

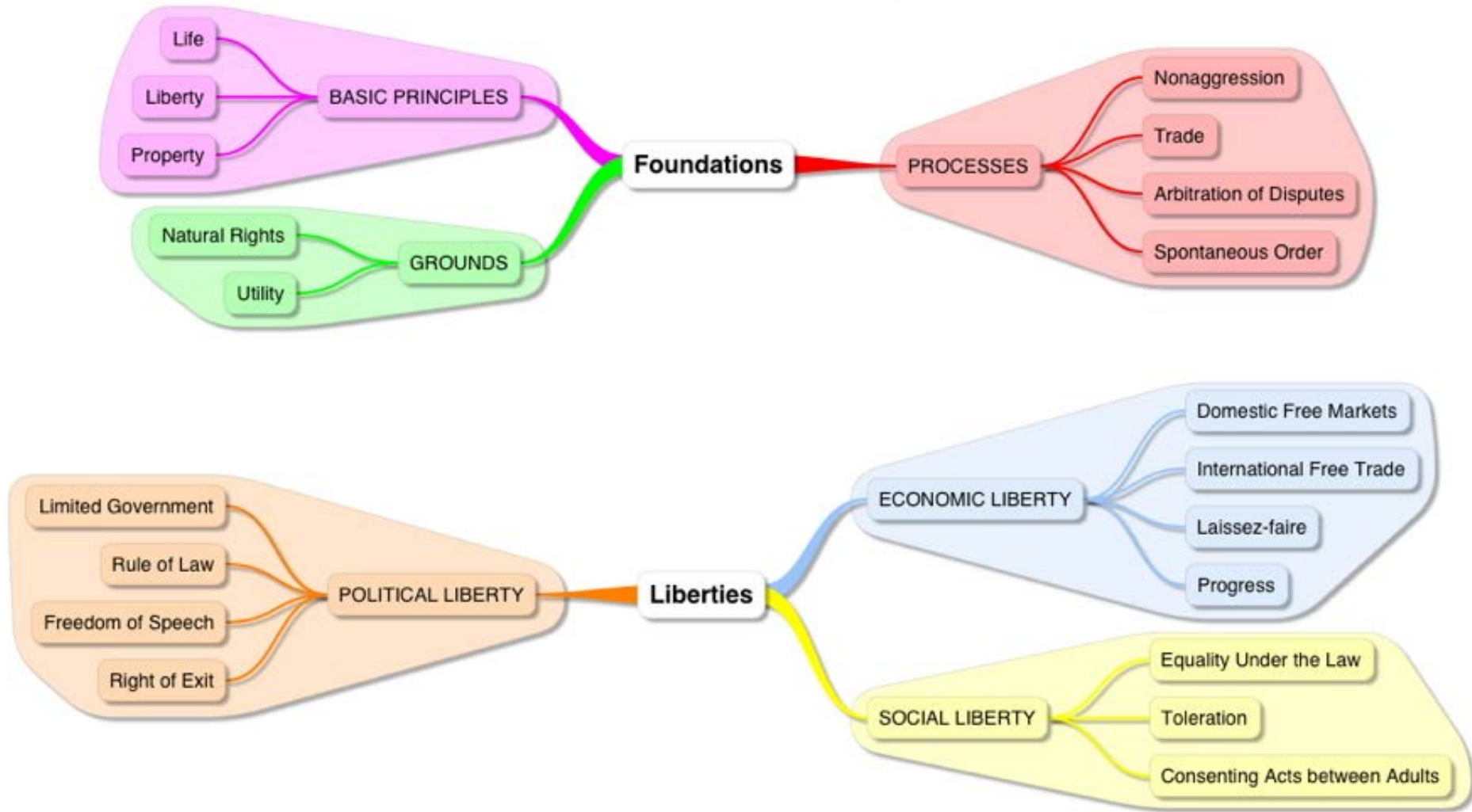
LIBERALISM AND KANT

Liberalism and Kant



LIBERALISM AND KANT

THE CLASSICAL LIBERAL TRADITION



LIBERALISM AND KANT

Most forms of liberalism are based on ideas that were developed during the European Enlightenment, such as:



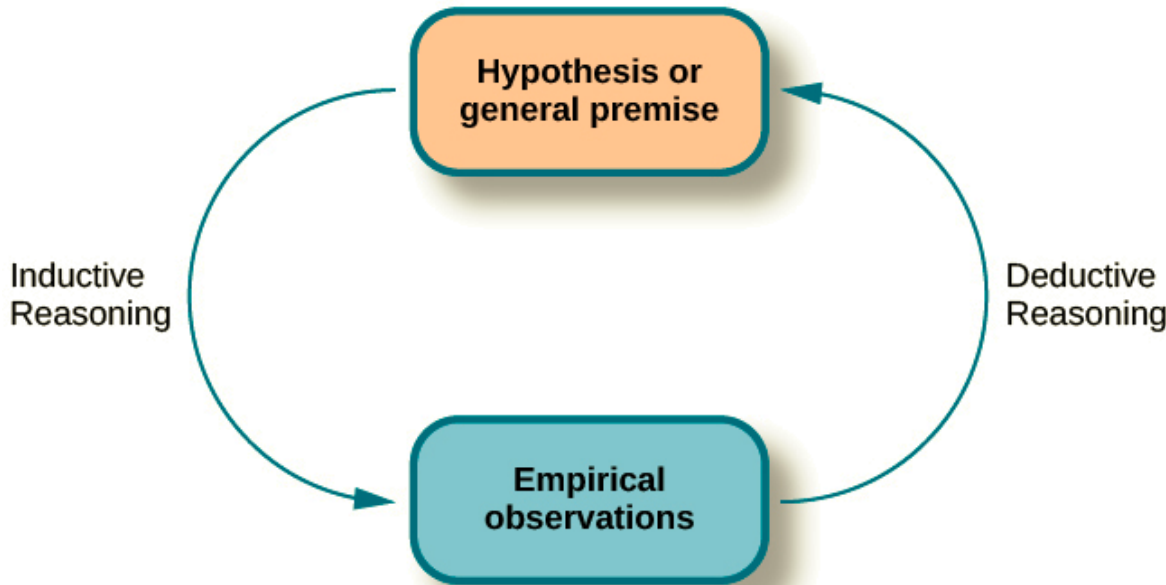
LIBERALISM AND KANT

- 1. The notion that humans are social animals whose cultures and individual capacities for good and evil are not innate or fixed but originate in social relationships and so can be modified or improved.**

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2. A belief in the importance of critical reason, skepticism, and doubt.

