

The following notes cover the following three class periods:

- Class on Rousseau and the French Revolution
- First class on Edmund Burke
- Second class on Edmund Burke

Notes for Class on Rousseau and the French Revolution

I. Introduction

a. Purpose and objectives of time together

- i. To understand the background and historical context to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* so that it will be enjoyable when studied later in the year.

II. The Enlightenment

a. Features of the Enlightenment

i. Anti-authority

1. Human reason over divine revelation
2. All people are equal
 - a. Men and women are/should be equal
3. Democracy

ii. Belief in absolutes

1. Absolutes based on man rather than God

iii. Utopian

1. Human nature could be changed through political means
2. Scientific utopianism
3. Secularism
 - a. Religion is a private personal matter
 - b. God removed from public square
 - c. The secular state independent of religion

d. Solution to wars of religion

iv. Strong ethical emphasis

1. Human rights
2. Justice
3. Equality
4. Liberty
5. Did not need to appeal to God for these virtues

III. Rousseau and the Enlightenment

a. Role in the Enlightenment

- i. Rousseau (1712–1778) began career as one of the *philosophes*
- ii. Came to reject *philosophes*' emphasis on reason. Emphasized feelings instead
 1. Because man is naturally good, we can trust our feelings
 2. Divine spark
 3. We need to be spiritual (in a subjective sense)
 4. Anticipated the Romantic movement
 5. Invented the modern subjective autobiography
 - a. Quotes on p. 64 of *Omnibus* to give a feel for what a proud man he was
 6. Love for mankind but hatred of his own offspring

iii. Utopian view of human nature

1. *Emile*
 - a. Give the child the right external environment and he will grow up to be innocent
 - b. Civilization is bad and corrupts the child's innocence
 - c. Noble savage
 - d. Get back to nature

i. Problem of circularity

IV. Rousseau's political thought

a. Tinker with the environment and you will have utopia

b. Idea of social contract

i. In order for authority to be legitimate, it must be derived from the consent of those being governed

ii. Popular at time of Enlightenment

1. "No man has received from *Nature* the right to command others." Diderot

c. Rousseau's book *The Social Contract*

i. Confusing

ii. Spartan not Athenian approach to the state

1. The good of society trumps the liberty of the individual

2. Anti-private property

a. "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying 'This is mine' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders; how much misery and horror the human race would have been spared if someone had pulled up the stakes and filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: 'Beware of listening to this impostor. You are lost if you forget the fruits of the earth belong to everyone and that the earth itself belongs to no one'" (From Rousseau's *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*).

b. "...the right of any individual over his own estate is always subordinate to the right of the community over everything; for without this there would be neither strength in the social bond nor effective force in the exercise of sovereignty." (SC p. 68)

iii. The god of the "General Will"

1. Because true sovereignty is the embodiment of the general will and is always directed towards the public good, it always speaks infallibly to the benefit of the people.

2. More than merely the subtotal of all the individual wills, many of whom may not be in touch with the true needs of the General Will. Select individuals have the task of determining what the General Will *really* is – that is, what the people *truly* want.
 - a. “...the laws are but registers of what we ourselves desire.” (p. 82)
 - b. “There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will. The latter looks only to the common interest; the former considers private interest and is only a sum of private wills. But take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel each other out, and the remaining sum of the differences is the general will.” (*Social Contract*).
3. The state exists to *give* liberty rather than to *guard* liberty. The state forces people to be free.
 - a. “...life is...a gift he has received conditionally from the state.” (p. 79)
 - b. “Each one of us puts into the community his person and all his powers under the supreme direction of the general will; and as a body, we incorporate every member as an indivisible part of the whole.” (SC, p. 61)
 - c. “...whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the whole body, which means nothing other than that he shall be forced to be free...” (p. 64)
 - d. “Every member of the community gives himself to it at the moment it is brought into being just as he is – he himself, with all his recourses, including all his goods.” (p. 65)
 - e. “...the general will is always rightful and always tends to the public good...” (p. 72)
 - f. “If the state, or the nation, is nothing other than an artificial person the life of which consists in the union of its members and if the most important of its cares is its preservation, it needs to have a universal and compelling power to move and dispose of each part in whatever manner is beneficial to the whole.” (p. 74)

