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英美概况教程

周叔麟 [美] C.W.Pollard June Almes 主编

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the United Kingdom
and the United States
of America



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Preface

Yang Zhizhong

A Survey of the United Kingdom and the United States of America is a collection of articles written by American, British and Chinese professors in the related fields. It covers many topics including philosophy, history, geography, politics, economy, education, culture and society. While the information is authentic and up-to-date, the language, being tailored to the needs of learners of English, is easy to read, and even to remember. At the end of each chapter, there are questions offered for reflection or discussion, and notes provided for better understanding. When reading the chapters, learners can not only gain knowledge but improve their English proficiency.

I was privileged to be the first reader of the manuscripts, and in the course of reading them, I found myself benefiting from it. Therefore, I recommend without slightest hesitation or reservation this collection to lovers of English, learners of English and all those who wish to know more about the USA and Great Britain.

Foreword

The purpose of this survey of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America is to provide an overview of the geography, history, government, economy, sociology, culture and education of the two countries, as well as of the philosophical traditions that have shaped much of western thought, including that of the United Kingdom and the United States.

The textbook is designed to assist people studying the English language, people studying British or American literature and culture, people planning to study in or travel to the United Kingdom or the United States, or people planning to work with British or American people.

This book is the result of a unique Sino-British-American cooperative effort. Professor Zhou Shulin at Nanjing University as well as Professors C. W. Pollard and June Almes at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania were chief editors on the Chinese and American sides.

Each chapter was either written by or reviewed by a specialist in the field and contains up-to-date, factual material. Each chapter was written in standard English, using the vocabulary of the appropriate academic field.

Professors June Almes and C. W. Pollard wrote the philosophy chapter. Shen Peixin from Changsha University of Science and Technology wrote the UK geography chapter, and US geography chapter in consultation with Professor John Way of Lock Haven University. Judy Ochs, M. Ed. of the South Middleton School District and C. W. Pollard wrote the UK history chapter; Prof. Lawrence T. Farley of Lock Haven University described the UK and US Governments. Prof. Steven D. Soderlund of St. Olaf College wrote the British economy chapter, and Gillian Masemore, ex-London newspaper staff, and C. W. Pollard wrote the chapters on British culture and education. Zhou Shulin wrote the American history chapter. Prof. Philip Sprunger of Lycoming College wrote the chapter on the US economy. Professors Judy Brink and Renuka Biswas, both of Lock Haven University, wrote the chapters on US culture and society. Prof. Almes wrote the American education chapter.

We would like to extend our hearty thanks to Yang Zhizhong, President, College English Teaching and Research Association of China, Professor of Nanjing University, for writing the preface of the book and for his great concern and valuable advice about the writing and publishing of the book. Special thanks go to Xiao Li, Zhang Yiyun and Sang Xiaoli of Nanjing University for making notes for the book, and Shawn Smith for her editorial suggestions.

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CHAPTER 1 PHILOSOPHY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

I. Introduction

The word "philosophy" is Greek for "love of wisdom" and has come to mean a systematic search for answers to life's great questions. Universal questions were asked independently by great thinkers in all civilizations: "What is man?" "Why are we here?" "What is truth?" To simplify the contrasts between eastern and western philosophical traditions, three characteristics can be identified. In the East, philosophy has had a longer history; it was founded on the oral tradition; and it contained principles to live by. In the West, philosophy is "younger"; it was recorded in written form; and it made claims supported by logical or * empirical⁽¹⁾ arguments.

Early western philosophers living near the eastern Mediterranean Sea, including the ancient kingdoms of * Sumeria⁽²⁾, * Mesopotamia⁽³⁾, Syria, Persia and * Phoenicia⁽⁴⁾, made valuable contributions. However, it was the early Greeks who changed the history of philosophy in the West.

Beginning with some of the major contributions of these Greeks, this chapter summarizes several important philosophical questions and arguments to the end of the 20th century. The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide a foundation for understanding the other chapters in this book.

