III. Book Review

On the eve of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution

Time To Ex-Hume the True Roots of our Republic and Un-Locke its Founding Principles

by Timothy Rush

The Pursuit of Happiness: How Classical Writers on Virtue Inspired the Lives of the Founders and Defined America
by Jeffrey Rosen
Simon & Schuster, 2024
Paperback or hardcover, $17.99
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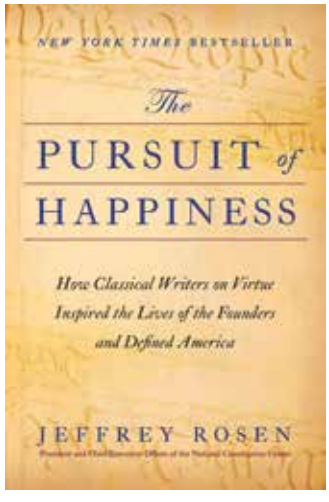

March 14—Jeffrey Rosen, head of the federally-chartered National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, and author of over a half dozen books on the Supreme Court and the relation of the legal system to the principles of the Constitution, has written an engaging intellectual history of the period of the founding of the American Republic. When he had time on his hands during the COVID-19 lock-down, he decided to read the major texts to be found in the libraries of the nation's founders and construct a sequence of vignettes of the Founders (with chapters at the end on Lincoln, Douglass, and Brandeis), arranged in Ben Frankin's 12 "self-improvement" categories, each introduced by a classical sonnet written by Rosen to identify key concepts in these readings.

He decided to particularly develop the sources and debate over the phrase "the Pursuit of Happiness" in the opening of the 1776 Declaration of Independence, as a touchstone to the thinking of the Founders. His central thesis—prompted by reflection on the last 60 years' degeneration of the cultural and intellectual climate in the United States—is that the original meaning of the pursuit of happiness, was not the pursuit of pleasure, but "the pursuit of virtue – as *being* good, not *feeling* good," (italics in original). He exhaustively documents how much the tradition of classical Roman authors in the Stoic tradition influenced the Founders, and how much the country has declined in the current age, where curriculum in "classical moral philosophy" and "civics" has almost disappeared. His view of what that Stoic tradition meant, declines in places to trite current buzz-words, but the point remains useful as far as it goes: "For this reason, the Founders believed that the quest for happiness is a daily practice, requiring mental and spiritual self-discipline, as well as mindfulness and rigorous time management. At its core, the Founders viewed the pursuit of happiness as a lifelong quest for character improvement, where we use our powers of reason to moderate our unproductive emotions so we can be our best selves and serve others." This touches on the profound matters addressed in Friedrich Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (see Robert Trout, "The Aesthetic Education of America," *Fidelio* magazine, Winter 1999, Vol. VIII, No. 4, pp. 16-44).

Rosen cites the extensive collections of Stoic writings, especially of Cicero, in the Founders' "reading lists," alongside volumes of the writings of British and Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, such as Hume, Locke, and Adam Smith, as foundational texts. The modern reader is startled at the erudition of the Found-

ers—most knew enough Latin and Greek to read ancient authors in the original; some, such as James Logan, knew six ancient and modern languages.

However, Rosen's mushing of classical Roman and Greek authors, and the British "liberal" tradition of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and Smith, is where Rosen goes awry. Rosen, whether by ignorance or design, misrepresents the very subject he has chosen, by obscuring the significance of the substitution of John Locke's "Life, Liberty and Property," with the phrase "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Instead of the conventional myth that the writings of John Locke (1643-1704) were the inspiration for the Declaration of Independence and its "unalienable rights" opening assertions, the true taproot of the philosophical outlook embedded in those opening words was the influence of Europe's polymath and indefatigable promotor of the "General Welfare" within and among nations, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). And, slightly amending the phrase of Robert Frost, "that makes all the difference"

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, 1646-1716

There is not even the mention of Leibniz's name in the index of Rosen's book, and the name of one of the principal transmitters of his work directly into the Constitutional Convention, the Swiss jurist Emmerich de Vattel, is listed only once, as one of many authors read by Alexander Hamilton, with no discussion of who he was and what he wrote. It is the hope of this book review, that an immense body of work printed in two publications of the LaRouche movement, *Fidelio* and *EIR* magazines, in the 1995-2005 interval, be avidly studied, revived, and disseminated, as a leading feature of the celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the beginning of the American Revolution in the next months (see accompanying article).

Rosen's Blinders

There are many things to like in Rosen's treatment. He certainly proves his case that "the Founders framed their quest for self-regulation and emotional intelligence through … the dramatic struggle between reason and passion," "Logos vs. Pathos." Rosen writes that Plato, in his *Phaedrus* dialogue, popularized this conflict with the image of "a charioteer, representing reason, driving a chariot pulled by two horses." One, the passionate part of the soul, pulled earthward, toward worldly pleasures. The other, "the noble or intelligent part of the soul, inclined upward toward the divine." The job of reason for the Founders, Rosen contends, was to align them. "The way for citizens to create a more perfect union, the Founders insisted, was to govern themselves in private as well as public, cultivating the same personal deliberation, moderation, and harmony in our own minds that we strive to maintain in the constitution of the state."