V. The French Revolution

- a. Calling of the Estates-General by Louis XVI in May 1789.
 - i. parliamentary-type body made up of representatives from the three estates: the clergy, the nobility, and the rest of France.
 - ii. attempt to solve the financial crisis that was threatening to debilitate the nation
 - iii. third estate forms 'National Assembly'
 - iv. urban and rural uprisings prevents king from suppressing illegal National Assembly
- b. revolutionary politicians whip up dangerous mobs by feed popular discontent and drawing on Enlightenment rhetoric
 - i. social contract
 - ii. anti-authority
 - iii. utopian view of politics and human nature
 - 1. attempt to create a new man through civic regeneration.
 - iv. 'liberty, equality, fraternity (brotherhood).'
- c. fall of the Bastille
 - i. symbol of the old regime
 - ii. stormed on July 14, 1789
- d. Storming of Versailles
 - i. 6 October 1789
 - ii. throngs of discontented peasants broke into the king and queen's palace in Versailles and forced the royal family to march to Paris paraded behind the heads of decapitated palace guards.
 - iii. Under the 'protection' of the National Assembly
- e. Execution of the king
 - i. Four months after the Revolutionaries had declared France to be a republic and following a thwarted attempt by the royal family to escape to Austria, the King was executed on 21 January 1793.
- f. reign of terror

- i. revolution spirals out of control
- ii. by summer of 1793, power is concentrated in a 12-man war dictatorship.
- iii. 'Committee of Public Safety'
- iv. Maximilien de Robespierre
 - v. formally suspended the revolution's own constitution to institute 'reign of terror'
- vi. Freedom of the press, freedom of religion and freedom of speech were all abolished, being replaced by a totalitarianism unseen since the days of the Caesars.
- vii. Under the banner of liberty, justice and human rights for all, over 40,000 French citizens were decapitated, while more than 350,000 Parisians spent time in jail.
- viii. "*Oh, Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!*" Jane Austen
- ix. De-Christianization policy
 - 1. The implementation of a new calendar to replace the Christian one. The calendar, which was adopted in 1793 and used for the next 12 years, employed a ten day week (in a 10 day week, no one could ever know when it was Sunday) and had 1792 (the year Louis XVI was taken into custody) as year 1. This was known as "the year of liberty."
 - 2. The dispossession, deportation and killing of the clergy
 - 3. Christians being denied freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of thought if it contravened the secular humanist ideology of the revolution.
 - 4. The criminalization of all religious education
 - 5. The elimination of all Christian symbols from the public sphere, including removing the word 'saint' from street names and destroying or defacing churches and religious monuments
 - 6. The replacing of Christian holidays and symbols with civic and revolutionary cults like the 'Cult of Reason' and 'Cult of the Supreme Being.' A statue to the goddess Reason was even erected and worshiped in Notre Dame Cathedral on 10 November 1793

g. Execution of Marie Antoinette

h. International war

Notes for First Class on Edmund Burke (February 1, 2010)

Preparatory assignment emailed to students prior to the class:

As you study Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, instead of doing the activities in the Omnibus book, I would like you to do the following:

- 1) Review your notes from our previous class on Rousseau and the French Revolution. (A copy of my own notes from this class time are attached).
- 2) After reviewing your notes from our earlier class on Rousseau and the French Revolution, be prepared to explain the meaning of social contract, with particular emphasis on how this concept found expression in the thought of Rousseau. Identify Burke's response to these ideas in his *Reflections* and be prepared to put his arguments into your own words.
- 3) After reviewing your notes from our earlier class on Rousseau and the French Revolution, be prepared to identify and explain at least three of the features of the Enlightenment that we discussed. Explain how some or all of these features found expression in the French Revolution and make a note every time you notice Burke interacting (either directly or indirectly) with any of these features.
- 4) After reviewing your notes from our earlier class on Rousseau and the French Revolution, be prepared to explain how the idea of Utopia found expression in the Enlightenment in general and in the thought of Rousseau in particular. Your answer should include reference both to Rousseau's political thought as well as his theories of parenting. How are these perfectionistic ideas undermined by Burke's realism?
- 5) As you read through Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, note any passages you do not understand and would like me to explain during class (it would be helpful, though not essential, if you could email me in advance with any problematic passages).
- 6) A few pages into Burke's *Reflections* he has a paragraph beginning "I flatter myself that I..." In this and the following paragraph, what are the main points of contrast that Burke is making between his view of liberty with those of the revolutionaries? If you get stuck, read Wilson's section about Burke's hostility to abstractions and then re-read Burke's two paragraphs in light of that.
- 7) How does the paragraph beginning "But I may say of our preacher..." and the four paragraphs following it (again fairly near the beginning of the book), interact with the idea of social contract? What arguments does Burke use to undermine this idea?
- 8) Why was the Glorious Revolution of 1688 important to Burke's opponents? What arguments does Burke use to undermine their interpretation of this event?
- 9) As you read through Burke's *Reflections*, make a note every time you notice any of the following themes. Be prepared to share your observations.
 - The importance of liberty
 - The necessity for rule of law
 - The folly of abstractions
 - Anti-Rousseau (particularly Rousseau's idea of liberty, property and the General Will)
 - Anti-social contract

- Realist rather than utopian
- The importance of worldviews in shaping the affairs of men
- The necessity of listening to ancestors
- The inviolable nature of private property
- Reformation rather than revolution

If you are having trouble understanding what is meant by any of these themes, then

- a) review your notes from our class on Rousseau and the French Revolution
- b) read the chapter in Omnibus about the *Reflections*
- c) read my book review of Burke's *Reflections* at <http://robinphillips.blogspot.com/2009/11/reflections-on-revolution-in-france.html>.

Lecture notes:

I. Review of philosophical background to French Revolution

- a. What is the idea of social contract and how was it picked up and used by revolutionaries?
- b. What were some key features of the European Enlightenment?
- c. How did some or all of these features find expression in the French Revolution?
- d. How did the idea of Utopia find expression in the Enlightenment in general and in the thought of Rousseau in particular?
- e. What was Rousseau's view of liberty, property and the General Will?

II. Burke's life and legacy

- a. After graduating from Trinity College, Dublin in 1744, Burke moved to London to study law.
- b. He quickly gave that up to travel in Continental Europe, while trying to support himself as a writer.
- c. When he returned to London, Burke continued writing, publishing his famous treatise on aesthetics, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*.
- d. In 1757 Burke married Jane Mary Nugent, the daughter of a physician who had treated him.

- e. Burke's career in politics began with the acquaintance of the Irish MP William Gerard Hamilton. When Hamilton was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, Burke became his private secretary.
- f. In 1765 Burke became private secretary to another statesman before finally entering Parliament himself as an MP for Wendover in 1765. He remained in Parliament until 1797, a loyal member of the Whig party.
- g. continued to write, being one of the most eloquent writers in the English tradition
- h. Burke's thought marked by emphasis on liberty and the dangers of statism
 - 1. called for "a jealous, ever-waking vigilance, to guard the treasure of our liberty, not only from invasion, but from decay and corruption..."
 - 2. Went against the grain of the popular politics to defend freedom and the rule of law, leading to an unpopular and largely unsuccessful career in Parliament.
 - 3. When the King's party sought to increase the royal prerogative he resisted
 - 4. When the Whigs sought to use government for the enrichment of their own class, he resisted.
 - 5. defended the American colonists living under the arbitrary will of George II's ministers
 - 6. defended people of India under Hasting's tyrannical oligarchy
 - 7. defended Irish Catholics suffering from unjust trade conditions
 - 8. defended the Negroes anguishing under Britain's merciless trade in human lives.
 - 9. It was not just because he was Irish that he called Cromwell "That great bad man"
 - 10. Burke's defence of liberty could simultaneously set itself against the tyranny of despotism and the tyranny of mass democracy. Whether he was defending the king and queen of France or the rights of the least important person in the kingdom, Burke's principles remained constant
 - a. "When, indeed, the smallest rights of the poorest people in the kingdom are in question, I would set my face against any act of pride and power countenanced by the highest that are in it; and if it should come to the last