I. Greek * Rationalism ⁽⁵⁾

Not only did the ancient Greeks ask universal questions, but they also made important assumptions. One major assumption was that something has always existed. They also believed that a unity underlies the diversity of people, animals, plants and inanimate objects. Today, this search for a unifying, unchanging theory of the universe continues through the work of modern physicists, including the German-Swiss-American, * Albert Einstein⁽⁶⁾ (1879 - 1955) and Britain's * Stephen Hawking⁽⁷⁾ (1942 -).

Equally important, the Greeks theorized about this unity. In other words, they made reasonable guesses about natural causes, based on their studies of Nature itself. This combination of assumptions and theories dramatically differed from previous philosophical approaches which relied on mythology and divine beings to describe the world. The end result was that early Greeks defined the true task of philosophy as system building: How does the "whole of things" emerge from this "tiny seed of self"?

The first major Greek philosopher was * Thales⁽⁸⁾ (624 - 550 B. C.). Thales claimed that Nature is rational; therefore, human beings could use their reasoning abilities to understand Nature. He asked, "From what do all things come and to what do all things return?" Once Thales asked this question, Greek thinkers wondered if our changing world was based on something unchanging? To answer this riddle, they were challenged to

discover answers which avoided mythology. Furthermore, this was the origin of * metaphysics⁽⁹⁾, the philosophical study which probes the nature of reality itself.

Thales reasoned that water is the basis of everything. Like the philosophers who followed Thales, what was important was not his answers, but the questions he asked. Thales' student, * Anaximander⁽¹⁰⁾ (611 – 547 B. C.) disagreed that water or any single substance could explain everything. Instead, he viewed the world * in terms of⁽¹¹⁾ opposites: hot and cold; dry and moist; and light and dark. As part of his search for simple concepts that explained the entire universe, he incorporated mathematical ideas to describe the rational world.

Convinced that mathematical truths do not depend on day-to-day contingencies, * Pythagoras⁽¹²⁾ (570 – 500 B. C.) explained the entire natural world with numbers. His * “Pythagorean Theory”⁽¹³⁾ which demonstrates the relationships among the sides of a triangle is studied in modern geometry. Today, using mathematics as a method to describe the universe is prevalent.

* Heraclitus⁽¹⁴⁾ (535 – 475 B. C.) is remembered because he introduced the concept of change as the only unchanging reality in the universe. He compared life to a flowing river: A person cannot step into the same river twice. As part of his universal theory of change, Heraclitus claimed that opposites are inherently connected. Heat cannot exist without cold; night cannot exist without day. The tension created by “Unity in opposition” is the principle which accounts for perpetual change. Therefore, the physical world is not what it seems to be; * static⁽¹⁵⁾ appearance is not the same as reality (change).

* Parmenides⁽¹⁶⁾ (515 – 440 B. C.) disagreed. He argued that change was an illusion. The world may appear to change, but actually everything was the same. To Parmenides, human reasoning could discover the hidden universal truth(s) which was disguised by the facade of change.

Like Heraclitus and Parmenides, * Democritus⁽¹⁷⁾ (460 – 390 B. C.) was intrigued by the phenomenon of change. He argued that everything in the universe obeys the laws of necessity. Events are not random; they are the result of mechanical laws. Like Parmenides, he believed that nothing actually changes. To explain this, he and his colleagues developed the atomic theory: the building * blocks⁽¹⁸⁾ of physical objects are collections of indestructible and invisible particles of matter called atoms. Nature consisted of an unlimited number and variety of atoms. When a plant or animal died, its atoms disperse and could be used again in new bodies. In English translation, the Greek word, “Atom” means “uncuttable”, even though modern scientists have “cut” the atom into smaller particles: electrons, * protons⁽¹⁹⁾ and * neutrons⁽²⁰⁾. Ironically, Democritus' mechanistic view of the world was accepted by western thinkers as early as the 16th century, but his modified atomic theory was not adopted until the 20th century.