He also introduces, in his survey of the intellectual landscape surrounding the Founders, a number of subsidiary figures of considerable interest on their own. One is Samuel Johnson (not the English lexicographer), first president of Kings College in New York (later Columbia University), whose work *Elementa Philosophica* was published by Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) in 1752. In this work, Johnson extolled the "pursuit of true happiness by thinking, affecting, and acting, according to the laws of truth and right reason." Franklin invited Johnson to be the first professor of moral philosophy in Franklin's Academy of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania), and later appointed Johnson head of a New York school for educating Blacks, which Franklin helped establish. Another is Mercy Otis Warren, sister of James Otis, whose play *The Group*, written on the eve of the Revolution in late 1774, ridiculed Hobbes's *Leviathan* and the hedonistic savagery of Bernard de Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*. Other important figures brought to light are Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui, Henry Home (Lord Kames), and Francis Hutcheson (more on him below).

But Rosen cannot wriggle out of the implications of his title, and his "word search" nominalism in connecting his anecdotal essays simply by any use of the phrase

"pursuit of happiness" in their writings and speeches, without any concern for the underlying conflicts of philosophical outlook, sadly weakens his book, which is otherwise a useful effort to show sources of the Founders' ideal of a lifelong commitment to improving one's character in order to do the good.

The gulf between the outlooks of Locke (and with him, Bacon, Hobbes, and Hume), and that of Leibniz, is sharply conveyed in two contrasting sets of assertions. From Locke, who stated that man's mental life is simply an assemblage of sense impressions, based on embracing pleasure and avoiding pain, we have that "the great and chief end, therefore, of uniting men into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their *property*" (emphasis added). From David Hume (1717-1776): "We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason. Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them…. A principle of universal benevolence does certainly not exist in man." The companion principle of Newton (1643-1727), promoted by the circles of Locke to do battle with Leibniz, was that there was no principle of development in the workings of the universe, and that God was merely a "clockmaker" whose clock constantly wound down, whereupon God would have to wind it up again.

James Logan, 1674-1751, by artist Thomas Sully.

Contrast this lifeless and soulless universe, to Leibniz's view that "…in addition to the general beauty and perfection of the works of God, we must recognize a certain perpetual and very free progress of the whole universe, such that it advances always to a still greater improvement. And as to the possible objection, that if it were so the world ought long ago to have become a paradise, the reply is ready: Even if many substances have already reached great perfection, nevertheless on account of the infinite divisibility of the continuum, there always remain in the depths of things slumbering parts, which must yet be awakened and become greater and better, and in a word, attain a better culture. And hence progress never comes to an end."

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, in the tenth principle of her guide to a level of international deliberation sufficient to reverse the current world economic and strategic crises, Ten Principles of a New International Security and Development Architecture, clearly adopts the same axiomatic outlook as Leibniz: "The basic assumption for the new paradigm is, that man is fundamentally good and capable to infinitely perfect the creativity of his mind and the beauty of his soul, and being the most advanced geological force in the universe, which proves that the lawfulness of the mind and that of the physical universe are in correspondence and cohesion, and that all evil is the result of a lack of development, and therefore can be overcome."

Where Locke stressed the defense of property as the fundamental purpose of government, Leibniz and his followers stressed a conception of happiness which was not merely a sense of virtue and being good (as Rosen states for the Founders), but a devotion to *doing good* for the general welfare—and that government must promote and defend the ability of the individual citizen to do so. Ben Franklin's intimate mentor, friend, and intellectual companion, James Logan (1674-1751), put it this way in a manual he wrote for circulation in Franklin's Junto of youth associates: "Why has Nature, whose general or fundamental Laws can never be eluded, left so much room in those things that are proper for the use of Man, for the improvement of her Productions, in Agriculture, Gard'ning &c. Are not all these with infinite more, plain lessons to Mankind, that in most significant language say to them: Naked you are born, it is true, and I have left you under many wants, but to supply them I have given you hands, and above all other creatures understanding to use them: Behold the utmost provision here made for your Industry. Join together in that Love and Benevolence that I have implanted in you, and by your mutual aid, and united endeavours, render them truly useful…. The order [of your Creator] you are to imitate in what is left to your own Power, your Wills, and your Affections. Thus therefore do and be completely happy."

Sleight of Hand

The core question which defenders of Locke's paternity as the source of the conceptions in America's founding documents try to wave away, is the substitution of "pursuit of happiness" for "property" in the list

of "unalienable rights." Some, such as Harvard's political science luminary of the mid-20th Century, Carl J. Friedrich, went so far as to say that the change "was not … necessarily a departure in meaning. Stylistically, 'pursuit of happiness' is unquestionably better, and it may have been no more than an instinct for a graceful phrase that caused the substitution."