extremity, and to a contest of blood – God forbid! God forbid! – my part is taken; I would take my fate with the poor, and low, and feeble. But if these people came to turn their liberty into a cloak for maliciousness, and to seek a privilege of exemption, not from power, but from the rules of morality and virtuous discipline, then I would join my hand to make them feel the force which a few, united in a good cause, have over a multitude of the profligate and ferocious.”

III. Burke and the French Revolution

- a. When Burke was sixty years old and considering retirement, the French revolution erupted.
 - i. Review background to French revolution, especially reign of terror.
- a. Burke’s critique of French revolution
 - ii. extended letter to the young man Charles DePont, who had written to Burke asking for his opinion on the revolution. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.
 - iii. first appeared in print on 1 November, 1790 and sold 12,000 copies in the first month alone. In less than a year there were 11 editions. By 1796, over 30,000 copies had been sold, making it one of the most influential political books ever written.
 - iv. Written *before* the terror alienated English sympathy
 - 1. Jeremiah-like ability to read the signs of the time and to bring his razor sharp mind to bear on the problems of his day.
 - 2. With an almost prophetic insight he was able to penetrate beneath the surface of things and discern undercurrents and implications that time would later make clear to everyone else.
 - 3. predicted with remarkable accuracy what the result of the revolution would be
 - v. knew that when principles such as liberty, equality and human rights are emulated as ends in themselves, stripped of all connection with circumstance and responsibility, the result must inevitably be dictatorship and terror.

1. "they have wrought under-ground a mine that will blow up, at one grand explosion, all examples of antiquity, all precedents, charters, and acts of parliament."

vi. had a remarkable effect in turning public opinion in England against the revolution

IV. Burke's philosophy

a. Student discussion

- i. observations and questions?
- b. What are some of the Enlightenment principles that Burke attacks?
- c. Discuss paragraph near beginning which starts, "I flatter myself that I..."
- d. How does the paragraph beginning "But I may say of our preacher..." and the four paragraphs following it (again fairly near the beginning of the book), interact with the idea of social contract? What arguments does Burke use to undermine this idea?
- e. Why was the Glorious Revolution of 1688 important to Burke's opponents? What arguments does Burke use to undermine their interpretation of this event?
- f. Emphasis on Liberty and the rule of law
 1. Interconnection between law and liberty
 2. Responsibility based on God's laws
 3. Attack on the unqualified, abstract liberty of the Enlightenment
 - a. *Reflections*, p. 148-49
 - b. enlarge the bounds of that liberty only gradually and with great caution.

b. Anti-social contract

- i. *Reflections*, p. 153
- ii. English system
 1. Hereditary passage of monarchy and liberty
 2. Social contract leads to anarchy or despotism

- a. *Reflections*, p. 350-351
- b. Social Contract leads to Napoleon Bonaparte. *Reflections*, p. 350
- c. Anti-utopian
 - i. Realist
 - ii. Understood the wickedness in man's heart
- d. Understood the role worldviews play in shaping the affairs of men.
 - 1. "a silent revolution in the moral world preceded the political, and prepared it"
 - 2. the revolution in France was first and foremost "a revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions."
 - 3. *Reflections*, pp. 213-214
 - 4. Atheism
 - a. *"But if, in the moment of riot, and in a drunken delirium from the hot spirit drawn out of the alembic of hell, which in France is now so furiously boiling, we should uncover our nakedness, by throwing off that Christian religion which has hitherto been our boast and comfort, and one great source of civilization amongst us, and amongst many other nations, we are apprehensive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a void) that some uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition might take place of it."*
 - b. atheism, for all its transitory pomp, is always doomed to failure because it goes against our instincts as men and women created in the image of God.
 - i. *"We know, and it is our pride to know," he wrote, "that man is by his constitution a religious animal; that atheism is against, not only our reason, but our instincts; and that it cannot prevail long."*
- e. Listen to ancestors
 - 1. 'People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors.'
 - 2. *Reflections*, p. 196

