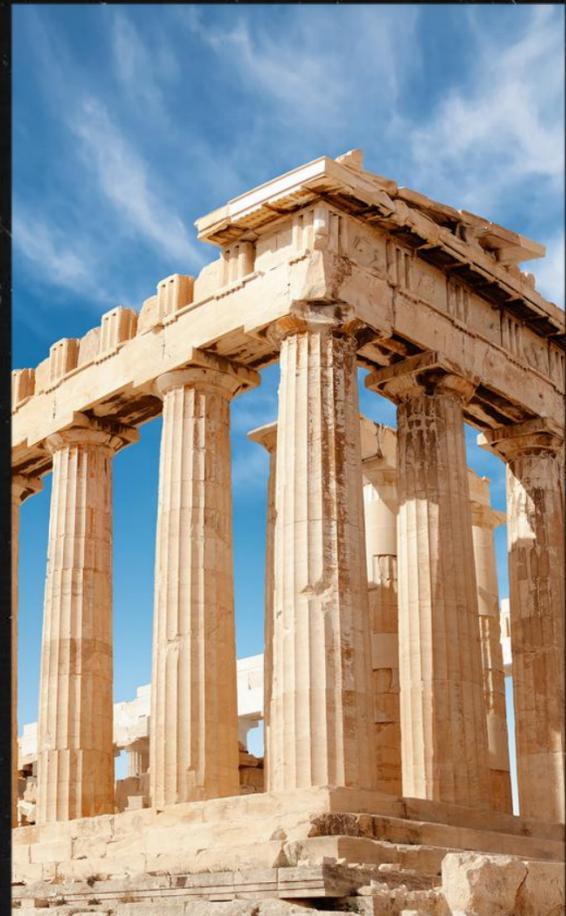
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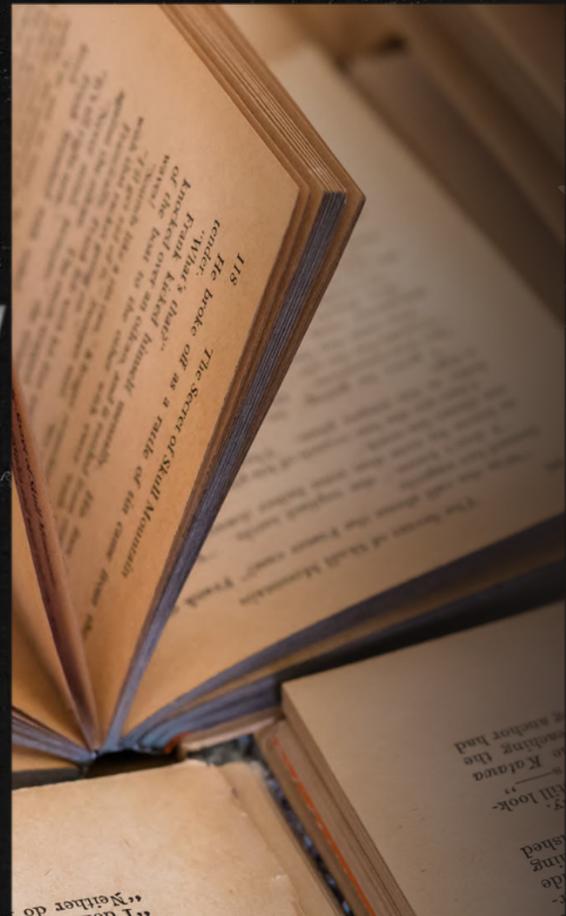
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SELF AS DEVELOPED BY MULTIPLE SOURCES



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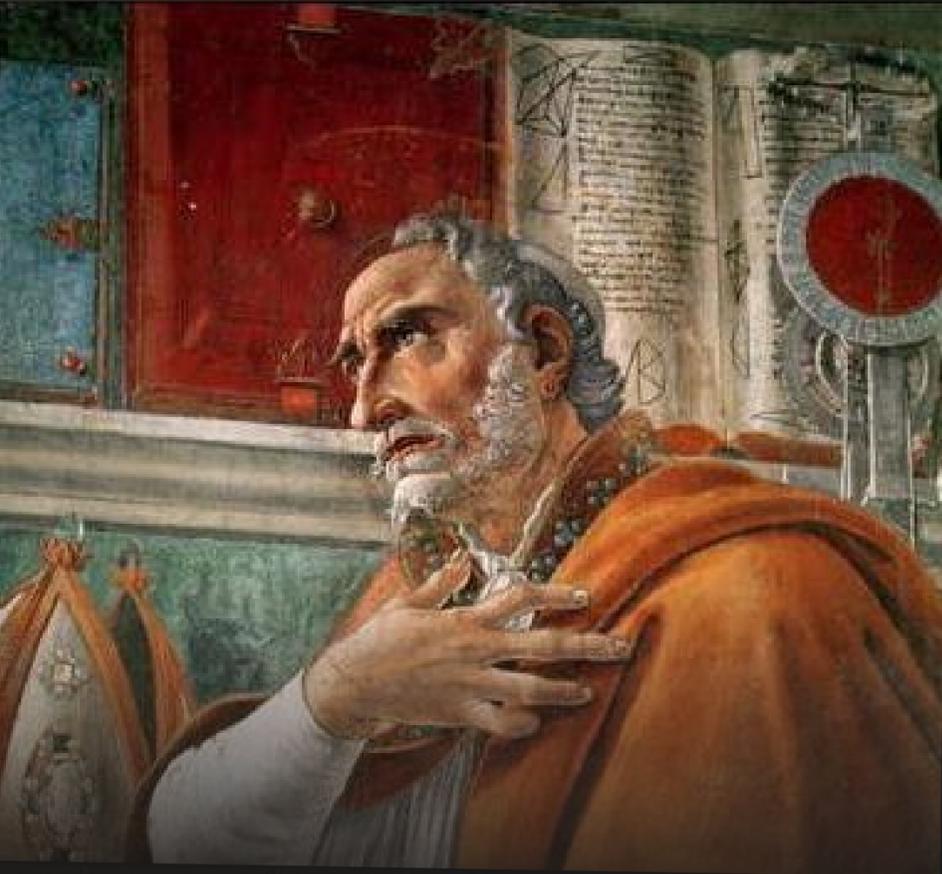
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PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, CULTURE, LITERATURE