LIBERALISM AND KANT



3. The human capacity to utilize these resources through observation, empirical testing and the acceptance of the fallibility of all knowledge.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

- 4. A consequent rejection of the intolerant, closed ways of thinking associated with blind religious faith and metaphysical speculation.**

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- 5. The notion that all human beings have a right to self-direction, and development is best achieved where governments become constitutional or accountable.**

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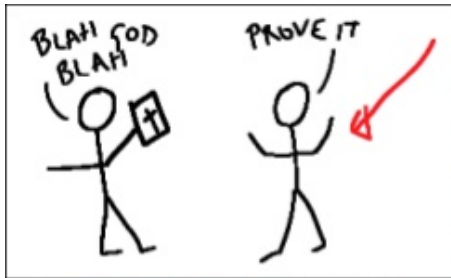
- 6. The possibility of attaining self-realization through practical involvement in, and attempts to transform, the material world.**

LIBERALISM AND KANT

I. Tenets of Liberalism



LIBERALISM AND KANT



My Idea! Rise of Science and Rationality

- Science liberates people from irrational fears and delusions. Educating from young with strong emphasis on science and discouraging religion.
- Making Scientific, skeptic and rational thinking a norm of society and human life.
- A Global movement for Science and Rationality they creating a platform for dissemination of Science and Rationality by bringing together Humanists, Atheists, Rationalists, Skeptics to fight Religious Dogma, irrationality and fundamentalism.

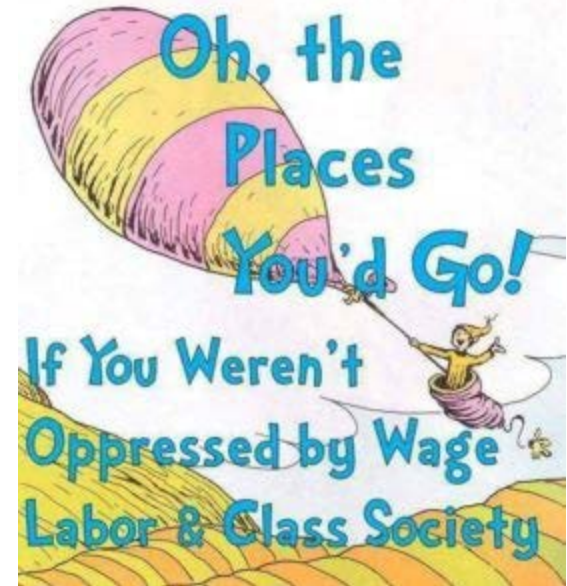
1. Human rationality and emphasis on science.

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CAPITALISM

If history could teach us anything, it would be that private property is inextricably linked with civilization.— Ludwig von Mises



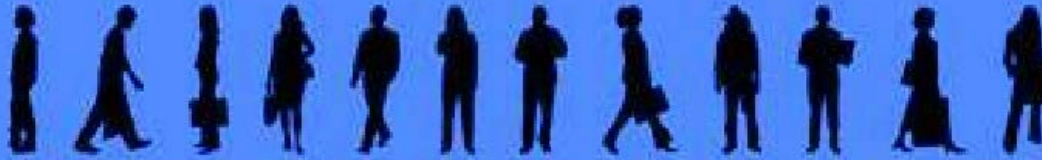
2. Private property, capitalism, business / trade.

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3. Economic growth and use of natural resources.

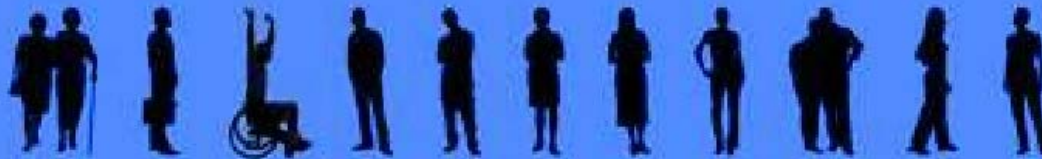
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Definition of Diversity

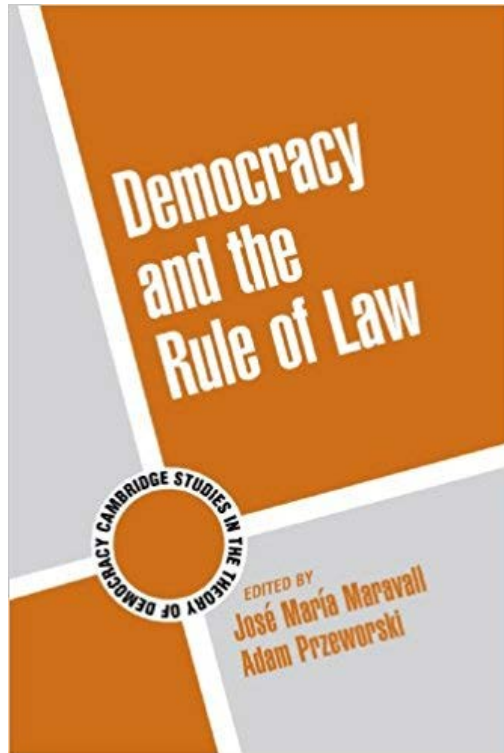
The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance & respect.

It means understanding that each individual is unique, & recognizing our individual differences.



4. Diversity and peaceful reform.

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"The problem is that democracy is *not* freedom. Democracy is simply majoritarianism, which is inherently incompatible with real freedom."

~ Ron Paul ~

5. Democracy and the rule of law.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

Peter Kropotkin



No evolution is accomplished in nature without revolution. Periods of very slow changes are succeeded by periods of violent changes. Revolutions are as necessary for evolution as the slow changes which prepare them and succeed them.

AZ QUOTES

6. Evolutionary, not revolutionary change.

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II. Varieties of Liberalism



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- 1. Commercial Liberalism** – theories which link business and free trade with world peace.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

2. **Republican Liberalism** – theories linking the practice of democracy with world peace (Kant).



Republican Liberalism

- Republican liberals argue that liberal democratic constitutions and forms of government are of vital importance for inducing peaceful and cooperative relations between states.
- most republican liberals emphasize that democratic peace is a dynamic process rather than a fixed condition.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

3. **Sociological Liberalism** – theories linking law, international integration with world peace.