At the time when Chinese scholars, * Confucians⁽²¹⁾ and * Taoists⁽²²⁾, were concerned with social relationships and human harmony with the natural world, Greek philosophers were arguing about what Nature itself was. By the 5th century B. C., certain concepts were familiar to most Greek thinkers. The world of human experience differed somehow from ultimate reality. Rationalism, the belief that reason is the primary source of knowledge, was firmly entrenched. Human beings could understand Nature through

reasoning, because Nature followed rational laws.

Not all Greek philosophers agreed with the Rationalists. One major group who doubted that human reason could understand Nature were called *Skeptics⁽²³⁾. Their question, "What is Knowledge?" led to the development of *epistemology⁽²⁴⁾, the philosophical study of knowledge itself.

One group of Skeptics were the *Sophists⁽²⁵⁾, wandering teachers who would teach anyone willing to pay for their services. Like other Skeptics, the Sophists did not believe that reasoning could solve the riddles of Nature. Unlike other skeptics, the Sophists concentrated on the individual and the individual's relationship to society. Their debates about what was socially induced and what was naturally induced led them to the conclusion that there were no absolute norms for right or wrong actions. The individual had to decide. The importance of the individual dramatically shaped future philosophical discourse in the West.

The Sophists and other thinkers gravitated to the Greek city-state of Athens, a city which dominated western civilization for nearly 250 years (594 – 338 B. C.). Athens was famous for its writers, architects, sculptors, thinkers and sports contests, including the origins of the modern-day Olympic Games. When Athens was conquered by the Italian Romans, many of its contributions were incorporated into the *Roman Empire⁽²⁶⁾. In turn, the Roman Empire laid the political and cultural foundations of Western Europe. The influence of this small city went far beyond its physical size.

1. SOCRATES (470–399 B. C.)

*Socrates⁽²⁷⁾, one of the three great ancient Greek philosophers, also lived in Athens. Today, we know Socrates primarily through the writings of his famous student and the second of the great Greek philosophers, *Plato⁽²⁸⁾. Therefore, it is not easy to distinguish Socrates' philosophy from Plato's ideas.

Socrates strongly disagreed with the Sophists. He argued that some norms are universally valid and absolute. He did not teach for money, and he did not believe that he was a wise person. He knew that he knew nothing about life and the world. It troubled him that he knew so little. According to Plato, Socrates once said, "One thing only I know, and that is that I know nothing."

He was also a rationalist who had unshakable faith in human reason. He distinguished between two types of knowledge: innate or *a priori* knowledge and empirical or **a posteriori*⁽²⁹⁾ knowledge. *A priori*, or prior to birth, each person has Virtue which is not learned through the physical senses. Virtue transcends both the individual and time and is the same for all people and all time. Paradoxically, Virtue cannot be taught and is lost at birth.

Empirical or *a posteriori* knowledge is learned through the physical senses. Empirical knowledge includes virtues in the ordinary meaning, such as helping a sick friend. This distinction between the abstract concept of Virtue and the everyday concept of virtues is important because Socrates' theory generated a thousand-year controversy about the nature of scientific knowledge. Today, there is general agreement that scientific knowledge is always based on first principles (Virtue) which are not subject to change. Human beings may make mistakes, but once a scientific truth has been discovered, it does not change.

Another major contribution was his question-and-answer technique, called the Socratic method, which is still used today. Instead of telling the student the answer, Socrates engaged his student in a dialogue. He never criticized the student, but led the student to understand his own self-contradictions and to a better understanding of himself and his values.

He believed that everyone could understand philosophy if a person used common sense. Right insights lead to right action. Socrates said, "He who knows what good is, will do good." Only a person who does right can be virtuous and happy. We do wrong because we do not know better; that is why it is important to continue to learn.

The Socratic question-and-answer method angered people who did not understand its purpose. When his enemies had him condemned to death for his beliefs, Socrates could have escaped from Athens. Valuing truth more than his life, he remained and was forced to drink poison.