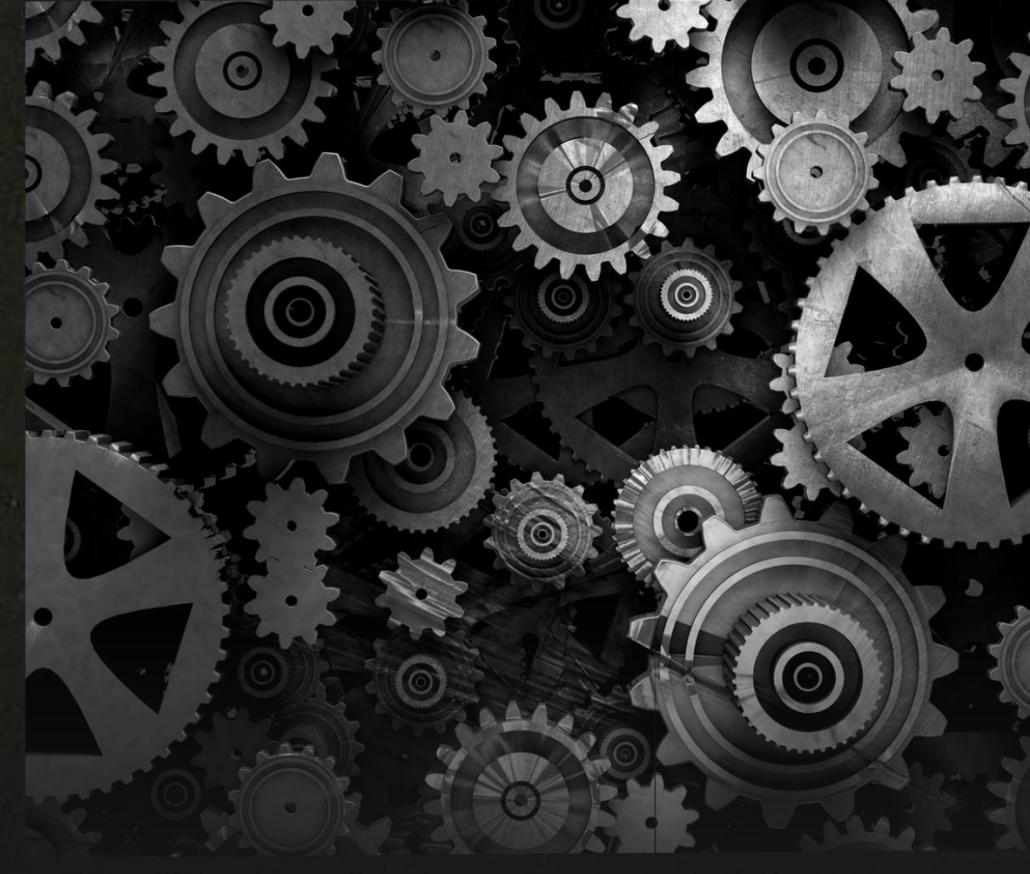
Taylor does not see the modern self as a concept developed merely by means of Western philosophy. Rather, he affirms a wide array of influences that establish the modern idea of selfhood. Thus, the credit/blame does not rest on just one field.



AUGUSTINE>REFORMATION

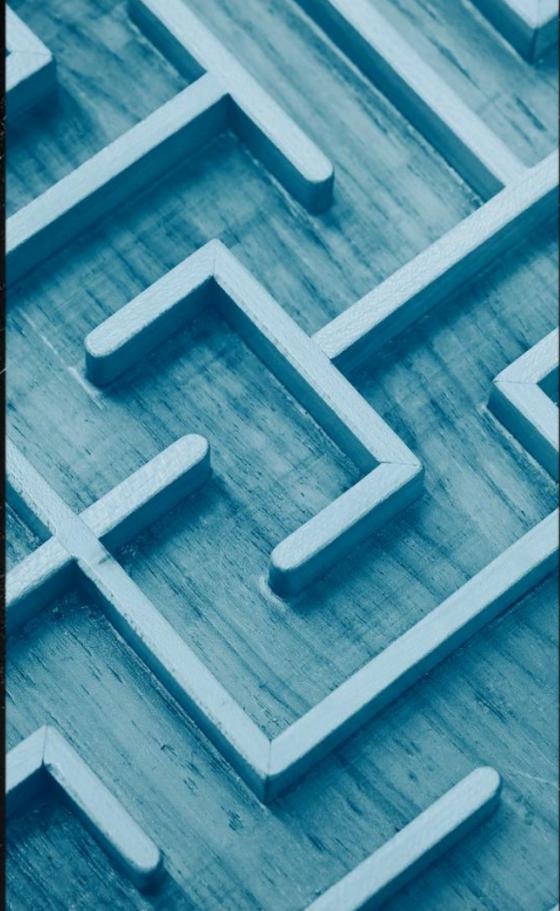


CALVINIST>PURITAIN



DEISM>ENLIGHTENMENT

Broadly, Taylor traces implicit lines of thought from Augustine to the Present.