Rosen's treatment of the topic is more sophisticated, but no less false. He highlights the formulation of a notable Scottish moral philosopher, Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), leaning away from the bald assertions of Hume *et al.* that morality was arbitrary and not generated by any internal bent of the human soul. Hutcheson developed the distinction that there were "alienable" rights, and "inalienable" ones. Jefferson had one of Hutcheson's two principal texts in his library, *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (the other text had the Socratic title, *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*). Rosen then makes the leap to say that, for Jefferson, "the right to property is an alienable right, which is why Jefferson substituted the 'pursuit of happiness' for 'property' in the Declaration."

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Cotton Mather, 1663-1728

Balderdash! First of all, Jefferson did not write the opening paragraph of the Declaration. The drafting committee of five—Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston—clearly used the model of George Mason's Preamble to the Virginia Declaration of Rights, written several months before the Declaration of Independence. Mason's Preamble stated "That all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent natural rights, of which cannot by any Compact, deprive or divest their Posterity; among which are their Enjoyment of Life and Liberty, with the Means of acquiring and possessing Property, and pursueing [*sic*] and obtaining Happiness and Safety." Jefferson's rough draft took this language almost word-for-word. It was editing by Adams and above all, Franklin, which simplified the language and dropped all reference to "property." See below for the significance of Franklin's intervention.

Second, Jefferson "came to admire Locke extravagantly," in Rosen's words, and in 1789, asked the painter John Trumbull to copy portraits of Bacon, Locke, and Newton, whom Jefferson described as "the three greatest men that have ever lived, without any exception." Though in 1776 Jefferson was more under the thumb of Franklin's leadership, he certainly had no affinity for the Leibniz heritage promoted by Franklin, and would never have reached out to the Leibnizian formulation of "the pursuit of happiness" as an inalienable right, on his own. It is instructive to contrast Jefferson's triumvirate of "the greatest men," with Franklin's list: Pythagoras, Socrates, and Jesus.

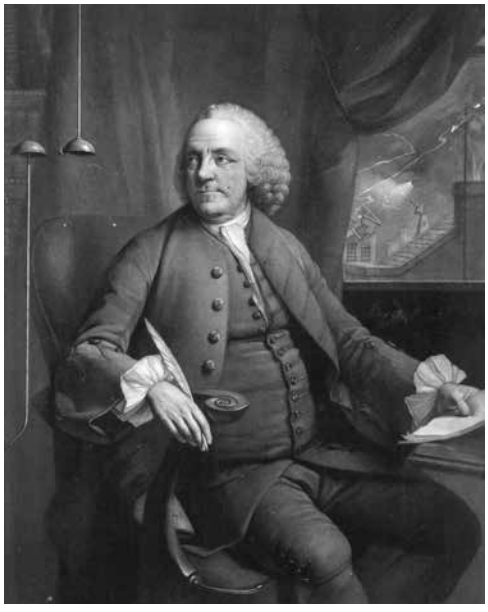
Franklin, in Three Acts

Franklin, indeed, was the key unifying intellectual figure in building the conditions and capacity for a republican revolution in the American colonies. And his long career doing that was saturated with the influence of Gottfried Leibniz. Let us take three elements of this history, as three acts in an anti-colonial drama, each associated with pioneering historiography identified in the accompanying "Essential Reading" article.

First was his early years (1706-1723) in the Boston of Cotton Mather (1663-1728). Historian H. Graham Lowry described Mather as "the most prolific intellectual figure in colonial America," publishing "455 works during his lifetime, including treatises on philosophy, religion, ancient languages, history, politics, biology, botany, geology, the art of singing, and the only medical guide for American physicians of that time." His father, Increase Mather, president of Harvard College, corresponded with Leibniz; as did Cotton Mather with one of the major collaborators of Leibniz in Germany, A. H. Francke, on programs of education and economic betterment of the entire population, which would later become the Constitution's "the promotion of the General Welfare." Mather's most enduring contribution to this mission was his 1710 volume, commonly known

as "*Essays to do Good,*" but more usefully referred to by its full title, which breathes the air of Plato and Leibniz, "*Bonifacius, An Essay Upon the Good, that is to be Devised and Designed, by Those Who Desire to Answer the Great End of Life, and to Do Good while They Live.*" Lowry states that this work "served as an organizing manual for the American Revolution, and was widely reprinted as late as the 1860's."

Mather recruited teenage Franklin as his protégé, to assist him in a battle to defend vaccination against smallpox, which "led to his deployment to Philadelphia in 1723, at age 17," in Lowry's words. Sixty years later, corresponding with Cotton's son Samuel, Franklin declared that it was Cotton Mather's "*Essays to do Good*" which had "an influence on my conduct through life… and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book."



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Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790, looking at electrostatic bells, often referred to as Franklin's Bells. He installed them to warn him of approaching thunderstorms. Visible through a window to his left is lightning striking a building.

Cadwallader Colden, 1688-1776, painted by John Wollaston.