2. PLATO (428-347 B. C.)

Plato considered (that) the death of his beloved teacher, Socrates, marked the difference between actual human society and the ideal society. He sought the ideal, the reality which is eternal and unchanging for both society and Nature. The earlier natural philosophers asked, "What allows our changing world to be based on something that is unchanging?" Plato now asked, "What is eternally true", "eternally beautiful" and "eternally good"?

Like Democritus, Plato believed that everything in the material world dies, decomposes and disintegrates. Unlike Democritus, Plato observed that many animate and inanimate objects in the material world are very similar. He reasoned that there were a limited number of forms (ideas), transcending the sensory world. For example, a particular chair can be destroyed, but the idea of a chair cannot be destroyed.

Since empirical knowledge of physical things is knowledge of unreliable objects, which change and decay, empirical knowledge is not the road to true knowledge. Therefore, true, absolute and eternal knowledge must be *a priori*, or innate within human beings. This amazing view is the basis of Plato's theory of ideas.

Plato's theory, called "Idealism"⁽³⁰⁾, was that human senses provide inexact concepts of things; only human reason can give us true knowledge about the world. To clarify his Idealism, Plato told a story about prisoners in a dark cave. This story is often called the "Allegory"⁽³¹⁾ of the Cave.

Plato asked his listeners to imagine that the prisoners in the cave spent their entire lives facing the back wall of the cave. Behind them was a path where people walked, talked and carried objects. Behind the path was a fire, which cast the people's shadows on the back wall of the cave. The prisoners could see the shadows, but not the people. They believed that the shadows were real people walking, talking and carrying real objects.

Then, Plato asked his listeners to imagine that one of the prisoners managed to look at the path behind him. At first, the prisoner would be blinded by the light from the fire. Gradually, he would see the real people and the real objects, not the shadows. Eventually, he would understand that the shadows were not real.

Finally, Plato asked his listeners to imagine that the prisoner went outside the cave.

Again, the prisoner would be blinded by the light, but this time it would be the light of the sun. There he would see shadows and real people and objects. In time, he would look beyond this scene and realize that there are causes for events, even in caves.

In Plato's story, human beings are the prisoners trapped in the cave of their physical senses, which shows them only shadows of reality. The brighter, outside world is the true world, the world of ideas which are absolute and eternal realities. Understanding the world of ideas leads to understanding the ultimate cause of the physical world. This * dualistic⁽³²⁾ view of reality is sometimes called "Mind over Matter".

Plato advocated an ideal society which he described in his work, *The Republic*. Ideally, every person could reach the highest level of wisdom and virtue possible in his society. He believed such people would be led by "philosopher kings" who would serve their fellow citizens unselfishly because they would be the people with the most wisdom. Today, this concept of an ideal republic is unique, but it was even more amazing that it appeared in the Athenian society of Plato's day.

In summary, Plato used earlier philosophical contributions to develop his Idealism into a comprehensive system which became a pillar of western thinking. * Alfred North Whitehead⁽³³⁾, a 20th-century British philosopher, wrote, "The safest general characterization of the European tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."

3. ARISTOTLE (385 – 323 B. C.)

As differing Confucian and Taoist views affected feudal China, so the views of Plato and Aristotle, Plato's most famous student and the third great Greek philosopher, affected feudal Europe.

Although * Aristotle⁽³⁴⁾ accepted the division of human thought into the empirical world of the senses and the ideal world of thought, he believed that Plato had turned reality upside down.

To Plato, the highest reality was gained through reason. To Aristotle, the highest reality was gained through the physical senses. Unlike Plato who described the natural world as a poor imitation of the world of ideas, Aristotle believed that nothing exists in consciousness that has not first been experienced through the senses.