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LIMITATIONS OF MERE RATIONALITY

HOW TO EXPLAIN THE “INNER DEPTHS”

Inner reflexivity and detached reason were notable aspects of the Enlightenment, contributing to the modern self. However, they cannot give cause for the sense of “inner depths” in modern man, an internal compulsion to love nature, desire sex, build families, and work to thrive.



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QUESTION: “INNER DEPTHS”

Inner reflection is a key part of modernity, according to Taylor. Is this a holdover from Puritan theology? How does Calvin’s *sensus divinitatus* relate to the modern idea of self-reflection and the desire for transcendence?





AFFIRMATION OF ORDINARY LIFE (PART III)



THE VOICE OF NATURE (PART IV)



SUBTLER LANGUAGES (PART V)

Taylor turns his focus to aspects of modernity that are in some ways reactions to enlightenment rationalism as the hallmarks of humanity and nature are valued in modernity.



PART III: AFFIRMATION OF ORDINARY LIFE

CHAPTER 13: GOD LOVETH ADVERBS

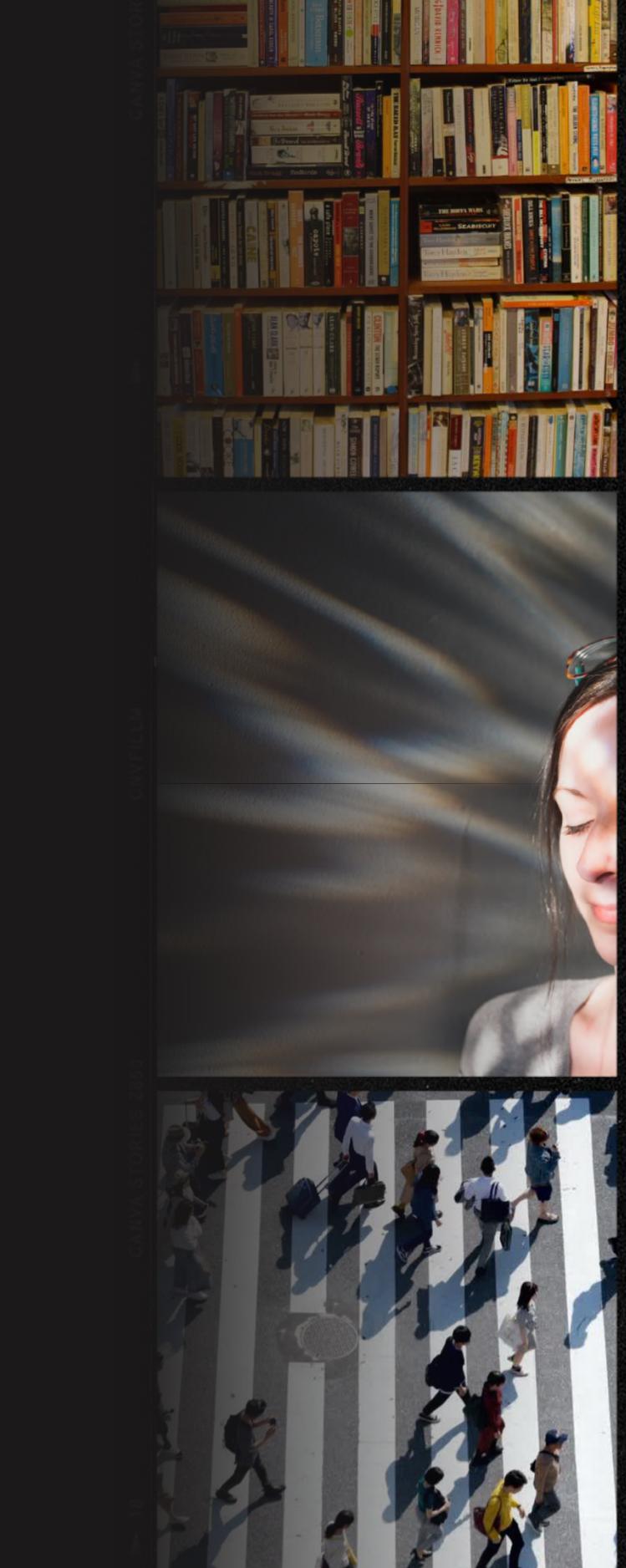
- Value for “ordinary life” comes from Judaeo-Christian values.
- Reformation rejected hierarchy (mediators) and equalized the value of clergy and laity in occupation.
- Value for ordinary occupations benefitted the common good (capitalism).
- Individual salvation, especially in the form of Calvinism/Puritanism made all things important, paving the way for modernism.
- “God loveth adverbs” refers to the importance of how things are done, not merely to the fact that they get done.





CHAPTER 14: RATIONALIZED CHRISTIANITY

- The Calvinist/Puritan affirmation of ordinary life influences the modern self.
- Locke and others manage to bring together “the ethic of ordinary life and the philosophy of disengaged freedom and rationality” (234)
- Lock’s “theological voluntarism” essentially secularizes Puritan ethics through the affirmation of God’s command via Natural Law.
- Effectively, God has to exist to give order to human life.
- Natural law shows God’s goodness through interlocking order.

A vertical collage of four images on the left side of the slide. From top to bottom: a bookshelf filled with books, a close-up of a woman's face with sunglasses on her head, a high-angle view of a crowd of people walking on a crosswalk, and a close-up of a brass compass resting on a map.