Act II: In the years 1727-1755, Franklin played a central role in the work of a small but extraordinary group of philosophical and scientific giants who erected in the American colonies a collaborative effort that echoed, and in some cases surpassed, the comparable efforts by Leibnizian circles in Europe to refute the tenets of the Newton-Locke British philosophical and scientific imperial cult. Those circles in Europe were back on their heels in the face of an onslaught from this cult, adopted with a vengeance by such Continental acolytes as Voltaire, Maupertuis, and Euler. The key figures in this anti-Newtonian scientific efflorescence in the American colonies, together with Franklin, were James Logan (1674-1751) and Cadwallader Colden (1688-1776). Exemplary of the dynamics of the Leibnizian forces on both sides of the Atlantic, is the role of Abraham Kästner, renowned mathematician and scientist, who in the midst of studies of Kepler and Leibniz in Leipzig in the 1740's, published a major anti-Newtonian work of Colden's in German translation, with a critique of certain propositions Kästner believed needed further development. When the translation came to Colden's attention several years later, Colden wrote a three-page development of the material highlighted by Kästner, which was edited by Franklin before being sent off.

The full story of this collaboration is beautifully developed by Philip Valenti in his two articles, and one by David Shavin (see "Essential Reading"), and it would

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Franklin's experiment, June 1752: Demonstrating the identity of lightning and electricity, from which discovery he invented the lightning rod.

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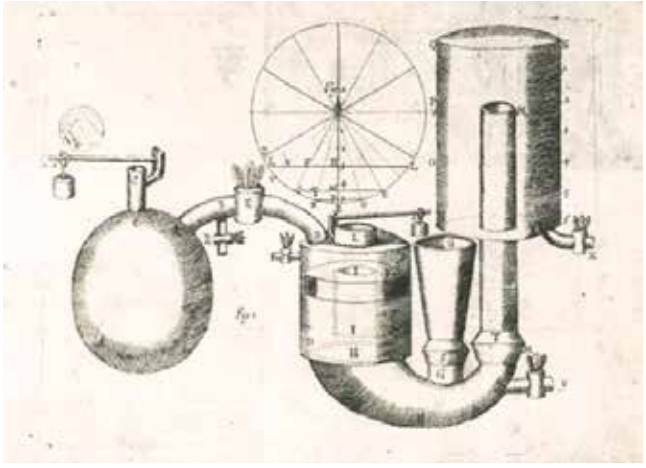
Allegorical painting of Benjamin Franklin's lightning experiment.

be idle to try to foreshorten the profound philosophical, scientific, and epistemological issues involved. It is sufficient to stress the richness of conceptual thinking embedded in the Franklin-Logan-Colden dialogues, reflected in Colden's view of a "species of action," which he calls "self-moving matter," hypothesizing that light, electricity, and magnetism all reflect such self-moving "matter" devoid of inertia. What a world this opens up, in comparison with Newton's world of colliding billiard balls of particles in which phenomena, such as gravitation and light, exert their powers "at a distance" with no intermediary process or matter—a vacuum. The Franklin/Logan/Colden world is one open to be harnessed by man for man's upward progress in an evolving universe. Franklin's electricity experiments fall into this larger field of action. Thus, Franklin exclaimed in a letter to Colden, "There are no Bounds (but what Expence [*sic*] and Labour give) to the Force Man may raise and use in the Electric Way." It is the same relationship of scientific discovery to physical economic progress which was demonstrated in Leibniz's remarkable collaboration with Denis Papin in Papin's 1707 demonstration of the principle of the steam engine.

Act III: In the 1766-1776 period, Franklin directly aided the transmission of Leibniz's suppressed work and influence to the revolutionary circles taking shape in the American colonies. The basic story is told in Shavin's "Leibniz to Franklin on Happiness." Shavin puts it this way in his opening: "In 1766, ten years before the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin met and discussed, with the German scientific republican Rudolph Erich Raspe, the Leibnizian idea of forming a nation based upon 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' In 1765, Raspe had just edited and published the first edition ever of Leibniz's suppressed manuscript, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, in which Leibniz had systematically torn apart the colonialist apology of John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.*" Learning of Raspe's publication of the monumental Leibniz refutation of Locke, Franklin sought Raspe out, spending ten days with him in Hannover, and getting into the Hannover library, where a treasure-trove of Leibniz's manuscripts, suppressed for 60 years by the Hannoverian Kings George I, II, and III of England, were housed.

The preface to the edition was provided by none other than the Abraham Kästner in correspondence



The steam machine of Denis Papin, 1647-1713.