SOCIOLOGICAL LIBERALISM

- Critique of realism
 - See international relations as relations between people, groups and organizations in different countries
 - Peaceful human society is possible if there is closer cooperation between those groups
 - Can be managed
-

LIBERALISM AND KANT

4. **Neoliberalism** – inclusive of all of the above but with a focus on the economic elements

such as the

“free”

market,

unconstrained

competition,

“free” trade,

and *laissez-faire*

government

policies.

Neoliberal Ideas

- The economy will prosper if left alone, and a prosperous economy is good for the people.
- Individuals bear responsibility for their poverty, and governments should not foster “dependence” on social programs.
- Economic rationales should be applied to social programs: competition, cost-benefits analysis, measurable outcomes.

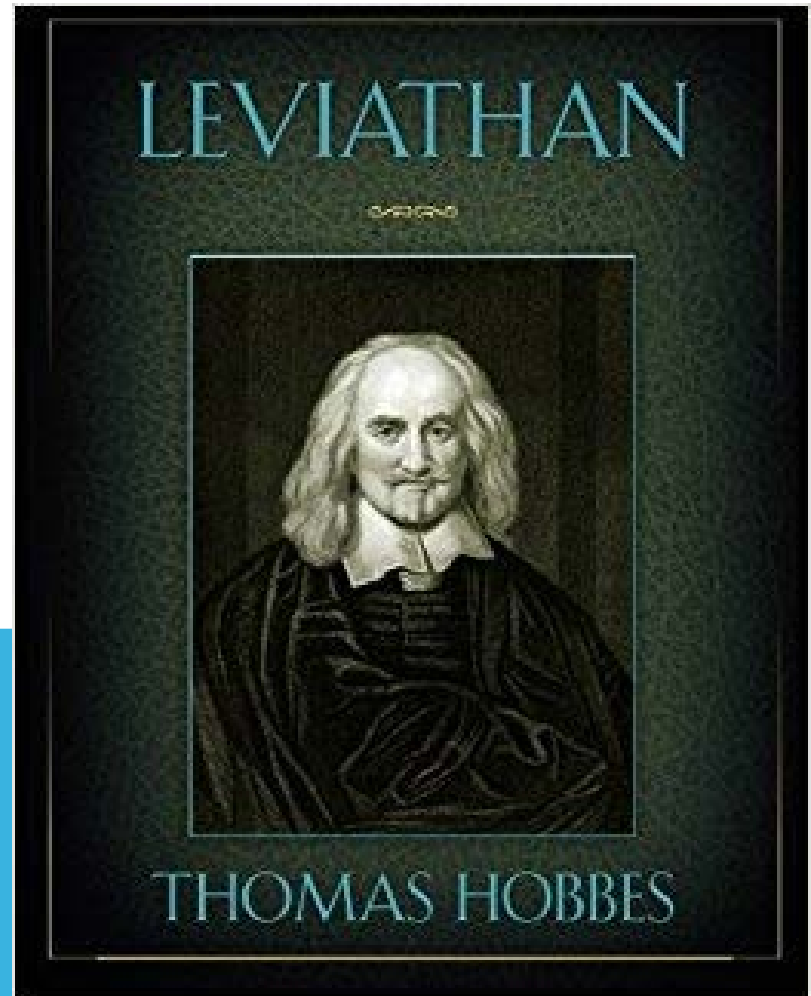
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III. Important Liberal Thinkers



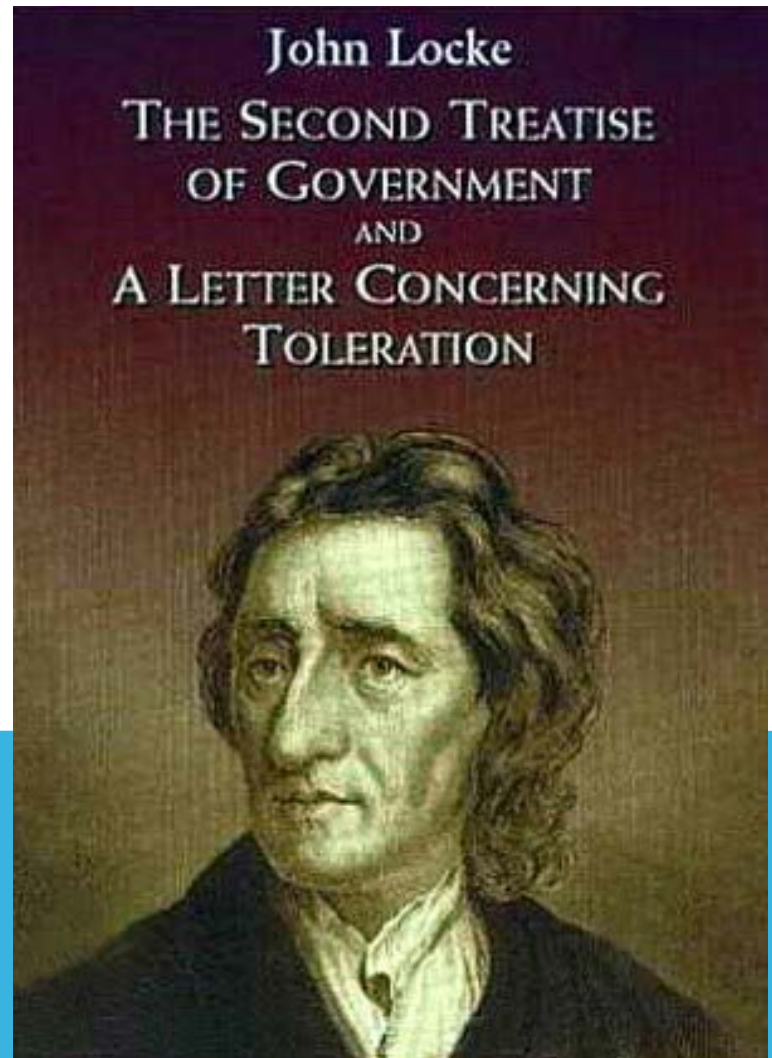
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1. **Hobbes** – although pessimistic about human nature, he broke with the practice of using custom and religion as support for political authority, and argues individuals were rationally capable of forming their own government.