CHAPTER 15: MORAL SENTIMENTS

- Against Lockean Deism, rooted in Puritan/Augustinian theology is Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson's view of morality.
- They propose a mechanical and functionally atheistic view of the law that places value on "cosmic good" which humans are to value by means of rationality as dogmas and passions are denied.
- Shaftesbury's view is rooted more in Plato and the Stoics in contrast to Augustine and the Puritans.
- Shaftesbury believes in an internalized "sentiment" that manifests in "benevolence for a greater good."
- This is ultimately played out in Rousseau and the Romantics.

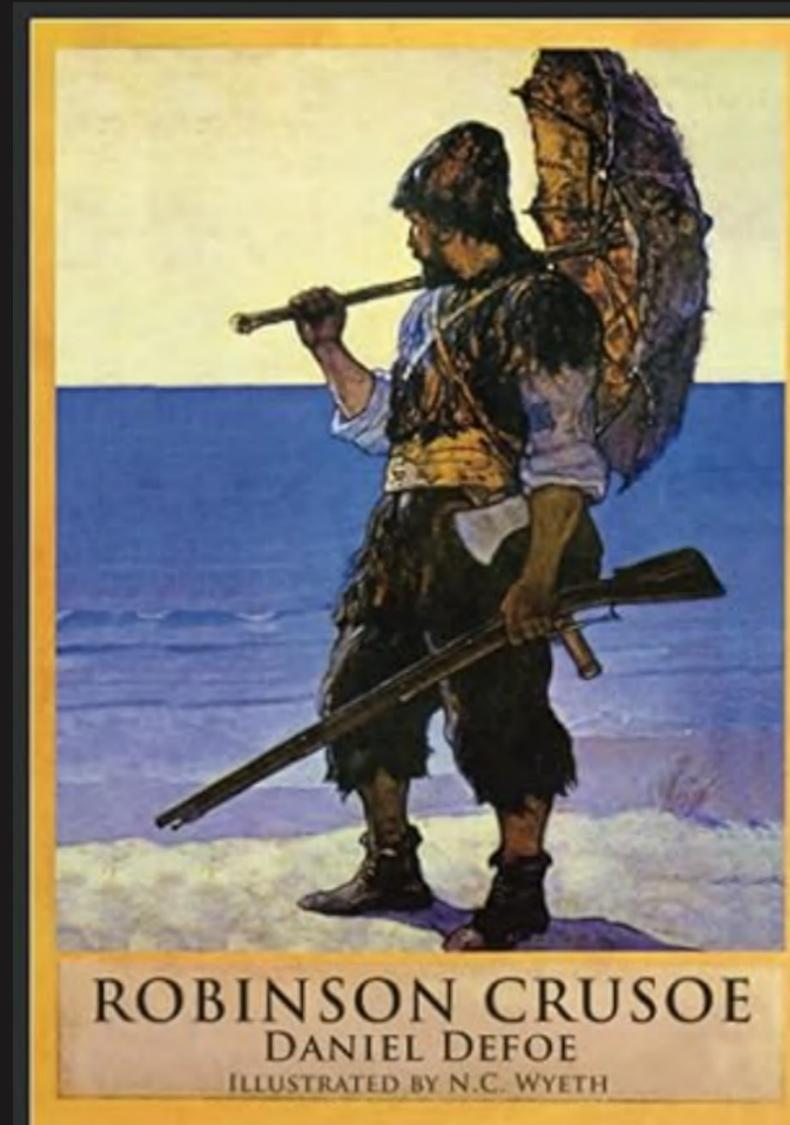
CHAPTER 16: THE PROVIDENTIAL ORDER

- Taylor argues that 18th-century Deism was more than a step toward atheism. Deism placed a high value on God's goodness bringing about good for humans.
- Deism is a "rewriting of the Christian faith, around the picture of a natural order designed inter alia for self-contained human good." Taylor says, it "stands in two lines of theological development: the Erasmian definition of God's goodness in terms of his beneficence to mankind; and the anti-hierarchical affirmation of ordinary life. (271).
- "The principle thing that makes the entities in the world into an order is that their natures mesh." (275)
- "This new order of interlocking natures arises to take the place of an order predicated on an ontic logos." (276)
- "It is not so much a matter of what acts are special to the good person, but rather how one carries out what everyone does. God loveth adverbs." (279)



CHAPTER 17: THE CULTURE OF MODERNITY

- Deism, with its “interlocking natural order” set the stage for the role of sentiment.
- While philosophers such as Locke and Shaftesbury give arguments to support the modern approach to modernity, they are not the only causes of it.
- Taylor argues that the value of commerce, the rise of the novel, marriage based on love, and the emphasis on sentiment are critical factors in modernity beyond philosophy.





PART IV: THE VOICE OF NATURE

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting in a car, looking at each other. The man is on the left, wearing a light-colored jacket, and the woman is on the right, wearing a dark, patterned top. They appear to be in a conversation. The background is dark, suggesting it might be nighttime or in a dimly lit area.

