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MARY SHELLY

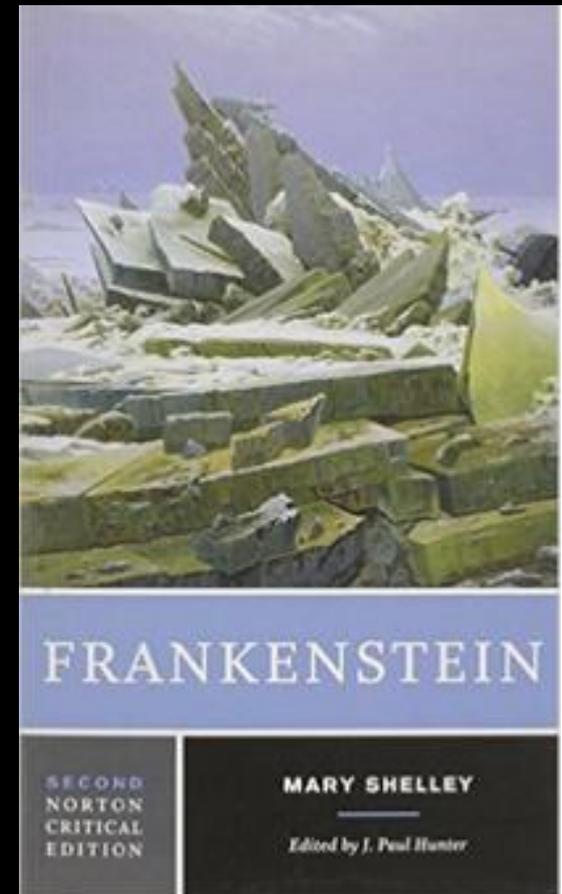
Frankenstein (1818)

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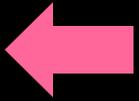
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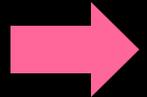
ISBN-13: 978-0393927931



LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD



The Critical Imagination
Bacon's "Helps," Idols of the Mind



The Idea of Human Nature
Rousseau and Sentimental Imagination

BACON: MEDIATING THOUGHT AND SENSE

INDUCTION

- The “true way”/ Interpretation of Nature
- contra “Anticipations,” from *particulars* to laws

EXPERIMENT

- A narrow, *designed* inquiry
- “fit and apposite” to target phenomena

Key point: centrality of mediating both sense and thought (reasoning, speculation, etc.). Bacon is an experimentalist, *not an empiricist*.

CURRENT TRAJECTORY

1. BACON & NEW METHOD (1620)

2. “ENLIGHTENMENT” TRADITION (17TH-18THC)

- Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Meditations* (1632/41)*
- Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)*
- Newton, *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Math.* (1687)
- Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690)
- Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748)
- Rousseau, *Discourses* (1750/54)*
- Jefferson & The American Experiment
- Kant, *Critiques* (1781/88/90)

3. SCHILLER & AESTHETIC EDUCATION (1794)*

(both Bacon & Schiller are transitional figures)

SCHILLER: ART AS *EXPERIMENT*

1620



Francis Bacon

Sense Experience
matters!

(Nature)

Interpretation
of Nature



1794



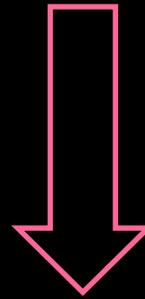
Friedrich Schiller

Aesthetic Experience
of *ideas* matters!

(Humanity)

Aesthetic Education
of Sensibility

Reason is not enough



EXPERIMENT

FROM MIND TO HUMAN NATURE

Shift in Focus: Human Understanding to Human Nature

A. Bacon and Descartes engage the question of human nature *indirectly* by way of *criticism of human thinking*

Bacon's "Helps" of the Mind

- Idols of the Mind as critical helps (heuristic helps?)
- experiment & induction (but how?)

Descartes's Focus on Mental Operations, Ideas

- privileged "help": mathematics (consequences?)
- mental* experiment, deduction (to what end?)

B. Hobbes and Rousseau address the question *directly* in a social context, and the horizon is an explicitly moral one

MORE PROBLEMS OF IMAGINATION

In Bacon's case, problems of synthesis and hypothesis generation: even if we guard against the Idols how do we DESIGN an experiment "fit an apposite"?