For Plato, our senses lead us to understand the eternal ideal forms in our mind which exist without any physical object. Even if there were no chairs in the world, the eternal, ideal form of a chair would exist, awaiting the mind that could think of it. Aristotle agreed that specific objects represented an ideal form, but he disagreed that an ideal form could exist without a specific form. At least one chair had to exist in the world. If Plato's motto was "Mind over Matter", then Aristotle's motto was "Matter over Mind".

Aristotle acknowledged that man has the innate ability to reason, his most distinguishing characteristic, but reason depended on the senses. Since man had reasoning ability, he could organize physical experiences into categories. Aristotle categorized all known living and non-living objects, as well as the fields of knowledge of his time. Although these categories have changed since Aristotle's day, his major contribution was his articulation of criteria for his categories. Reality consisted of "substance", what objects are made of, and "form", each object's specific characteristic or what it can do. For

example, a hen's "form" is that it lays eggs, cackles and flutters. When the chicken dies, it cannot lay eggs, cackle or flutter. All that remains is the hen's "substance", but then it is no longer a chicken.

As a result of Aristotle's search for causes of events, he created a pattern which continues to be debated today. He developed four causes for why events occur in the natural world. To answer the question, "Why does it rain?", Aristotle would agree with the modern explanation that moisture in the clouds cool and condense into raindrops which fall to the earth by the force of gravity. However, only three of Aristotle's causes were included in the answer. The "material" cause is the clouds; the "efficient" cause is the cooling of the cloud's moisture; the "formal" cause is the form of water which falls as raindrops. Aristotle added a fourth and "final" cause, which is the purpose of the rain; namely that plants grow so people can eat them. Today, people who believe in a final cause or a benign purpose for the universe argue with those who believe that only the material, efficient and formal causes can be scientifically analyzed.

By defining a structure which validated or invalidated deductive reasoning, Aristotle founded the science of logic. His method is called a "syllogism"⁽³⁵⁾ which argues from a general principle to a specific example:

General Principle; All men are mortal.

Connection; I am a man.

Deductive Conclusion; I am mortal.

Aristotle's theories dominated Western philosophy for more than a "millennium"⁽³⁶⁾. Some of his ideas, such as the belief that women were "incomplete" men and that the earth was the center of the universe ("geocentric"⁽³⁷⁾ theory), held western thinking back for a very long time. Despite contemporary criticism of Aristotle's theories, his influence was enormous. Modern science is richer for overcoming his arguments. He was a "seminal"⁽³⁸⁾ thinker, and his consistent, systematic approach to the philosophical problems he faced serves as a model for all times.

III. The Middle Ages

The Greeks were conquered by the Romans who adopted and modified much of the Greek culture. These two ancient civilizations are often studied together as the "Greco-Roman Age"⁽³⁹⁾. After its first introduction to the Roman Empire, three or four hundred years passed before Christianity dominated western philosophy. The Christian dominated era in Western Europe is called "the Middle Ages"(ca 476 A. D. - ca 1400 A. D.), or the Medieval Period, a thousand-year-feudal era which occurred between "Antiquity"⁽⁴⁰⁾ and the Modern Age.

The Christian tradition generally assumed that Christianity, based on the life and teaching of "Jesus Christ"⁽⁴¹⁾, was true. During this era, non-Christian thinkers and their writings were often burned. Both Plato and Aristotle were born before Christ, and, therefore, were not Christians. However, Christians did accept earlier ideas which did not contradict Christian thought, such as the dual nature of the world; the separation of humans from the natural world; the need to promote virtue and goodness as human goals; and the importance of each human being. Ironically, much of the Greco-Roman heritage

was lost until the Islamic scholars in the Near East, who had preserved many writings from Antiquity, reintroduced them to western Europe during the * Renaissance^[42].