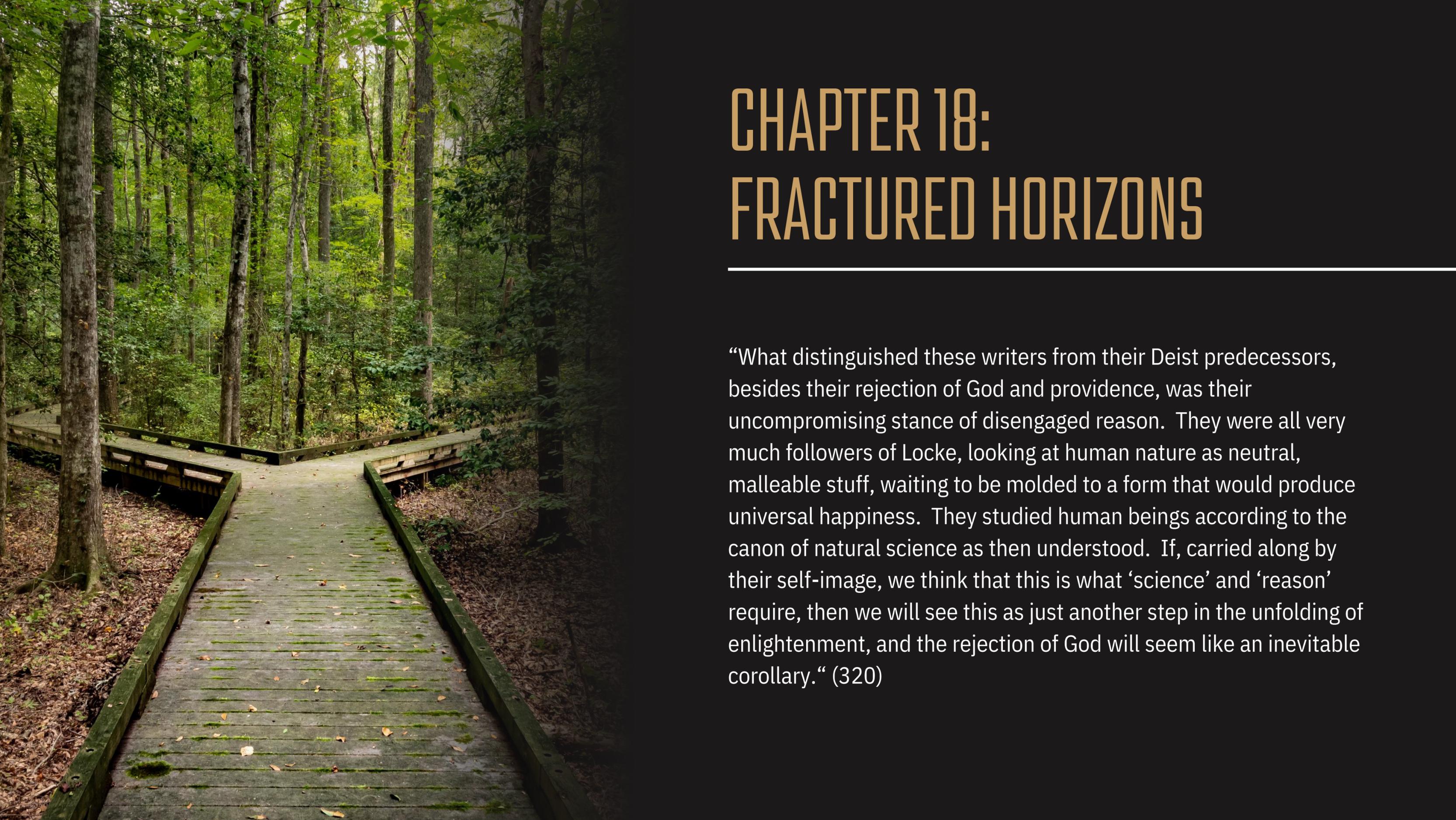
CHAPTER 18: FRACTURED HORIZONS

COMMON THEMES IN MODERNITY

- Autonomy
- Self-Exploration/Feeling
- The Good Life/Commitment
- Political Egalitarianism and Universal Rights
- Family Structures and Work

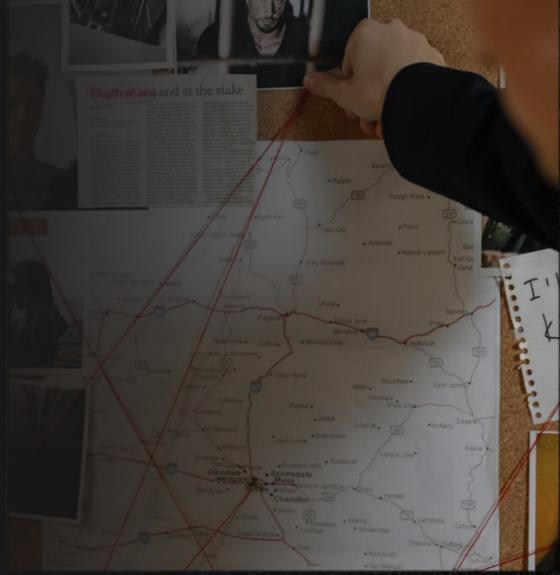
DEISM LEADING TO SECULARIZATION

- Regression of Belief in God and Religious Practice
- Rise of Scientific Worldview Against Revelatory Worldview



CHAPTER 18: FRACTURED HORIZONS

“What distinguished these writers from their Deist predecessors, besides their rejection of God and providence, was their uncompromising stance of disengaged reason. They were all very much followers of Locke, looking at human nature as neutral, malleable stuff, waiting to be molded to a form that would produce universal happiness. They studied human beings according to the canon of natural science as then understood. If, carried along by their self-image, we think that this is what ‘science’ and ‘reason’ require, then we will see this as just another step in the unfolding of enlightenment, and the rejection of God will seem like an inevitable corollary.” (320)