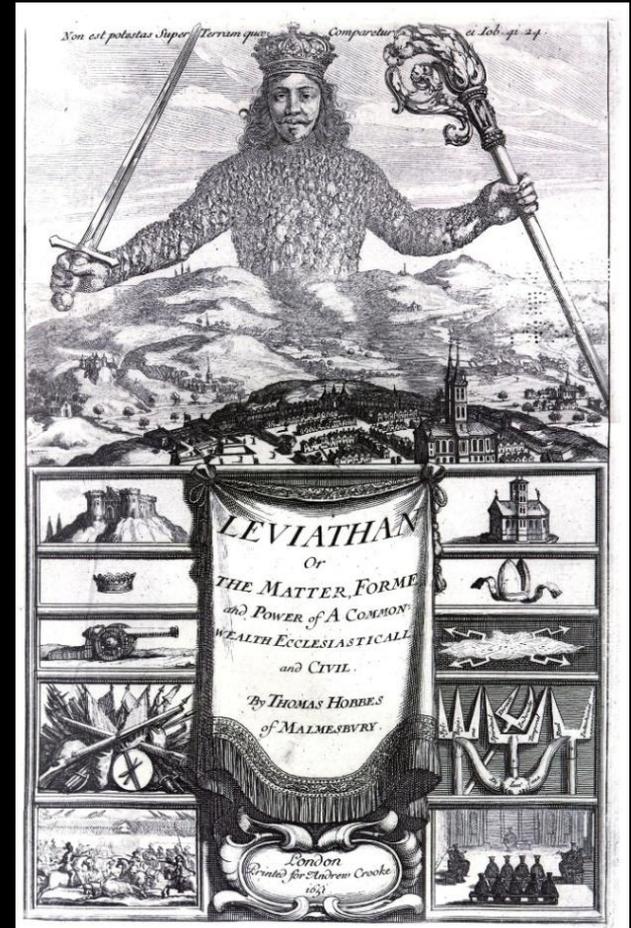
In Descartes's case, a problem of continuity between Reason and Imagination (and the senses): what is the RELATION between senses and ideas? How can ideas apprehended by introspection be applied to experience?

QUIZ 3: HOBBS

THOMAS HOBBS: THE LEVIATHAN (1651)

CONTEXTS

1. Written in the crucible of war:
English Civil Wars (1642-51)
2. Philosophical focus on
materialism, mathematics,
physics
3. Developments in mechanics,
human anatomy, etc.



HOBBS: ART & IMITATION

“**NATURE** (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also *imitated*, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the Artificer? Art goes yet further, *imitating that rational and most excellent work of Nature, man.*”

Nature (art of God)  Man (art of man)  State (politics)

Discussion: HOBBS

HOBBS: MENTAL DISCOURSE, INVENTION

TWO MODES OF THINKING

1. Unregulated by will/desire (associative thinking)
 2. Regulated by will/desire (purposive thinking)
 - critical/reflective (of causes)
 - speculative (of effects)
- 

“In sum, the discourse of mind, when it is governed by design, is nothing but seeking, or the *faculty of invention*, which the Latins call sagacitas, and solertia; a hunting out of the causes of some effect, present or past; or of the effects of some present or past cause”

Assumption: truth is IN nature, solely a matter of discovery
Modes: remembering, searching, *guessing*

HOBBS: MOST SIGNS = BEST GUESSER?

“The best prophet naturally is the best guesser; and the best guesser, he that is most versed and studied in the matters he guesses at, for he hath most signs to guess by.”

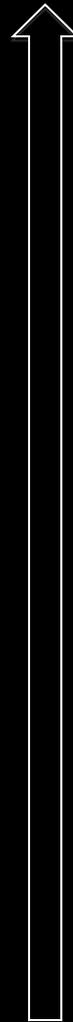
“...he that has the most experience in any kind of business has the most signs whereby to guess at the future time, and consequently is the most prudent; and so much more prudent than he that is new in that kind of business, as not to be equaled by any advantage of natural and extemporary wit, though perhaps many young men think the contrary.”

Some issues: How do we deploy the signs? Are the signs limited to the “kind of business” we are considering? What about the Idols, the force of experience to blind us to novelty?

THE GREAT CHAIN OF SENSE?

dreams
strong fancies
fictions

- 1) Can we change/modify our nature?
- 2) Do “compound” imaginations have any epistemological value?



Understanding
words/signs

Experience
compound/simple
(imagination/memory)

Decaying Sensations
(fancies)

Sensations

Objects

Nature

God



THE IRONY OF HOBBS'S THEORY

The irony here is that Hobbes deploys the “signs” of *mechanics* (automata, engines, watches) and *physics* (motion of limbs, waves, etc.) to “guess” at the necessary (according to Hobbes) *political artifice*: the creation of the Leviathan.

This is a tremendous act of Hobbes's imagination, yet *his* theory of *imagination as “decaying sense”* (a species of memory) is *unable to value or explain this fully*.

Key point: The logic of imagination cannot simply be imitative, nor can its function simply be a special mode of memory

HOBBS: “SPEECH AND METHOD,” IDEAS

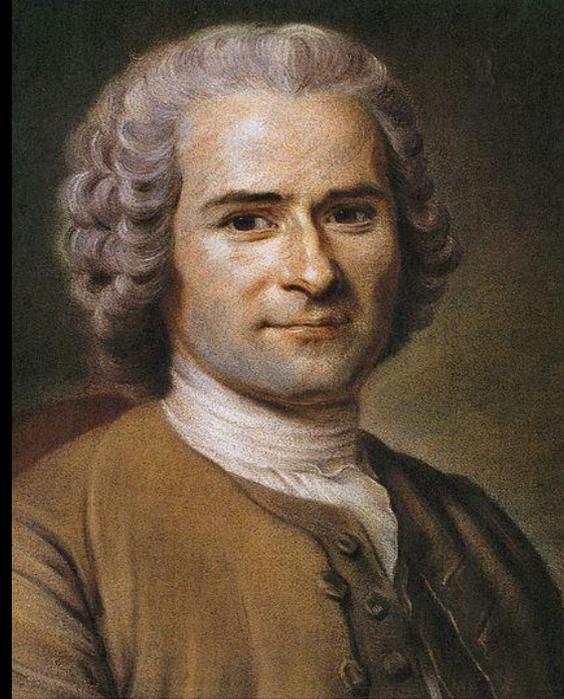
“For besides sense, and thoughts, and train of thoughts, the mind of man has no other motion; though by the help of speech, and method, the same faculties may be improved to such a height as to distinguish men from all other living creatures.”

IMPLICATIONS & ISSUES

1. Centrality of experience, *education*. But....
2. Generally, a linear image of thinking.
(Hello, 19thC Industrialism!)
3. Thing-thought: “No man can conceive of anything, but he must conceive it in some place...”
(Argh, Plato AGAIN: Ideas are like Objects...)

What about a force, such as a magnetic field? Higgs field?
Human emotion? The idea of Justice? Humanity?

FROM HOBBS TO ROUSSEAU



HOBBS : applying a theory of the state of Nature to man

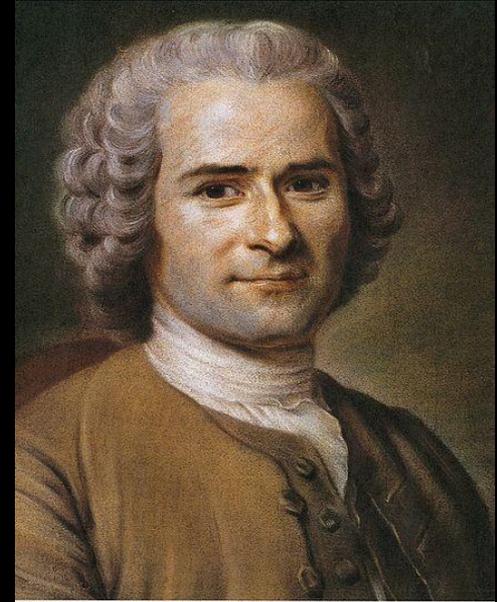
ROUSSEAU : criticism of society, posit theory of natural man

Key problems: human will (desires, passions, freedom, etc.)
and society (community, governance, law, etc.)

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

CONTEXTS

1. 18thC Enlightenment
2. “Discourses” (1750,54)
3. *Emile & Social Contract* (1762)
4. Critique of Modernity
5. Education & culture,
“progress” and the individual
6. Reason and Sentiment



“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains”

PRECURSOR TO “ROMANTIC” IMAGINATION

focus on individuals, freedom, introspection,
feeling, nature, *creativity*, and expression