Throughout the Middle Ages, most thinking was devoted to religious interpretation, or the study of * theology^[43]. Unlike philosophers, who are not restricted to thoughts based on a particular religious belief, theologians are more limited in their studies. Two medieval theologians have also been called philosophers. The major philosophical problem for them was whether a person should simply believe the Christian doctrines or whether these doctrines could also be analyzed through reason. One of these theologian philosophers was * St. Augustine^[44] (354 – 430), who was influenced by Plato's Idealism. According to St. Augustine, man has a body and a soul; all human history is a struggle between the materialistic and the spiritual worlds. The other significant philosopher was * St. Thomas Aquinas^[45] (1225 – 1274). If St. Augustine * christianized^[46] Plato's philosophy, then St. Thomas christianized Aristotle's philosophy. Aquinas believed that he could demonstrate the existence of God (* Aristotle's Final Cause^[47]), based on both innate reason and faith.

Despite the materialism and * secular^[48] nature of most modern European and American culture, the medieval Christian millennium shaped western thinking. To some extent, contemporary western philosophy is an attempt to refute or replace much of medieval religious thought.

IV. The Renaissance

The Middle Ages gradually ended with the emergence of the Renaissance (ca 1400 – 1700), the precursor of the Modern Age. The French word "renaissance" means "rebirth" in English. It refers to the rebirth of knowledge in Europe, particularly the rediscovery of the Greco-Roman texts. This era was characterized by changes in all areas of human endeavor, based on a new humanism which focused on Man. However, Man was seen differently than the earlier views held by the Sophists and Socrates. Man became part of the natural world, an object of investigation as much as any other animal. Gradually observation and systematic experimentation expressed in mathematical terms replaced medieval * scholasticism^[49] and religious faith.

Medieval philosophers, primarily church men, built on the traditions of previous generations. Starting with the Renaissance, the modern history of philosophy became a procession of outstanding individuals from the secular world, each with a personal style, each proud of marking an epoch.

Three important scientists refuted Aristotle's geocentric universe by recording observations of the planets and stars. The Polish * astronomer^[50], * Nicolaus Copernicus^[51] (1473 – 1543); the Italian scientist and mathematician, * Galileo Galilei^[52] (1564 – 1642); and the German astronomer, * Johann Kepler^[53] (1571 – 1630) demonstrated that the earth was only a small part of an infinite universe. Once they had established that there was no absolute center of the universe, a person could imagine that he was the center of his own universe.

* Isaac Newton^[54] (1642 – 1727), a British mathematician, surpassed both Anaximander and Pythagoras in his use of mathematics to describe the universe. Newton's

laws of motion explained all visible motions, from those of stars to those of tiny pebbles.

* Francis Bacon⁽⁵⁵⁾ (1561 - 1626), a British statesman and writer, wrote the first description of the modern scientific method: constructing a hypothesis; conducting an experiment to test the hypothesis; and reaching conclusions based on the experiment. Unlike Aristotle who merely observed, Bacon and western scientists actively manipulated nature in order to understand and control it.

* Thomas Hobbes⁽⁵⁶⁾ (1588 - 1679), a British mathematician and political writer, described human society and hypothesized about its future. His harsh description of the materialistic, selfish society is very different from either Plato's Republic or Christianity's idealism.

These thinkers adopted Democritus' mechanistic world view. They compared the universe to a huge machine which followed laws, with changes that could be measured accurately. The dramatic shift to the scientific method challenged the authority of both church and state. In parts of the contemporary western world, the scientific method is still regarded as inferior to religious authority as a source of knowledge.

1. RENE DESCARTES (1596 - 1650)

There is a direct line from Socrates and Plato via St. Augustine to the French logician and mathematician, * Rene Descartes⁽⁵⁷⁾. All of these men were Rationalists who claimed that reason was the only path to knowledge. Descartes applied reason to the question, "What can we know for certain?" Descartes insisted that a philosopher must begin by doubting all that can be doubted. At the same time, the philosopher must avoid skepticism when doubting doubt itself.

Descartes agreed with earlier thinkers who relied on mathematics, rather than the evidence provided by our senses. He used mathematical logic to reason through complex problems in other fields of knowledge. By first dividing the problem into its smallest components, he moved progressively to more complex issues.