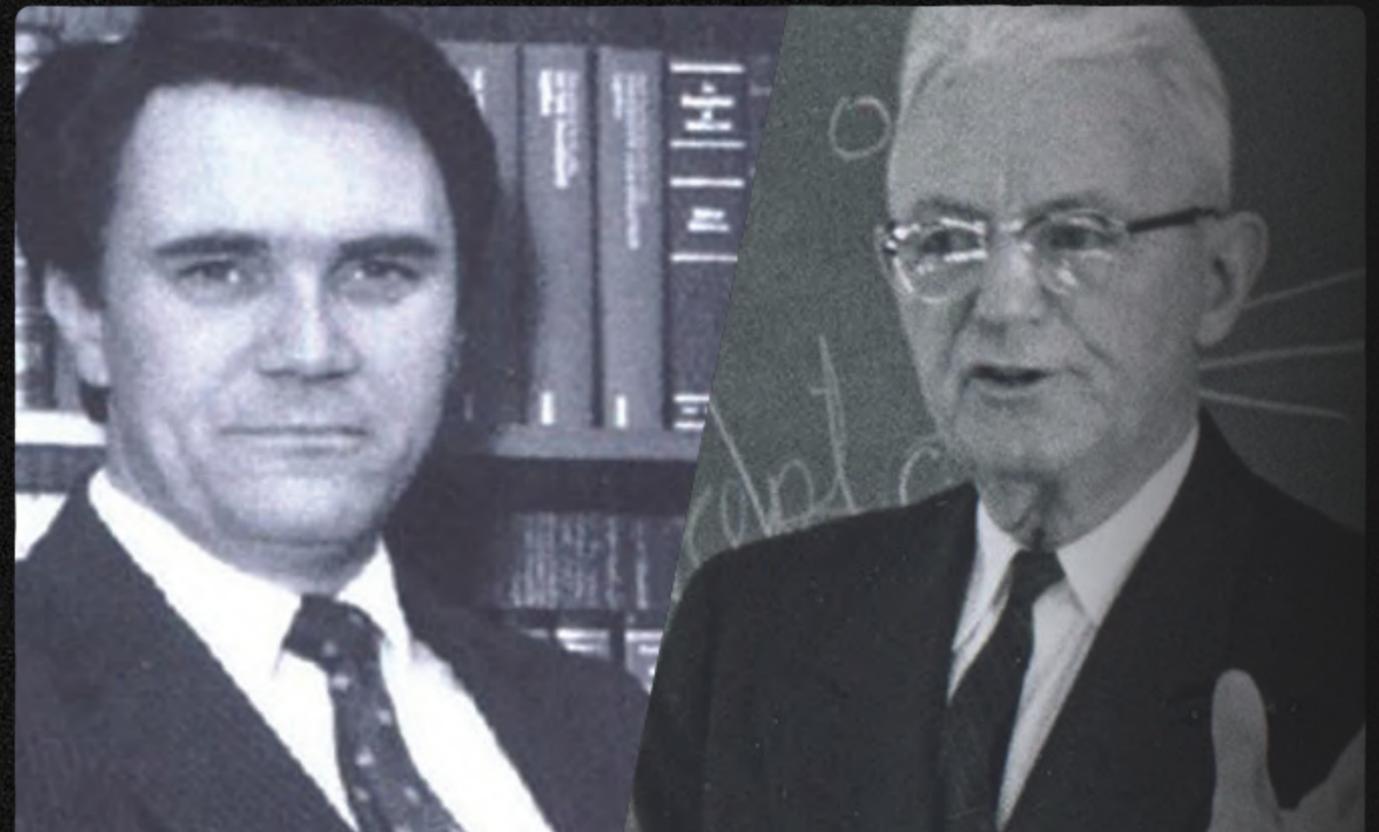
CHAPTER 19: RADICAL ENLIGHTENMENT

Secular Enlightenment philosophy proves to be “parasitic,” depending on its enemies for moral sources. Utilitarianism has no foundation for morality but leverages morality within the culture.

(Holbach, Diderot, Hume, Nietzsche)

QUESTION: PRESUPPOSITIONS?

How possible is it to force the utilitarian to see his own inconsistencies by asking them to evaluate their standard of ethics?



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CHAPTER 20: NATURE AS SOURCE

“The counter-Enlightenment, the ecological movement, and the radical anti-utilitarian-technologist left are living forces today as well.” (355)