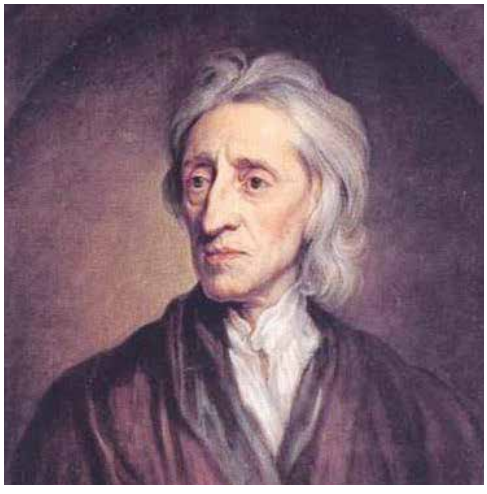
with the Franklin/Colden/Logan circle 15 years before. When Franklin arrived at the University of Göttingen, a hive of Leibnizian intellectual life, it was Kästner who hosted Franklin to a "Science Festival," at which Kästner presented a special paper on the nature of electricity, along with various electricity experiments. Franklin compiled a reading list which his Leibnizian friends in Hannover and Göttingen recommended to him, and left funds with Raspe for them to be sent to him in America. Thus was a fresh flow of the work of Leibniz and his collaborators directed to the American colonies in the decade leading into the American Revolution—a flow intensified with Franklin's circulation of the great work of Leibniz-follower Emmerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations,* in its first English translation, into the First and Second Continental Congresses of 1774 and 1775.

So, for the 250th birthday of the American Republic, it is indeed time to un-Locke its founding principles. The great mathematician and physicist Bernhard Riemann (1826-1866) famously concluded his habilitation dissertation of 1854, "On the Hypotheses Which Underlie Geometry," with a dramatic assertion, in the paraphrase of Lyndon LaRouche, that "to settle the underlying issues of mathematics, one must depart that domain, into physics." So, the substitution of "Pursuit of Happiness" for "Property" in the formulation of inalienable rights in the Declaration of Independence, is to depart the domain of Locke, into that of Leibniz.

Locke vs. Leibniz

Excerpted from "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: How the Natural Law Concept of G. W. Leibniz Inspired America's Founding Fathers," by Robert Trout, Fidelio *magazine, Spring 1997, Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 8-11. Subheads have been added.*

The Eighteenth century was defined by the attempts of the financier oligarchy, or Venetian Party, then headquartered in England, to wipe out the modern nation-state. The Venetian Party launched the Enlightenment, to spread the ideology that man was no more than a hedonistic animal, controlled by his sensual urges. By destroying the ability of men to think and act like citizens, they aimed to destroy the basis for the existence of the nation-state as an opponent to their oligarchical control of human society.



John Locke, painted by Godfrey Kneller.

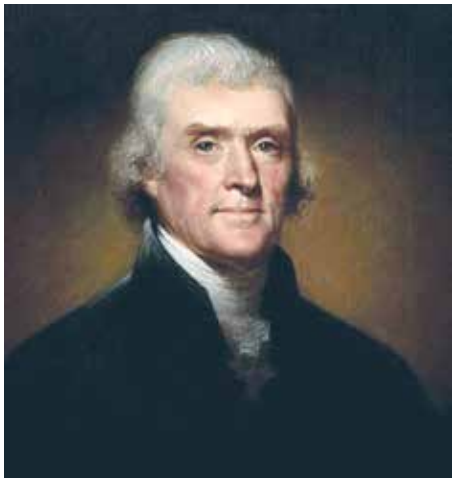
The prevailing theories of the Enlightenment were based on the method introduced by the Venetian, Paolo Sarpi. Sarpi's writings became the basis for such English writers as Hobbes, Locke, Mandeville, and Bentham. All these writers started by assuming that the individual's hedonistic desires are self-evident facts, and built up society from that premise. Thomas Hobbes is generally known for his bestial portrayal of human nature. John Locke, who is usually portrayed as the source of the ideas of freedom and government which motivated the Founding Fathers, was no better.

Locke wrote that the souls of the newly born are blank tablets. He asserted that thinking is only sense perception, and that the mind lacks the power "to invent or frame one new simple idea." He wrote,

> The knowledge of the existence of any other thing, we can have only by sensation: for there being no necessary connection of real existence with any idea a man hath in his memory; … but only when, by actual operating upon him, it makes itself perceived by him. … As to myself, I think God has given me assurance enough of the existence of things without me: since by their different application, I can produce in myself both pleasure and pain, which is one great concernment of my

present state. ("An Essay Concerning Human Understanding", Vol. II)

From this bestial view that the human mind consists of only sense certainty, pleasure and pain, Locke developed an equally bestial theory of the nation. Man originally existed in a State of Nature of complete liberty. If he was attacked by another, he was justified in seeking retribution. Men, however, being filled with self-love, extracted more retribution than they justly deserved. The community or state came to be an umpire, by setting rules for the proper amount of "just retribution." And thus, the commonwealth came into existence to set just punishments and to defend itself against outsiders. It follows that Locke's conception of freedom was no more than the right of each man to follow his hedonistic instincts in all things, where not prohibited by the umpire's rules. Not surprisingly, when Locke wrote the "Fundamental Constitution for the Government of Carolina," in 1669, he established a feudal system which included both Black and White slavery.