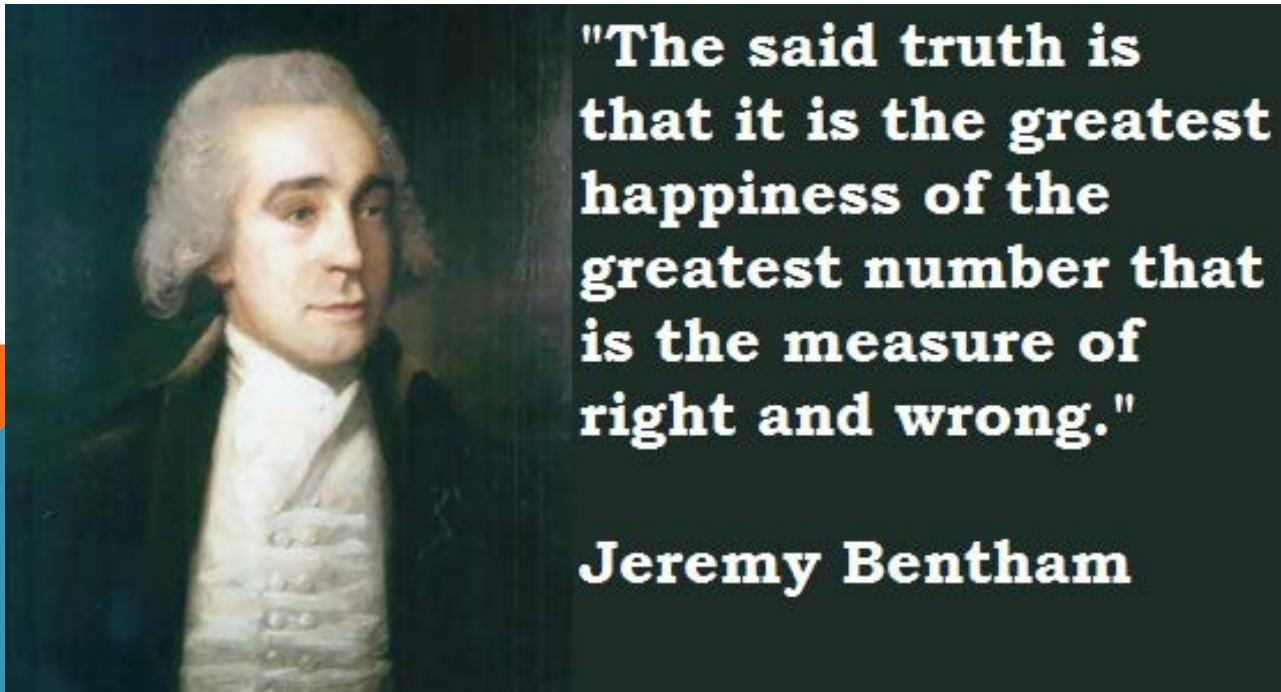
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2. **Locke** – created the first recognizable statement for liberalism by arguing for a representative government that could protect life, liberty, and property; a “social contract” theorist.



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3. **Bentham** – developed “utilitarian” theory, the idea that the value of an action can be measured by its utility to individuals (greatest pleasure for the greatest number).

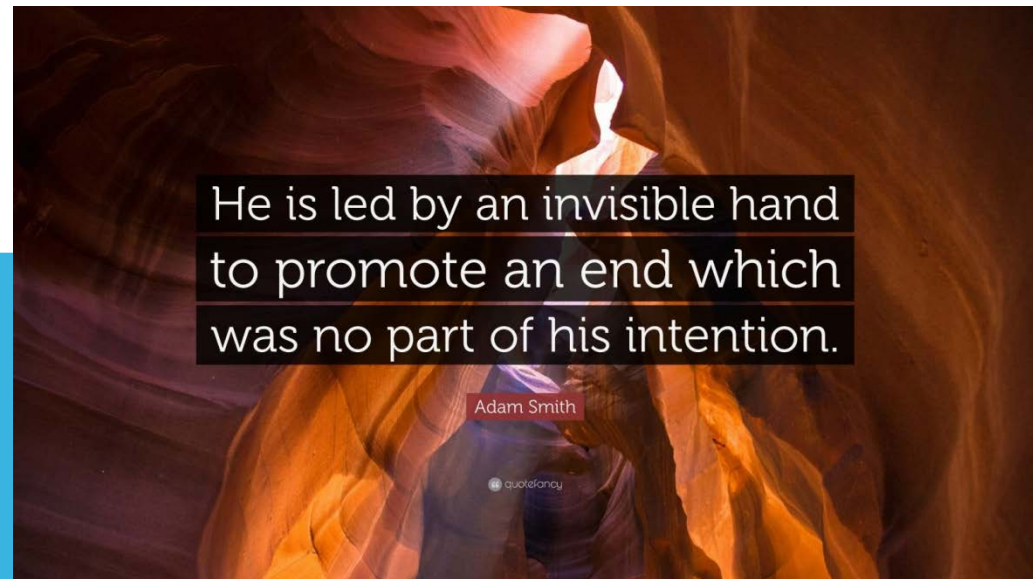
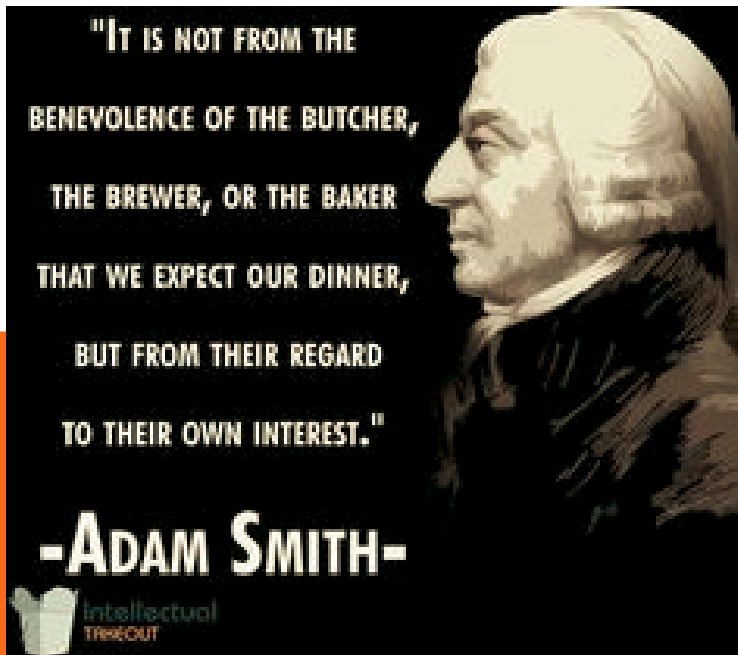


"The said truth is that it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong."