3. only by reverencing our ancestors could freedom be preserved.
 - Because
 - a. liberty is not a natural right as Rousseau taught but the product of tradition, family and faith, passed on in much the same way as property is transmitted: from one generation to another through inheritance.
 - b. the great liberties of the British tradition
 - i. built up over years of tradition stretching back to the Magna Charta, the Declaration of Right and the entire network of common law freedoms which the hereditary succession of the monarchy helped to preserve.
 - c. legacy of liberty would not long abide a generation that was willing to cast off the heritage of their ancestors.
- f. Reformation rather than revolution
 1. Whenever Burke wished to reform, it was in order to conserve.
 - a. He was sympathetic to the American struggle (it is not true that he actually *supported* their war for independence) for the same reason that he looked positively on England's, so called, 'glorious revolution' of 1688, since both these struggles were aimed at preserving an already existing network of charters, customs and liberties.
 2. "My son, fear the Lord and the king; do not associate with those given to change; for their calamity will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin those two can bring?" (Proverbs 24:21-22)
 3. Not static traditionalism
 - a. "A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation"
 - b. slow, organic reform based on constitutional precedent.
 - c. If we must to repair the walls, he said, we should do so on the old foundations.
- g. The inviolable nature of private property

Notes for Second Class on Edmund Burke (February 15, 2010)

I. Review questions

- a. Why was Burke's career in politics largely unsuccessful?
- b. Why were so many Englishmen sympathetic to the French Revolution?
- c. Burke wrote his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in 1790. What is the significance of that date?
- d. What was the Glorious Revolution?
- e. How was the Glorious Revolution interpreted by Burke's opponents?
- f. How does Burke interpret the Glorious Revolution?
- g. Summarize the following aspects of Burke's philosophy
 - The importance of liberty
 - The necessity for rule of law
 - The folly of abstractions
 - Anti-Rousseau (particularly Rousseau's idea of liberty, property and the General Will)
 - Anti-social contract
 - Realist rather than utopian
 - The importance of worldviews in shaping the affairs of men
 - The necessity of listening to ancestors
 - The inviolable nature of private property
 - Reformation rather than revolution

II. Text analysis and discussion

"BUT I may say of our preacher "utinam nugis tota illa dedisset tempora saevitiae". — All things in this his fulminating bull are not of so innoxious a tendency. His doctrines affect our constitution in its vital parts. He tells the Revolution Society in this political sermon that his Majesty "is almost the only lawful king in the world because the only one who owes his crown to the choice of his people." As to the kings of the world, all of whom (except one) this archpontiff of the rights of men, with all the plenitude and with more than the boldness of the papal deposing power in its meridian fervor of the twelfth century, puts into one sweeping clause of ban and anathema and proclaims usurpers by circles of longitude and latitude, over the whole globe, it behooves them to consider how they admit into their territories these apostolic missionaries who are to tell their subjects they are not lawful kings. That is their concern. It is ours, as a domestic interest of some moment, seriously to consider the solidity of the only principle upon which these gentlemen acknowledge a king of Great Britain to be entitled to their allegiance.

This doctrine, as applied to the prince now on the British throne, either is nonsense and therefore neither true nor false, or it affirms a most unfounded, dangerous, illegal, and unconstitutional position. According to this spiritual doctor of politics, if his Majesty does not owe his crown to the choice of his people, he is no lawful king. Now nothing can be more untrue than that the crown of this kingdom is so held by his Majesty. Therefore, if you follow their rule, the king of Great Britain, who most certainly does not owe his high office to any form of popular election, is in no respect better than the rest of the gang of usurpers who reign, or rather rob, all over the face of this our miserable world without any sort of right or title to the allegiance of their people. The policy of this general doctrine, so qualified, is evident enough.”