White House Historical Association

Thomas Jefferson, painted by Rembrandt Peale.

Jefferson Locked Up

The myth that John Locke was the philosopher behind the American Republic, is easily refuted by examining how Locke's philosophy steered Thomas Jefferson, for example. Jefferson's actions make it clear that, had Locke's philosophy been the inspiration for the American Revolution, the U.S. would never have become the world's leading nation and industrial power. Jefferson, who claimed that the three greatest men in history were the British empiricists Francis Bacon, John Locke, and Isaac Newton, adopted their outlook that sense certainty is the basis for all knowledge, writing: "I feel, therefore I exist. I feel bodies which are not myself: there are other existences then. I call them matter. I feel them changing place. This gives me motion. Where there is an absence of matter, I call it void, or nothing, or immaterial space. On the basis of sensation, of matter and motion, we may erect the fabric of all the certainties we can have or need." (Letter to John Adams, Aug. 15, 1820)

Having denied that human nature is creative reason, Jefferson saw society and economics as based on fundamentally fixed relationships. Consequently, he endorsed Thomas Malthus's ideology, that man's needs must exceed his ability to produce. He rejected national economic development through the increase of the productive powers of labor, and instead accepted Adam Smith's free trade doctrines. Jefferson saw slavery as appropriate for Blacks, whom he considered as inherently inferior.

Thomas Malthus

Jefferson opposed Hamilton's measures for the development of the nation, and in a private letter stating his opposition to Hamilton's National Bank, for example, he raved that any person in the state of Virginia who cooperated with the Bank, "shall be adjudged guilty of high treason and suffer death accordingly." Jefferson was fanatically opposed to the development of American industry, and described the growth of cities in America as "a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution." He fought to keep the nation as a feudal plantation.

If man were nothing more than a bundle of hedonistic instincts, however, whose cognitive ability was limited to sense certainty, mankind would today be no more than a few million bestial individuals on the entire planet, scratching out an existence in the dirt. In his own period, it fell to Gottfried Leibniz, who represented the best of the tradition of the Renaissance that had

established the modern nation state beginning with the France of Louis XI, to demonstrate that Locke's premises were an inhuman fraud.

Leibniz's Creative Reason

Leibniz developed a science of the mind, which was coherent with human nature as creative reason, rather than animalistic instincts. For the human species to make fundamental changes in its methods of existence, men must be capable of creative reason, instead of merely taking in sensual impressions and acting on instincts. Leibniz described how the mind functions by recognizing the contradictions in sensual impressions and generating Platonic ideas, which are "by far to be preferred to the blank tablets of Aristotle, Locke, and the other recent exoteric philosophers."

In his writings, Leibniz demonstrated how the principles of science and law are also "not derived from sense, but from a clear and distinct intuition, which Plato called an idea." Plato discussed, in the *Republic*, how some sense impressions do not provoke thought, because the judgment of them by sensation seems adequate, while others always invite the intellect to reflection, because the senses give the mind contrary perceptions. These sense impressions force the mind to conceptualize an explanation, which is intelligible rather than visible. The best example of a Platonic idea, is the demonstration which Lyndon LaRouche has developed of Eratosthenes's measurement of the size of the earth, which Eratosthenes accomplished more than two millennia before anyone had actually "seen" the shape of the earth's curvature.

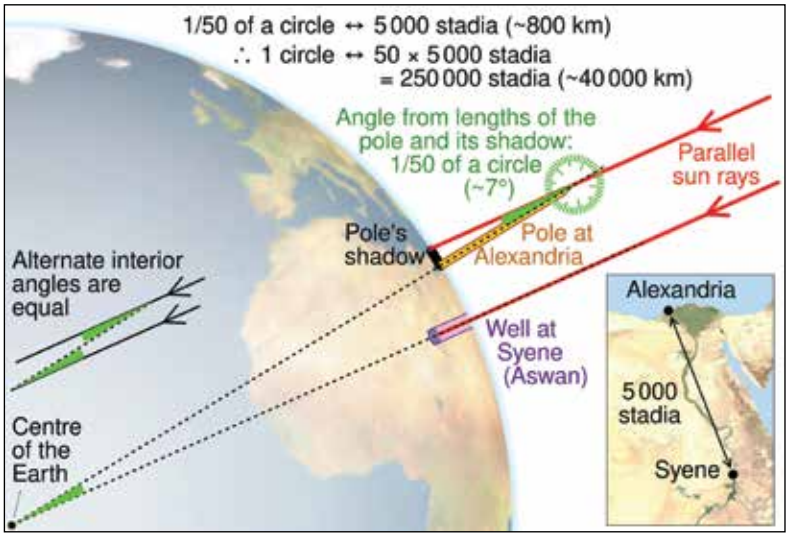


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Illustration of the method Eratosthenes used c. 240 BC to calculate the circumference of the Earth to within just a few percent of its actual size.