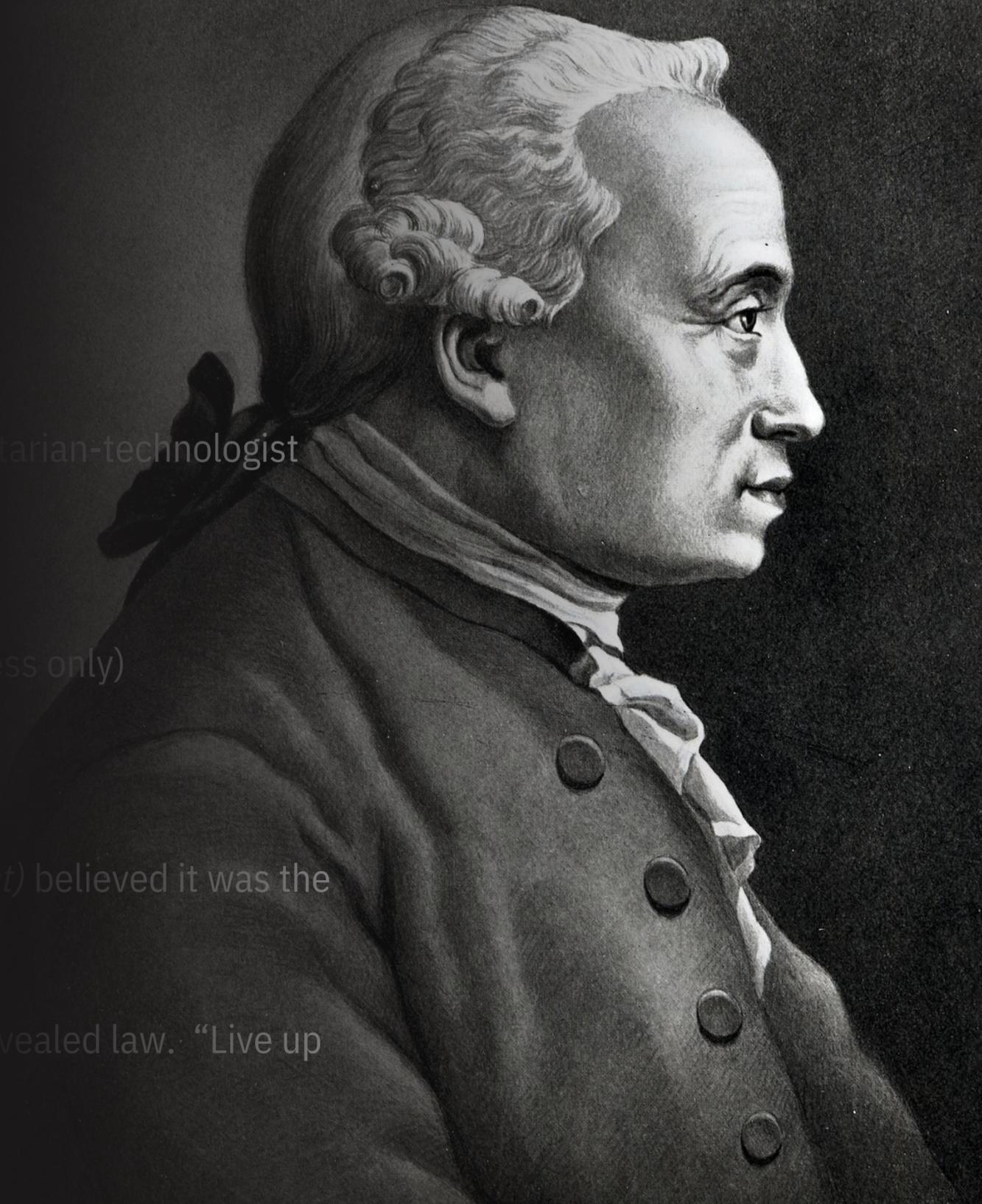
Anti-Panglossian (resistance to false optimism in modernity)

Anti-Leveling (resistance to a simplistic view of the human will based on happiness only)

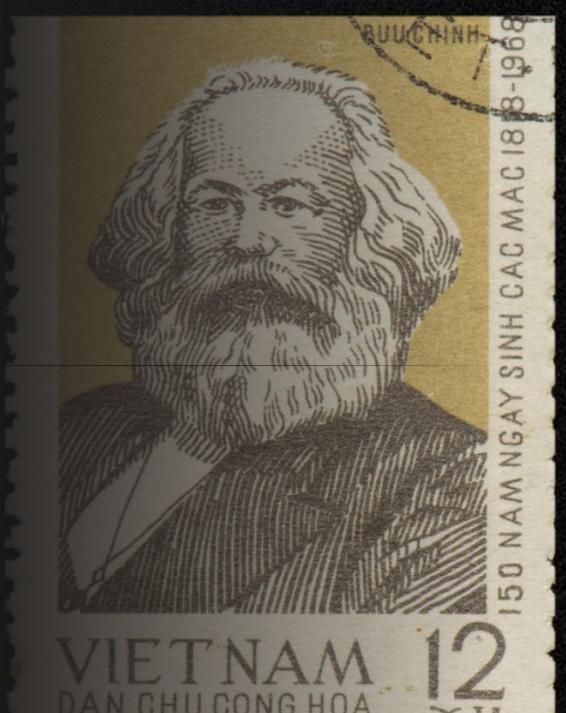
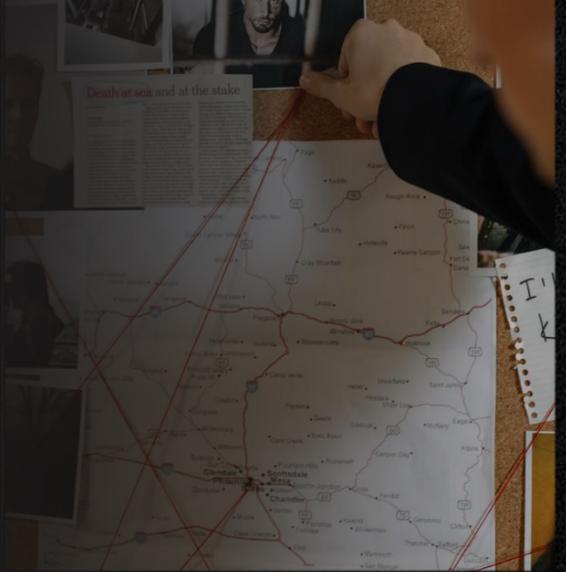
(Kant, Romanticism)

Christianity saw God as the source of higher love while Rousseau (*Social Contract*) believed it was the “voice of nature”

Kant saw morality as an outcome-based endeavor, not an adherence to God’s revealed law. “Live up to what you really are, vix., rational agents” (365)



“If our access to nature is through an inner voice or impulse, then we can only fully know this nature through articulating what we find within us. This connects to another crucial feature of this new philosophy of nature, the idea that its realization in each of us is also a form of expression. This is the view that I have called elsewhere ‘expressivism’.”(374