Jeremy Bentham

LIBERALISM AND KANT

4. **Smith** – from the classical economist school, who argued that government should refrain from interfering with the economic laws of the market (*laissez-faire*).



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IV. Divisions in Liberalism



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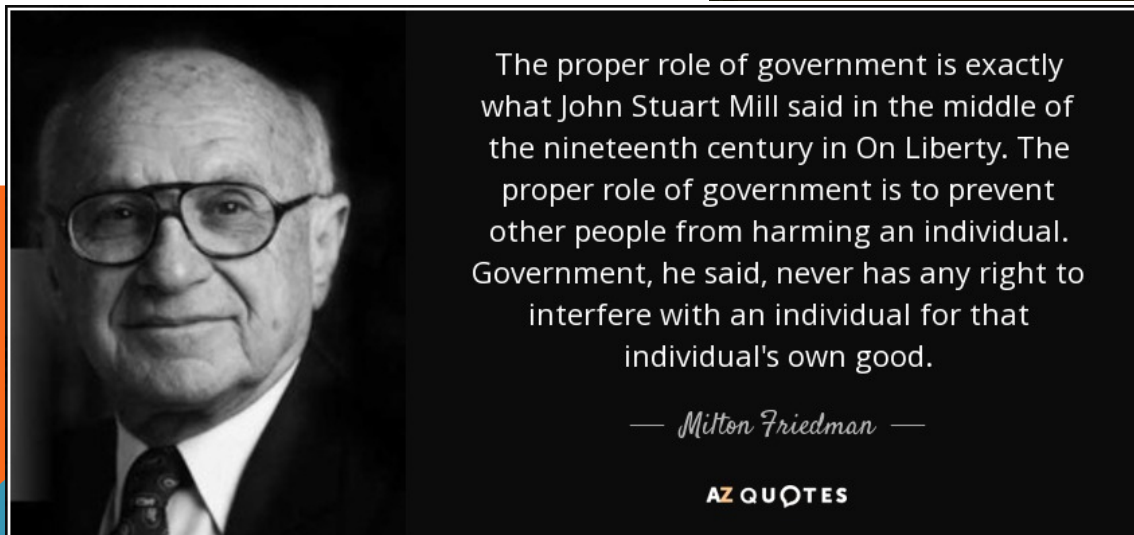
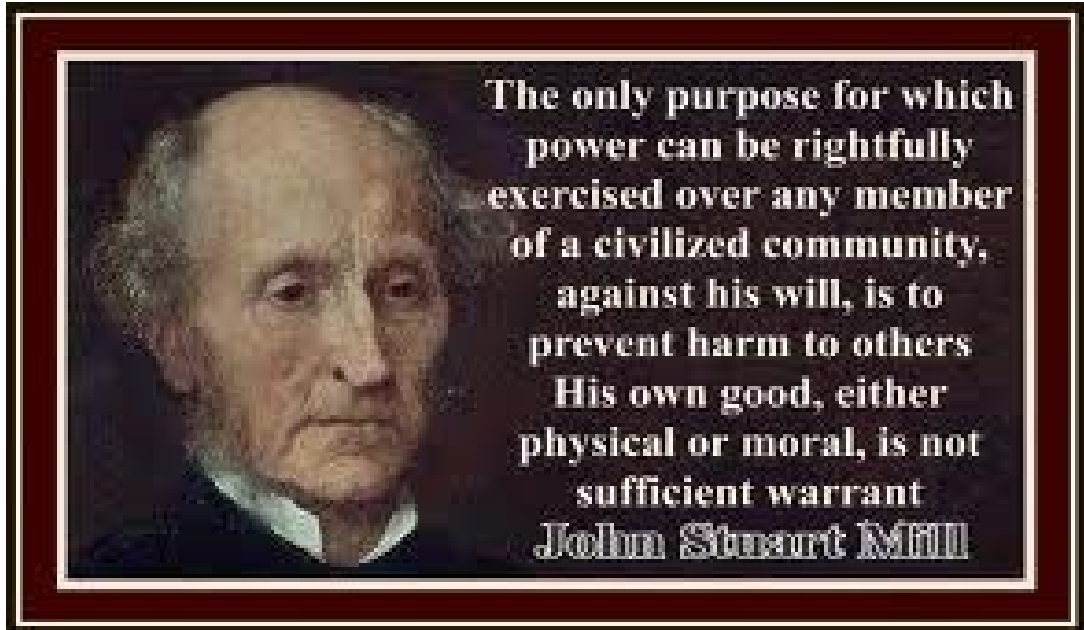
By the end of the 19th century, liberalism splits in two directions, one advocating increased government intervention in the economy and society, the other stressed individual liberty and limited government activity. The latter becomes associated with 20th century conservative thought.

The enemy isn't conservatism.
The enemy isn't liberalism.
The enemy is bullshit.

Lars-Erik Nelson, political columnist

LIBERALISM AND KANT

1. **Mill** – initial supporter of utilitarianism, later rejected in favor of socialism.

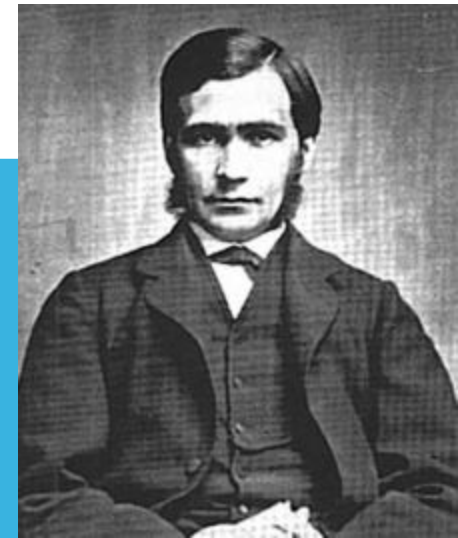


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The Welfare State



2. **T.H. Green** – along with Mill, and early supporter of the idea of a “welfare state.”



LIBERALISM AND KANT

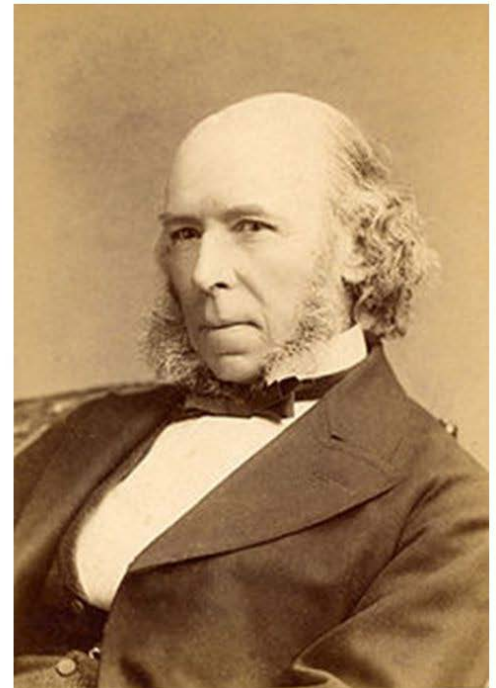
3. **Spencer** – focused on theories of individual competition, and is reputed to have coined the phrase “survival of the fittest.” Argues that society progresses through individual competition that enables the fittest to gain which produces (over the long haul) a better society.

HERBERT SPENCER (1820-1903)

Spencer applied the principles of biology to society.

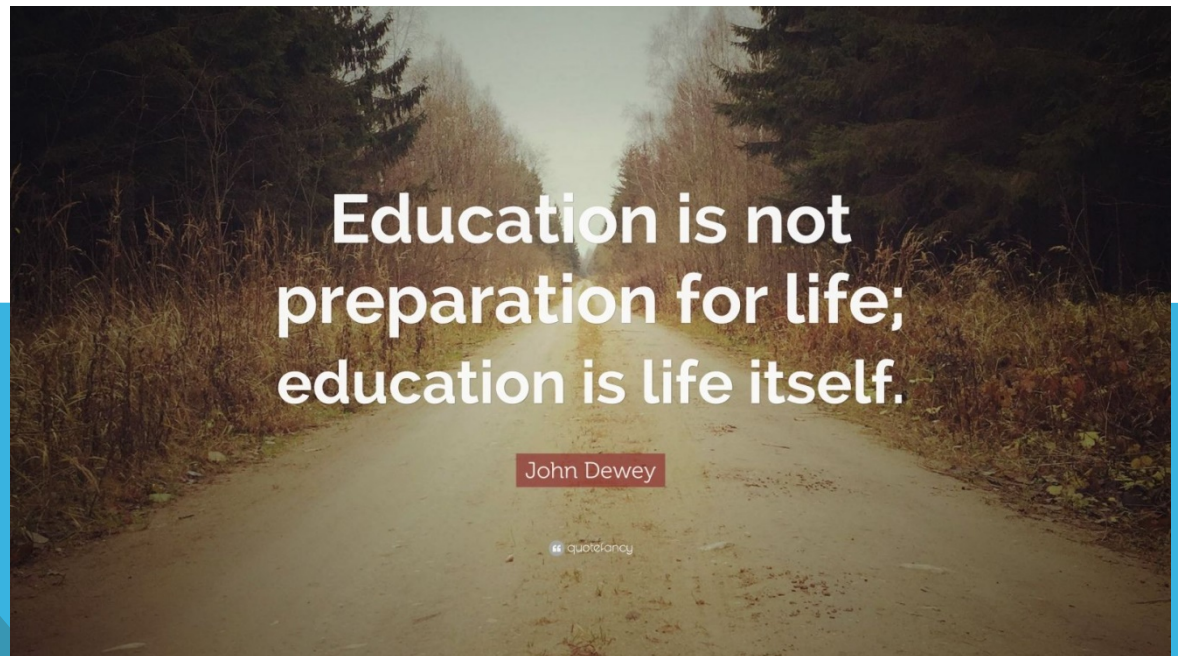
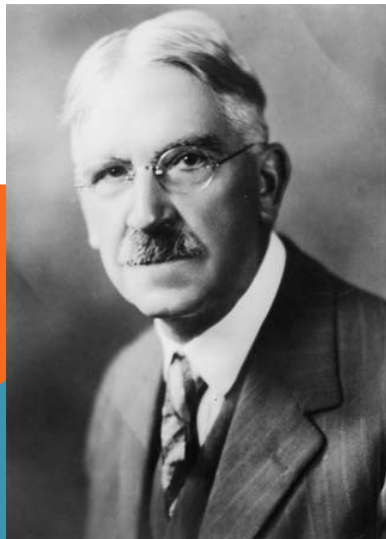
Influenced by the views of Charles Darwin, he popularized the evolutionary theory of social change and coined the phrase “survival of the fittest.”

Spencer’s view of society became known as Social Darwinism, and has fallen out of favor among modern sociologists.



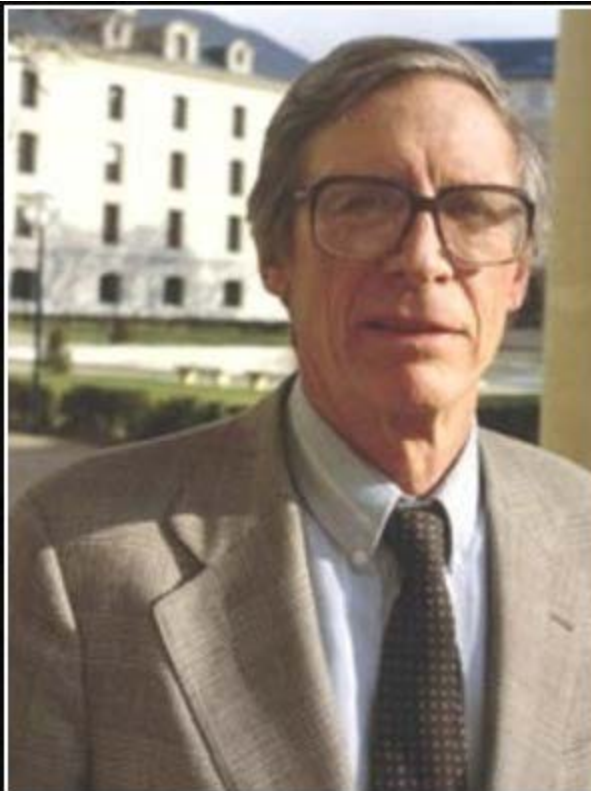
LIBERALISM AND KANT

4. **Dewey** – created the philosophical position known as instrumentalism or using philosophy to search for truth and solve problems (pragmatism); stressed the need to move away from laissez-faire; government was the only effective way to deal with certain economic and social problems.



LIBERALISM AND KANT

5. **Rawls** – suggested that in a just democratic society, individual or group self-interest cannot be allowed to determine the allocation of benefits.



A just society is a society that if you knew everything about it, you'd be willing to enter it in a random place.

— *John Rawls* —

LIBERALISM AND KANT

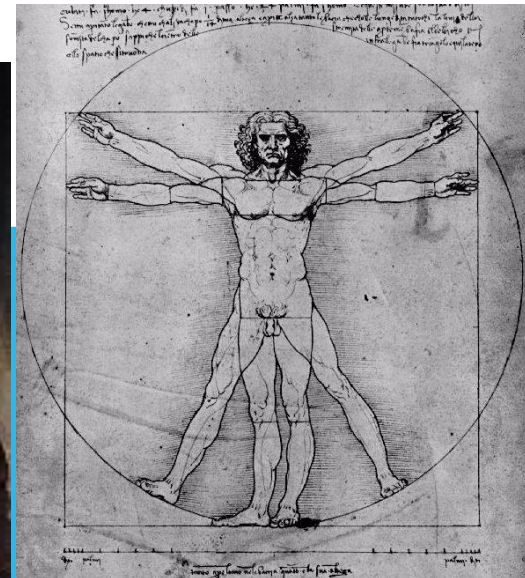
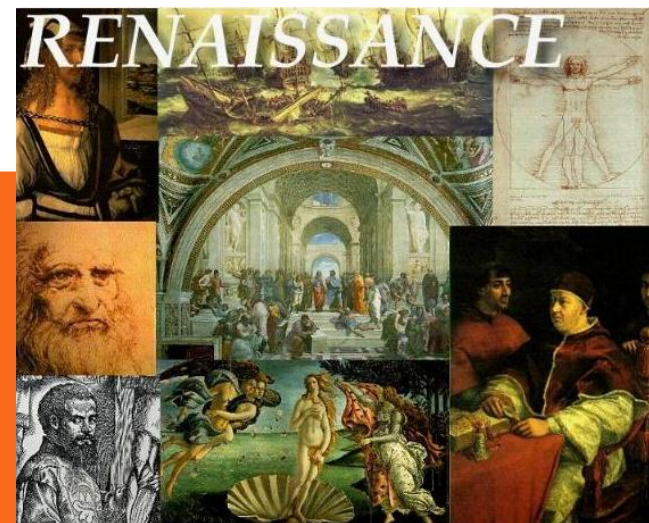
Kant



LIBERALISM AND KANT

Kant's philosophy took place against the backdrop of three important events:

1. The Renaissance (1400 – 1500)
2. The Reformation (1500 – 1600) Luther, Calvin
3. Modern Science (1600 – present) Galileo, Newton



LIBERALISM AND KANT

Another important period, described as *The Enlightenment*, saw the concepts of scientific rationality and reason applied to all aspects of human affairs as a way to improve the conditions of human life.

VALUES
OF THE
ENLIGHTENMENT

REASON
SCIENCE
PROGRESS
LIBERTY
TOLERATION

LIBERALISM AND KANT

I. Theory of the Universe



LIBERALISM AND KANT

1. **Kant** was a man of science *and* metaphysics and concentrated his efforts on reconciling the two.

Philosophy is looking for a black cat in a dark room. Metaphysics is looking for a black cat that isn't there in a dark room.

Theology is looking for a black cat that isn't there in a dark room and shouting "I found it!"

Science is looking for black cat in a dark room using a fucking flashlight.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

2. **Kant's** “two worlds”: the world “as it appears” to us, a world we *can* know; and the world “as it is in itself” or the world we *cannot* know.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

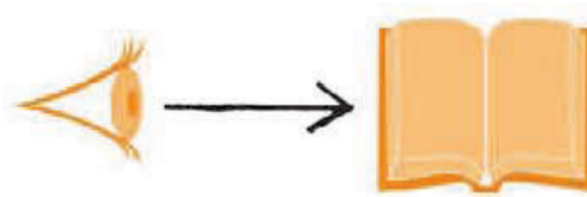


- Human beings are part of two worlds:
 - *Phenomenal world* – we are subject to the laws of nature.
 - *Noumenal world* – We have a sense of oughtness, moral law, which conforms to a higher reality.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

The notion of “transcendental idealism,” or forms of reason. For **Kant**, there are three “transcendent ideas”:

**God, freedom,
and
immortality.**



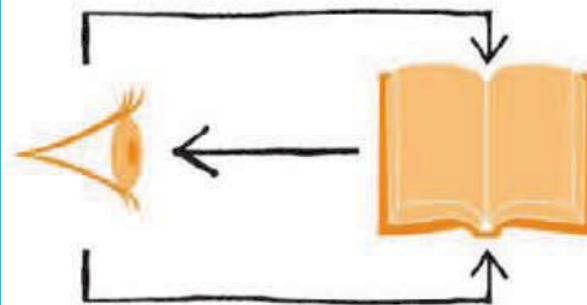
Rationalism

The rationalists believed that the use of reason, rather than experience, leads to knowledge of objects in the world.



Empiricism

The empiricists believed that knowledge comes from our experience of objects in the world, rather than our reason.

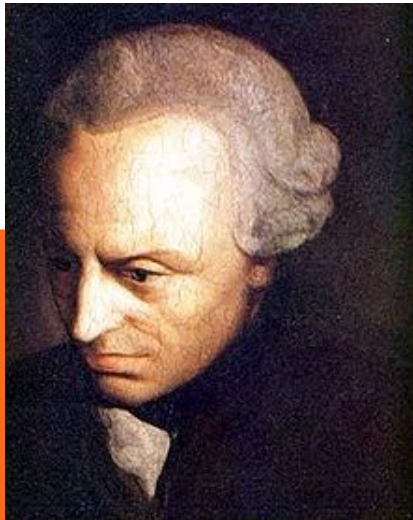


Transcendental Idealism

Kant's theory of transcendental idealism stated that both reason and experience were necessary to understand the world.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

These transcendent ideas are expressions of deep “interests” of reason that cannot simply be dismissed. Metaphysical speculation is as inevitable for us as breathing.



"All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason."

Immanuel Kant

“It is a part of the human condition that our reason has this particular fate that in one species of it, knowledge is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is also not able to answer.”

LIBERALISM AND KANT

II. Theory of Human Nature



LIBERALISM AND KANT

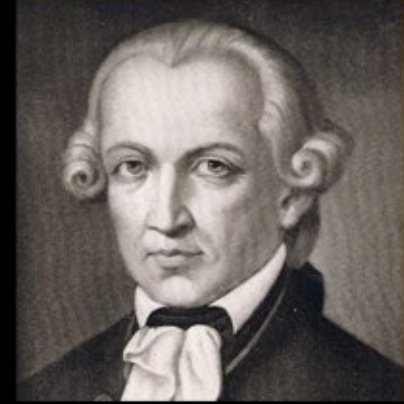
1. **Kant's** quest: to reconcile morality and religion with science (free will vs. determinism). He concluded that we cannot know the ultimate question of spiritualism vs. corporealism.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

2. 3 states of knowledge: sensibility, understanding, imagination

All our knowledge begins with senses, turns into understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason

~ Immanuel Kant ~



I had therefore to remove knowledge, in order to make room for belief.

Immanuel Kant

www.StatusMind.com

LIBERALISM AND KANT

Morality is not the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness.

Immanuel Kant

3. We do not just perceive, judge, and theorize, we are also *agents* – we do things and affect the world by our actions.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

4. Humans are free, rational beings who can act for moral reasons, not just selfish desires, *but*, Kant is unsure whether we can know the true reasons for actions, moral or otherwise.



Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's mind without another's guidance. Sapere Aude! Dare to Know! Have the courage to use your own understanding is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment.

(Immanuel Kant)

LIBERALISM AND KANT

III. Diagnosis



LIBERALISM AND KANT

1. We are midway, “between animals and angels.”



Ludwig Feuerbach

My only wish isto transform friends of God into friends of man, believers into thinkers, devotees of prayer into devotees of work, candidates for the hereafter into students of the world, Christians who, by their own procession and admission, are half animal, half angel into persons, into whole persons.

AZ QUOTES

LIBERALISM AND KANT



WE BUY THINGS WE DON'T NEED
WITH MONEY WE DON'T HAVE
TO IMPRESS PEOPLE WE DON'T LIKE.

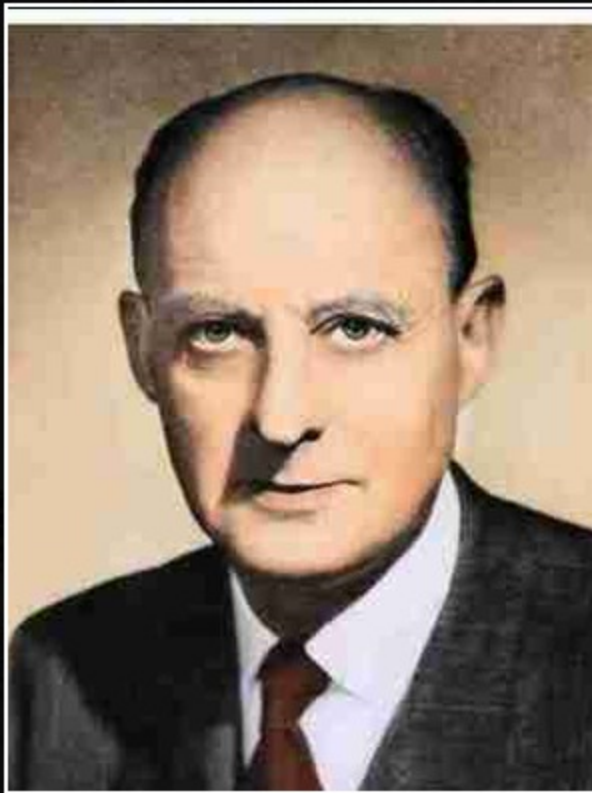
2. We are many times unable to postpone the satisfaction of immediate desires in the interest of longer-term goals.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

3. Human beings are *depraved*, which for **Kant** meant we *subordinate* “duty” to “inclination,” the deliberate preference for one’s own happiness over obligations to other people.



LIBERALISM AND KANT



There is no social evil, no form of injustice whether of the feudal or the capitalist order which has not been sanctified in some way or other by religious sentiment and thereby rendered more impervious to change.

— *Reinhold Niebuhr* —

AZ QUOTES

4. He is unable to decide whether “evil” is a result of our own choice or innate within us. He also sees “radical evil” develop as a result of *social conditions*.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

IV. Prescription



LIBERALISM AND KANT

1. **Kant's** answer to these problems mirrors his diagnosis of what ails us; filled with ambiguity. He tries to answer the question of evil at two levels.

- According to Kant, the goal of morality is freedom. But for Kant, freedom is not just doing whatever you want. It's living by your own reason. Brainwashing, advertising, cravings, and desires—all of these make you unfree.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

2. First, he suggests evil can only be eradicated through religion.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

**3. Later, he tries
to suggest there
are practical,
moral reasons
to resist evil.**

LIBERALISM AND KANT

- *Kant imagines a second person, who is naturally sweet and kind and loving. She always does the right thing—but only because being good brings her pleasure. Kant thinks that her actions are not really moral because, like the actions of the prudent shopkeeper, they aim at personal pleasure. Sure, it's a good thing that she wants to help people, but Kant thinks there is no deep reason to admire her. Do you agree?*

4. Ultimately, **Kant's** moral philosophy suggests that motivation for doing one's duty should *not* include expecting personal benefit from the deed.

LIBERALISM AND KANT

5. In the end, we have two philosophies:

a. Practical – humans can find a basis for moral action.

b. Religious – our ultimate hope is “divine grace.”

LIBERALISM AND KANT

V. Critical Discussion



LIBERALISM AND KANT

- 1. Obviously, one major problem with Kant's philosophy is in its utter incomprehensibility.**

LIBERALISM AND KANT

2. Does he satisfactorily reconcile the question of science and faith?