- Why did Burke have such a problem with someone saying that the King of Britain “is almost the only lawful king in the world because the only one who owes his crown to the choice of his people”?
- In this quotation is Burke interacting with the idea of ‘social contract’? If so, how?
- What was “the policy of this general doctrine” to which Burke refers in the last sentence?
- What did Burke fear would be the result if this general doctrine were widely accepted?
- What are some other passages where Burke advances similar arguments?
- Burke refers to his opponents as advocating a “political gospel.” What might Burke have had in mind by this passing remark?
- When the reign of terror came three years later, Robespierre explicitly rooted his policies in the new creation language of the gospel, saying, “*I am convinced of the necessity of bringing about a complete regeneration, and, if I may express myself so, of creating a new people.*” In what ways does our society also look to politics as a source of civic regeneration?
- How are the utopian ideals of the political gospel reflected in the following quotations?

“[G]overnment] should . . . protect us from harm and provide every child a decent education; keep our water clean and our toys safe; invest in new schools and new roads and new science and technology. . . . Our government should work for us. . . . That’s the promise of America . . . the fundamental belief that I am my brother’s keeper; I am my sister’s keeper.” (Barack Obama, Convention acceptance speech, Thursday, August 28th, 2008.)

“[W]hen somebody hurts, government has got to move.” George Bush, from speech titled, “President’s Remarks on Labor Day,” given to Ohio Operating Engineers, Richfield Training Center, Richfield, Ohio, September 1, 2003.

In Barack Obama’s acceptance speech in Chicago on November 5, 2008 he told the story of American history, from its inception to its growth into civic maturity in a “*new dawn of American leadership*” – a process that climaxes in his own utopian announcement: “*Our union can be perfected.*” Does this reflect revolutionary ideas about achieving utopia through political means? What would be Burke’s concerns about these tendencies if he were still alive today?

“A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation. Without such means it might even risk the loss of that part of the constitution which it wished the most religiously to preserve.”

- What does this quotation tell us about Burke’s approach to change and reform?
- How does Burke’s approach to change differ from the revolutionary approach?
- Why does Burke connect the means to change with the means of conservation?

“The dislike I feel to revolutions, the signals for which have so often been given from pulpits; the spirit of change that is gone abroad; the total contempt which prevails with you, and may come to prevail with us, of all ancient institutions when set in opposition to a present sense of convenience or to the bent of a present inclination...”

They have no respect for the wisdom of others, but they pay it off by a very full measure of confidence in their own. With them it is a sufficient motive to destroy an old scheme of things because it is an old one. As to the new, they are in no sort of fear with regard to the duration of a building run up in haste, because duration is no object to those who think little or nothing has been done before their time, and who place all their hopes in discovery. They conceive, very systematically, that all things which give perpetuity are mischievous, and therefore they are at inexorable war with all establishments. They think that government may vary like modes of dress, and with as little ill effect; that there needs no principle of attachment, except a sense of present convenience, to any constitution of the state.”

- What does Burke mean when he talks about “the spirit of change that is gone abroad”?
- Why was Burke concerned about “the total contempt which prevails with you, and may come to prevail with us, of all ancient institutions”? How does this concern relate to Burke’s views on liberty?
- What are some other passages where Burke advances similar arguments?
- Burke was critical of those who set aside ancient institutions to satisfy “a present sense of convenience or to the bent of a present inclination.” To what extent has the satisfying of present inclinations become an unconscious guiding motif in American political discourse? What are some of the ancient institutions our society has set aside in order to do homage to the god of present inclination?
- Do contemporary Americans also tend to treat as mischievous all things which give perpetuity? How might they question play out in regards to questions of environmental policy? Economics? Moral practices? Competing hermeneutical models for interpreting the constitution?

“...the stationary policy of this kingdom in considering their most sacred rights and franchises as an inheritance.... You will observe that from Magna Charta to the Declaration of Right it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity — as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves a unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown, an

inheritable peerage, and a House of Commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties from a long line of ancestors.

This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection, or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free, but it secures what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims are locked fast as in a sort of family settlement, grasped as in a kind of mortmain forever. By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of providence are handed down to us, and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts...

- Why does Burke argue that his view of constitutional policy works “after the pattern of nature”?
- What is Burke’s view of inheritance in the passage above?
- The view of government that Burke advocates in the above passage is inextricably bound with the British system. But are there any underlying principles that can be applied to the American system?
- What are some other passages where Burke advances similar concerns?
- In America, is liberty also the result of the type of franchised inheritance that he is describing?

“The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself. It makes our weakness subservient to our virtue, it grafts benevolence even upon avarice. The possessors of family wealth, and of the distinction which attends hereditary possession (as most concerned in it), are the natural securities for this transmission....

Few barbarous conquerors have ever made so terrible a revolution in property. None of the heads of the Roman factions, when they established crudelem illam hastam in all their auctions of rapine, have ever set up to sale the goods of the conquered citizen to such an enormous amount. It must be allowed in favor of those tyrants of antiquity that what was done by them could hardly be said to be done in cold blood. Their passions were inflamed, their tempers soured, their understandings confused with the spirit of revenge, with the innumerable reciprocated and recent inflictions and retaliations of blood and rapine. They were driven beyond all bounds of moderation by the apprehension of the return of power, with the return of property, to the families of those they had injured beyond all hope of forgiveness....

- How does Burke’s view of property here differ from that of Rousseau?
- What are some ways that the strength of society depends on the inviolability of private property?

- What are some ways that contemporary governments routinely undermine the inviolability of private property?
- Is Western society heading more towards Rousseau's view of property or Burke's and what are the likely consequences?
- Do Western Governments treat people as their possession? If so, what are the implications for private property?
- How do the following facts or quotations play into this discussion:

A report from the Institute for Public Policy Research has urged that christening services be replaced by "birth ceremonies," in which the parents of children and the State agree to "work in partnership" to raise children. Alan Johnson, then Secretary of State for Health, explained the new policies, "We want to create conditions where more parents can engage as partners in their children's learning and development, from birth, through the school years and as young people make the transition to adulthood."

This echoes the ideas of Ellen Richards, who argued in 1910 that, "In the social republic, the child as a future citizen is an asset of the state, not the property of its parents. Hence its welfare is a direct concern of the state." Ellen H Richards, *Euthenics: The Science of Controllable Environment* (Boston: Whitcomb and Barrows, 1910), p. 133.

As Hillary Clinton expressed it, "As adults we have to start thinking and believing that there isn't really any such thing as someone else's child. My child, your child, all children everywhere, must live and make their ways in society, and now, in the increasingly shrinking world we live in, in the larger globe as well." Hillary Rodham Clinton's address to the 1996 United Methodist General Conference.

"Far am I from denying in theory, full as far is my heart from withholding in practice (if I were of power to give or to withhold) the real rights of men. In denying their false claims of right, I do not mean to injure those which are real, and are such as their pretended rights would totally destroy. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right. It is an institution of beneficence; and law itself is only beneficence acting by a rule. Men have a right to live by that rule; they have a right to do justice, as between their fellows, whether their fellows are in public function or in ordinary occupation. They have a right to the fruits of their industry and to the means of making their industry fruitful. They have a right to the acquisitions of their parents, to the nourishment and improvement of their offspring, to instruction in life, and to consolation in death. Whatever each man can separately do, without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favor. In this partnership all men have equal rights, but not to equal things. He that has but five shillings in the partnership has as good a right to it as he that has five hundred pounds has to his larger proportion. But he has not a right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint stock; and as to the share of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society; for I have in my contemplation the civil social man, and no other. It is a thing to be settled by convention."

Revolutions are favorable to confiscation; and it is impossible to know under what obnoxious names the next confiscations will be authorized.”

- What are some of the natural rights that Burke identifies?
- What mechanisms for legal confiscation are in place in our own society? In light of the above words, do you think Burke be against all or some of these mechanisms?