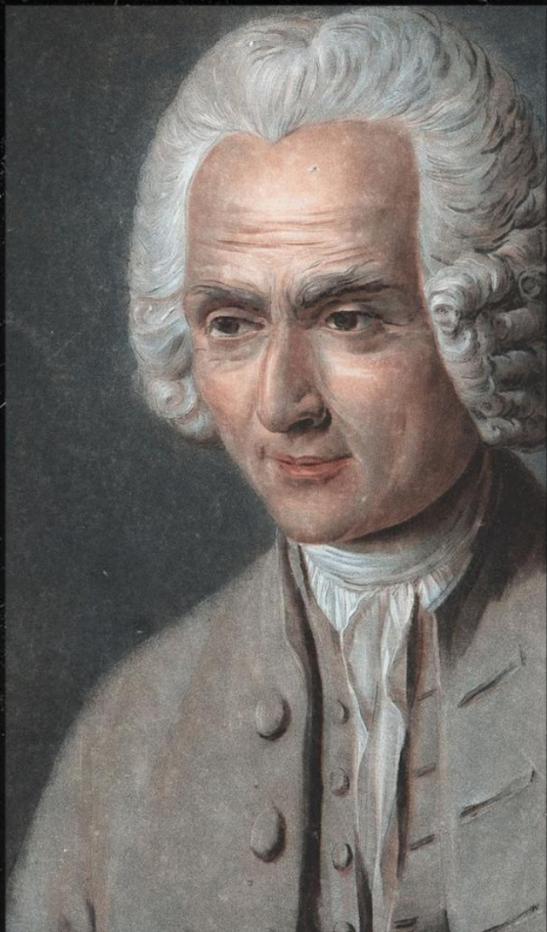


CHAPTER 21: THE EXPRESSIVIST TURN

“Marx’s theory of alienation and his perspective on liberation are based not only on Enlightenment humanism but also on Romantic expressivism, and hence ultimately on the idea of nature as a source.” (388-89)



PART V: SUBTLER LANGUAGES



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CHAPTER 22: OUR VICTORIAN CONTEMPORARIES

MORAL AND POLITICAL VALUES OF MODERNITY

- Value for freedom
- Revivals of morals (William Wilberforce)
- Puritan roots leading to social and moral reform.
- Deism fell out of favor briefly
- Romanticism leading to political nationalism (esp. Rousseau)



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CHAPTER 23: VISIONS OF THE POST- ROMANTIC AGE



Art plays a critical role in the development of the modern identity as it no longer serves merely to challenge norms but through media, the populace and the artist seem to be in “collusion” (425)

Since the Romantic era, art has been seen as having a spiritual value in addition to its expressive value.

Art is seen as transformative and related to existential thinking.

“The internalization is in a sense more complete in the atheist or naturalist theories, more complete for Nietzsche than for Dostoyevsky.” (455)





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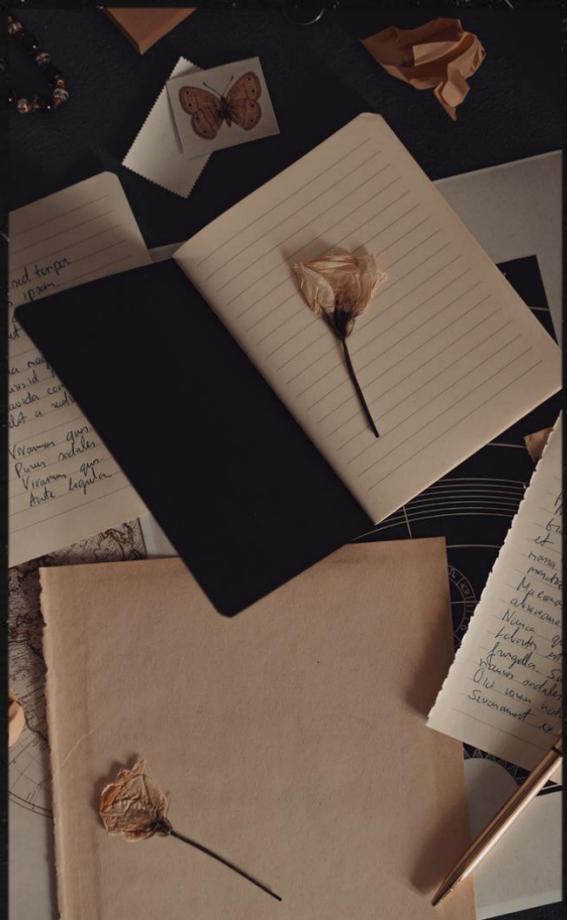
CHAPTER 24: EPIPHANIES OF MODERNISM

TENSION BETWEEN RATIONALISM AND ROMANTICISM

Reactions within modernity led to some rejection of objectivism, subjectivism, and humanism.

Postmodernity (Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, et al) emerges as deconstruction attacks all forms of hierarchical conceptions.

Poetry and art seem to be at the center of understanding over objective statements of reality.



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CHAPTER 25: CONCLUSION: THE CONFLICTS OF MODERNITY



Taylor concludes the modern era is a mix of influences and not a monolithic result of our singular influences across time.

He identifies three issues: sources, instrumentalism, and morality.

Enlightenment naturalism and subjectivist expressivism still have influence.

“The Intention of this work was one of retrieval, an attempt to uncover buried goods through rearticulation--and thereby to make these sources again empower, to bring the air back again into the half-collapsed lungs of the spirit.” (520)

“My aim in this Conclusion has only been to show how my picture of the modern identity can shape our view of the moral predicament of our time.” (521)





QUESTIONS:

How does the modern idea of self affect morality in our present era?

Is Taylor correct in his assessment of the Reformation's role (especially Calvinist Puritan) influence on modernity and individualism?

How much of modernity can be traced to biblical principles as opposed to something that emerged merely in the Reformation?

THANK YOU