Leibniz's and Locke's different conceptions of how the mind works, were reflected in their different understanding of the nature of God. Leibniz's God is the Creator, who is able to transform the universe to higher levels of perfection, in a fashion which is reflected in man's transformation of human society. To illustrate how God transforms the universe, Leibniz used the example of an eternal book on the Elements of Geometry. Each new copy is made from the previous one, with new advances being added, in a lawful process of change. The nature of this lawful process of change from one copy to the next, is illustrated by the scientific discoveries made by Leibniz and his collaborators. The new copy of the Elements of Geometry is not reached by principles of formal logic, but through a scientific discovery which takes the form of a Platonic idea. "What is true of books, is also true of the different states of the world; every subsequent state is somehow copied from the preceding one (although according to certain laws of change)." Leibniz quoted Plato's *Phaedo*, to describe how the Creator orders the universe according to reason, and is continually acting to further the perfection of his creation.

For Enlightenment neo-Aristotelians like Sarpi, Locke, and Grotius, the idea that the universe could be both lawful and evolving in a constant process of perfection, was incomprehensible. They saw God as trapped in the same set of fixed rules, in which their minds were trapped. Grotius stated this explicitly, arguing that, "The law of nature, again, is unchangeable—even in the sense that it cannot be changed by God." Since not even God can change these fixed laws, far less powerful mankind must live in a universe defined by these fixed relationships. Aristotle, Locke, *et al.*, developed a system of law, and a model of society, in which people are trapped in fixed categories, such as aristocrat or servant.

Leibniz understood that the idea of man living in accordance with natural law does not mean searching for some set of fixed laws, floating off in the heavens. Rather, man lives in coherence with natural law, by ordering society according to the powers of creative reason,

which makes man in the image of God. For Leibniz, the highest right, and the source of true happiness, is piety, when man lives so that he seeks to perfect himself, in conformity with the perfection of the Creator. …

Leibniz dedicated his life to efforts to educate people to understand that true happiness is found by locating their identity in benefitting mankind and their posterity. He was involved in far-reaching efforts to improve the productive powers of labor, through fostering education, and developing technology and science, so the population could be lifted out of backwardness. His efforts to develop heat-powered machinery, so that one man could do the work of a hundred, mark the founding of economic science on a basis coherent with the natural law concept of man's increasing perfection. He created whole new branches of knowledge, such as the calculus, and worked to develop links with far-away countries like China.

Leibniz's understanding of natural law is best expressed, today, from the standpoint of Lyndon LaRouche, who describes himself as "in that Leibniz tradition upon which our 1776 Declaration of Independence and 1789 Federal Constitution were premised."

Essential Reading

The foundational work is that of H. Graham Lowry, *How the Nation Was Won: America's Untold Story, 1630-1754*, EIR, 1987. 498 pp. This book is a masterclass on how ideas shape history—in this case, the battle raging simultaneously in London and the American colonies in the first decades of the 1700's, between nation-builder factions allied with Leibniz's outlook and initiatives, and a rising British imperial faction rooted in oligarchical methods brought forward by England's "Venetian Party."

Four outstanding articles from the 1995-2005 period, specifically develop the Lowry thesis with rich detail, taking the fight fully into the period of the American Revolution itself. They merit the closest reading.

They are:

1) *The anti-Newtonian roots of the American Revolution*, Philip Valenti, *EIR* Vol. 22, No. 48, Dec. 1, 1995, pp. 12-31. "One of the most persistent, destructive historical myths, is the one which claims that the American Revolution against Britain was inspired by British liberal philosophy…. The hub of falsehood around which that Anglophile's myth revolves is the baseless supposition, that the strongest influences on the American founders include the political philosophy of John Locke (1632-1704) and his predecessor Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), as well as the allegedly rational-scientific system of Isaac Newton (1642-1727). In this report, we examine some of the documentary proof that exactly the opposite was true. The characteristic belief of the leading Americans, as typified by the case of Benjamin Franklin, was their commitment to eradicate any influence of Locke or Hobbes upon the law and political institutions of these United States." This opening statement is amply proved, based on citations from primary sources. A sub-head, "Locke's war against America" has devastating documentation of Locke's promotion of slavery, child labor, forced impressment of unemployed laborers as seamen in Britain's navy, and the looting of the American colonies through Britain's Board of Trade (established in 1696 with Locke as a founding member).

2) Valenti's companion piece, *The Leibniz Revolution in America, 1727-1752*, *EIR* Vol. 31, No. 32, August 13, 2004, pp. 19-37, outlines how the "pagan worship of Isaac Newton," in Lyndon LaRouche's words, "had been established as the official cult doctrine of the budding British Empire by no later than 1727," the year of Newton's death, and how the battle against its entropic, mechanistic view of the universe (with attendant implications for human affairs), included leading figures of the American colonies.