Descartes did not believe that man knew nothing. This belief led him to ask another important question, "What is the relationship between the body (matter) and the mind (spirit)?" According to Descartes, the human body is a perfect machine, following natural laws. But man also has a mind which interacts or operates independently from the body. Descartes' dualism separated mind and matter (body) into two great, mutually exclusive and mutually exhaustive divisions of the universe. In his search for the simplest component of truth, he said, "I think; therefore, I am."

To the question, "What am I?" Descartes answered that I am a thinking, conscious being for as long as I am thinking. His * epitaph⁽⁵⁸⁾ was a most Socratic motto: "No man is harmed by death, save he who is known too well by all the world, and has not yet learned to know himself."

Throughout the West, Descartes' view of the nature of the mind is still the most widespread view among educated people who are not philosophers. Descartes has also been called the father of modern Rationalism and the father of modern western philosophy.

As Aristotle challenged some of Plato's Idealism, Descartes' contemporaries challenged his Rationalism. The major disagreement came from the 17th and 18th century Empiricists who concurred with Aristotle that all ideas are the result of sense experiences

grounded in the physical world. *John Locke⁽⁵⁹⁾, *David Hume⁽⁶⁰⁾ and *George Berkeley⁽⁶¹⁾ were the most influential Empiricists of their time. Because all three men were British, modern day Empiricism is sometimes called British Empiricism.

2. JOHN LOCKE (1632–1704)

If Descartes, the mathematician, was the modern father of Rationalism, then Locke, once a medical student, was the modern father of Empiricism. Both men asked the same questions: “Are there innate ideas?” and “Is the world really the way we perceive it?” However, their answers to these questions radically differed.

First and foremost, the Empiricist claims that man’s physical senses are the only source of knowledge. Locke’s empirical answer to the question, “Are there innate ideas?” was, “There is nothing in the mind. . . except what was first in the senses. ” At birth, the mind is a blank tablet, much like a classroom black board is blank until a person writes on it. Locke believed that ideas come from sense experiences and are processed in the mind through thinking. Locke combined thinking, reasoning, believing and doubting into a single concept which he named “reflection”.

Locke’s concept of the blank mind represented one side of a deep division in western social thought which is concerned with how much knowledge is given *a priori* (from the individual’s reason) and how much is learned *a posteriori* (from the individual’s sensory experience). If humans only derive ideas from their experiences, then a child’s environment is responsible for shaping the child. On the other hand, if the Rationalists are correct about innate ideas and concepts, then the child is also responsible for his actions. This continuing debate is often summarized as “Nurture” versus “Nature”.

Then Locke asked his next question, “Is the world really the way a person perceives it?” His answer was both “Yes” and “No”. “Yes”, the world does consist of primary qualities, such as motion and weight, which can be measured objectively. Therefore, primary qualities are truly the way they are perceived (Correspondence Theory). The world also consists of secondary qualities, such as colors and flavors which are subjective and depend on the individual. Locke’s answer was also “No”—the world is not as it is *perceived⁽⁶²⁾ when these secondary, subjective qualities are analyzed.

Like many other philosophers who preceded and followed him, Locke was not always consistent in his views. In addition to his contributions to Empiricism, Locke is also famous for his political views which relied less on the senses and more on reasoning. He advocated the equality of the sexes; the separation of powers within a government; and the natural rights of man. The American Declaration of Independence reflects Locke’s arguments for the natural rights of man. The United States’ Constitution and national and state governments are organized by the separation of powers: executive, legislative and judicial branches.

3. DAVID HUME (1711–1776)

Hume, a Scot, was the most important Empiricist of his age. He was skeptical about all we claim to know. He began by asking, “How do humans experience the everyday world?” He argued that people have two types of perception: impressions and ideas. Based on sense experiences, impressions are original and immediate. Reflections, or reasoning processes, are an imitation of impressions and occur later. To Hume, a true idea was one