"This is why the successful American revolution against the British Empire needs must have been preceded by the passionate rejection of Newtonianism by the intellectual leaders of the North American colonies, especially among the youth, as these leaders embraced the cause of the greatest political and philosophical adversary of British liberalism, the German universal genius Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). More than this, it was the Americans' bold challenge to Newtonian orthodoxy, which strengthened the resistance to the British-imposed intellectual dictatorship over continental Europe at a crucial point, inspiring the work of Abraham Gotthelf Kästner (1719-1800) and his collaborators and students, and leading to the revolutionary breakthroughs of Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855).

"As new historical researches confirm, it was the debate and dialogue over Leibniz's ideas among the circles of Kästner, with the leading anti-Newtonian American intellectuals of the day—James Logan (1674-1751) and Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) of Philadelphia, and Cadwallader Colden (1688-1776) of New York—which set America on its course of independence…."

One passage of Valenti's on Colden's contributions succinctly conveys the core of the battle: "The fundamental premise of Colden's treatises is a rejection of the Newtonian dogma of matter as passive, inert, and 'dead,' and therefore subject to the inevitable entropic 'winding down' into chaos and doom. The Universe is composed of principles of action, Colden argued, not hard, irreducible particles of dead matter."

3) *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: How the Natural Law Concept of G. W. Leibniz Inspired America's Founding Fathers*, by Robert Trout, *Fidelio* magazine, Vol. VI, No. 1, Spring 1997, pp. 6-27. "The American Revolution was, in fact, a battle *against* the philosophy of Locke and the English utilitarians. Key to this struggle, was the work of the Eighteenth-century jurist, Emmerich de Vattel, whose widely-read text, *The Law of Nations*, guided the framing of the United States as the world's first constitutional republic. Vattel had challenged the most basic axioms of the Venetian Party, which had taken over England before the time of the American Revolution, and it was from Vattel's *The Law of Nations*, more than anywhere else, that America's founders learned the Leibnizian natural law, which became the basis for the American System." Trout stresses Vattel's promotion of one of the key concepts of the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, ending the Thirty Years War, that "The first general law that we discover in the very object of the society of nations, is that each nation is bound to contribute everything in its power to the happiness and perfection of all the others." An American translation and printing of Vattel's *Law of Nations* on the eve of the Revolution became one of the main sources consulted by the delegates to the First Continental Congress in the fall of 1774, according to the librarian of the library used by the Congress, and Franklin reported in late 1775 that he had been given the book "in good season, when the circumstances of a rising state make it necessary frequently to consult the law of nations. Accordingly, that copy which I kept has been continually in the hands of the members of our congress, now sitting…."

4) *Leibniz to Franklin on 'Happiness,'* by David Shavin. *Fidelio*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Spring 2003, pp. 45-73. "In 1766, ten years before the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin met and discussed, with the German scientific republican Rudolph Erich Raspe, the Leibnizian idea of forming a nation based upon 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' In 1765, Raspe had just edited and published the first edition ever of Leibniz's suppressed manuscript, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, in which Leibniz had systematically torn apart the colonialist apology of John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*." Shavin then expands this crucial point: "The Founding Fathers did not confuse 'happiness' with pleasant entertainment, a 'good time,' or material possessions. Happiness, or felicity, was and is the composition of the universe by the Creator, such that the physical, objective conditions of existence—life!—are uniquely addressed and solved by the free exercise of man's subjective, playful, agapic capacities—i.e., liberty. It would not be Leibniz's 'best of all possible worlds,' had the Creator flubbed it, and created a universe where the freedom of man was not uniquely necessary for life. 'Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,' is not a laundry list of rights. They are, and were for Benjamin Franklin, an encapsulation of Leibniz's political philosophy." Shavin continues: "That Franklin actually met with the men who broke the tyranny of the suppression of Leibniz's manuscripts, a tyranny run personally, for fifty years, by the Hannoverian kings George I, George II, and George III of Great Britain, is a story that needs to be told." And Shavin does it, brilliantly.

Additional Reading

Further groundbreaking material on the subject is to be found in:

Leibniz, Halle, and the American Revolution, by Edward Spannaus. *Fidelio*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Spring 2003, pp. 33-44. Spannaus develops the significance of the exchange of letters between a principal Leibnizian in Europe, August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), and the American intellectual giant of those years, and mentor of Benjamin Franklin, Cotton Mather (1663-1728), in defending Francke's sponsorship of nurturing orphanages and educating the poor, against the attacks of Bernard Mandeville and Adam Smith, who decried such practices. Mandeville wrote that "Going to school in comparison to working is idleness." (Locke, by the way, urged forcing indigent children to work from age three to fourteen, rather than go to school). Highly relevant: H. Graham Lowry's *Cotton Mather's Leibnizian conspiracy*, *EIR*, Vol. 22, No. 48, Dec. 1, 1995, pp. 42-43.

America's 'national party' spearheaded the battle against British ideology, by Anton Chaitkin. *EIR*, Vol. 22, No. 48, Dec. 1, 1995, pp. 32-42. Chaitkin shows how Hamilton's American System of Political Economy grew out of the ideological battles against Britain's apologists for empire, brought to the surface in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution.