BEYOND THE REVOLUTION

A History of American Thought from Paine to Pragmatism

William H. Goetzmann

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Scottish Enlightenment and the Minds of Early America

Although the ideas of John Locke, the English Whigs, and republican thinkers from both Britain and France formed the basis for revolution, the broadest philosophical foundation for the new nation derived from another culture and another people situated on the fringe of the British Empire—Scotland. Like the Americans, the Scots, feeling remote from London, drew upon ideas from Germany, France, and the Low Countries starting in the seventeenth century and in so doing created the Scottish Enlightenment, which had a profound influence on America.

Many of the leading Scottish thinkers, conscious of their country's comparatively recent subjugation by Britain, espoused the cause of revolution against an unjust monarch, but Scottish society was innately conservative. This conservative mix of ideas that characterized the Scottish Enlightenment seemed most useful to nation-builders in postrevolutionary America. The Scots had succeeded in generating a remarkable concentration of intellectual energy that took full advantage of the new sciences of the day, yet without abandoning a number of traditional values they greatly esteemed.

Among these values were Common Sense practicality, an innate feeling for the empirically observed–fact characteristic of a rural society, a sense of order and rectitude, and a devotion to Presbyterian Calvinism. Unlike the French and the English Deists, the Scots, in their enthusiasm for Enlightenment ideas, did not revert to the varieties of paganism that historian Peter Gay has found so characteristic of the Continental Enlightenment. In Scotland, science went hand in hand with Presbyterian religion, which was one of its primary appeals to Americans, who viewed themselves as members of a Christian civilization to which deism and atheism were anathema. The strong reaction of American intellectuals to the French Revolution and the postwar rejection of Tom Paine for his "atheistical" ideas were indicative of the dominant tides of American thought in the new republic, even after the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800.

Beyond the model of an enlightened Christian civilization that Scotland represented, Americans also admired Scots' sense of order—an obvious priority in fashioning a new nation out of many nations or states made up out of diverse peoples. And perhaps most of all, Americans found appealing the way in which Scottish men of ideas derived practical and universal but "Common Sensical" principles out of a very clever ongoing inquiry into the facts of nature. The new knowledge they were producing in such fields as geology, natural history, medicine, and the work-yielding properties of steam, as well as their scientific insights into human nature, fascinated Americans from the early eighteenth century until the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Even more so than Scotland, America was nature's nation, and any thinking person welcomed all of the insights into nature's workings the Scots provided—especially the simply organized, practical, nonmetaphysical way in which these insights were presented. Moreover, considering the variety of peoples who swelled the new nation, the Scots' prolonged search for general principles, especially moral principles, common to all mankind was especially welcome to American intellectuals concerned with creating a civilization they hoped would be congruent with the nation. Without a continuing, informed, and updated sense of the nature of those general principles common to all mankind, America's global experiment was doomed. Thus the Scottish Enlightenment, above all other versions of that western world intellectual phenomenon, took on a heightened significance in the fashioning of the early republic. The story of the rise of the Scottish Enlightenment and the transmission of its ideas to America is fundamental to the history of American thought.

Enlightenment in Scotland did not come easy, nor did it "just happen." As in many nations of the western world it grew out of the importation of new information and a corresponding clash between the old and the new ways. But the Scottish revolution in ideas was managed from the outset not by democratic philosophies but by the existing establishment.

Presbyterianism reigned supreme in Scotland. Anglicanism made inroads only with difficulty due to the prevailing spirit of Scottish nationalism and cultural self-awareness. But by the turn of the eighteenth century, the new learning of the Enlightenment had begun to challenge the Calvinistic fundamentalists of the Scottish church. Within Presbyterianism a moderate faction came to assume power—not without a struggle resembling that between the liberals and evangelicals in America.

In large measure the transformation in Scottish religion and thought was achieved through the medium of an educated elite of lawyers, educators, and practical scientists. Large landholders, tradesmen, scientists, doctors, and learned clergymen banded together in city clubs such as the Medical Society of Edinburgh, later renamed the Philosophical Society. Feeling, like the Americans, very much on the fringes of civilization, the Scottish intellectual clubs were self-conscious and close-knit organizations. As such they had maximum impact upon the five Scottish universities: St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Glasgow, New Aberdeen, and Edinburgh. In a relatively short time, they made these centers of learning among the most advanced in the European world because they looked outward to such continental universities as Leyden, Louvain, Göttingen, Halle, and Paris, where many of their faculty studied medicine, law, and even theology. The Scottish universities also deliberately avoided the model of Oxford and Cambridge. Recognizing very early that science required specialization, the Scottish universities abandoned the regenting, or tutorial teaching, system in favor of departments of specialization headed by professors in individual fields whose knowledge was both deep and practical. The cultural centrality of the Scottish universities derived primarily from two main functions. They served as a means of conserving Scottish religious values by meeting, mastering, and co-opting the new science in the interest of preserving traditional religion. And they served as practical information agencies for a colony aspiring to full participation in the commercial world of the eighteenth century, which prompted Adam Smith to publish his classic, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776).

Behind the transformation of Scottish thought lay a dramatic story of men and ideas. As we have seen, since the first decades of the eighteenth century, Americans had been steeped in Enlightenment thought derived from the scientific revolution, which had rediscovered natural law. Newton's mighty *Principia,* along with updated versions of the Great Chain of Being, presented vivid mental images of nature's ordered and rational cosmology. The same was true for the Scots. Like eighteenth-century Americans, they were relatively certain that they knew what the world looked like. Similarly, John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* seemed to provide a straightforward way of perceiving the world and of storing away these perceptions in the mind in accordance with the innate dictates of reason that every man possessed. And since knowledge was derived from the senses, knowledge was bound to be orderly because nature itself was orderly. If they followed nature closely and adhered to reason, men could create a new and potentially perfect environment. Locke's philosophy seemed to point the way.

And yet from the beginning, as Locke himself and a number of American intellectuals recognized, his philosophy was shot through with ambiguities. If man was born with no innate ideas—a tabula rasa—where did reason itself originate? What was the source of man's moral sense of right and wrong, and where did his power of judgment come from, his free will and hence his liberty, which the colonists so strongly believed to be man's natural right? And from where did man acquire consciousness of his selfhood and of God? In short, how was man different from the animals he so carefully studied out in the state of nature? Such questions worried the Deists and the atheists scarcely at all. In America Deist writers like Ethan Allen in *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* (1784) and Joseph Priestly in his *Disquisition Relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777) were thoroughly naturalistic and tended to see man as simply the "reasoning animal" set down in a kind of continuous mechanistic and ecological present, like kudus and lions on some vast, untended Serengeti Plain. Other thinkers, such as the Anglican

Bishop George Berkeley and Scotland's amiable David Hume, probed more deeply into Locke's thought with the opposite result. Berkeley came to believe there was no objectively real world outside the mind of man. Instead, reality was a continuous set of sensations implanted in the human mind by God.

Hume, the eminent Scottish skeptic, also concluded that the world could be only a mental construct. To him, this meant that such mainstays of apparent natural law as cause and effect existed only in the minds of individuals who believed in them because of associations formed from the memory of sequences of prior experiences. For many, after Hume published his *Treatise on Human Nature* in 1738, unadulterated Lockean empiricism made no sense at all. Nature could well be nothing more than a multitudinous series of mental impressions. In Hume's view, religion was impossible because there was no "first cause" or any cause and effect at all. Similarly, science, which depended on the idea of cause and effect and laws of predictability, was also impossible.

At this point, with God himself in potential eclipse, a group of Hume's countrymen—for the most part Scottish Presbyterian moralists, led by Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, James Beattie, Adam Ferguson, Dugald Stewart, John Witherspoon, and Thomas Brown—took time off from their Paisley parishes, their rambles through the Highland heather, their Edinburgh Philosophical Club meetings, and their eccentric golf matches on the heaths hard by the North Sea to begin a counterattack in the name of religious orthodoxy against their renegade countryman. In so doing they created Scottish Common Sense Realism—a powerful philosophy that reformulated Locke's ideas so as to rescue orthodox Presbyterianism.

With the Scottish and Scotch-Irish mass immigration to America in the 1730s came Common Sense Realism. It, rather than Lockeanism per se, became the "official" American philosophy and the fountainhead of theology for nearly 150 years. As it invaded American seminaries, academies, and colleges, starting with the founding of Princeton in 1777, Common Sense Realism formed the substance of virtually every president's or headmaster's edifying course of lectures on moral philosophy—especially those of the Reverend John Witherspoon, who became president of Princeton University in 1759. As late as 1883, Yale President Noah Porter's *The Human Intellect*, a classic of Scottish Realism, served as the major text in moral philosophy. In fact, headstrong minister-sociologist William Graham Sumner created a major crisis at Yale College by using a text by upstart Englishman Herbert Spencer. The Scots yielded to no man in Scotland—or in America, upon which they made an indelible impression. Once again cosmopolitanism had shown the way; borrowing from Scotland, Americans had acquired a national philosophy.

In attacking Berkeley's idealism and Hume's skepticism, the Scottish philosophers took their cue from Locke and based their ideas solidly upon a dualistic view of the world. They believed reality was divided into "mind" and "matter" and that both existed in such forms as to be comprehended—even studied closely—by reasoning individuals who followed the inductive, or Baconian, method. They claimed, however, that Locke had not gone far enough. Empiricism could be carried far beyond simple sensation and nature studies into the mental kingdoms of reason and reflection. Taking Baconian induction as a methodological given, the Scottish thinkers focused their studies first upon observations of how the human mind worked when it engaged in the processes of reasoning, reflection, inference, and judgment. Their objective was to seek out the natural laws of thought and morality and then apply them to human behavior in the perfect social and political world system, which could reflect only the wishes or workings of God himself.

The two major Scottish figures in this endeavor were Francis Hutcheson of Edinburgh University and Thomas Reid of Aberdeen, who coined the term Common Sense. Hutcheson, a disciple of Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury, grandson of Locke's patron, applied the empirical method of study to the whole range of human behavior in the social environment. He examined institutions such as family life, the origins of society and government, political economics, and the law. In all his works he was interested primarily in discerning common principles that would provide concrete solutions to the everyday problems of life. Among other things, like several of his Scottish compatriots, Hutcheson argued the right of revolution against unjust rulers. Most profoundly, however, Hutcheson asserted that the human mind was guided by benevolent social affections, which stemmed from an innate moral sense that was as real as the sense of beauty or taste to which he compared it. This point was picked up by Jonathan Edwards as early as 1755 in *The Nature of True Virtue.* Seeking to co-opt the Scottish Enlightenment thinker, much as he had done with

Locke, Edwards saw the moral sense as an implantation by God that directed the human will. In contrast to Edwards, and in concert with all other Scottish moralists, Hutcheson believed in free will and hence moral accountability. At the heart of Hutcheson's philosophy was a revision of Locke's theory of the tabula rasa. The mind was not inert but was composed of innate faculties such as reason, the moral sense, the judging sense, taste, and the intuitive ability to recognize beauty. With respect to moral questions, conscience was every man's guide. In the realm of beauty, taste provided the innate common denominator.

Thomas Reid carried the faculty psychology even further and with perhaps more sophistication. Jarred strongly by Hume's work, Reid conceded that the mind does not simply copy sensations. Rather, he asserted that the mind is active in perception. Grammatically speaking, mental faculties had a gerundive function. They were judging, tasting, and selecting experiences in such a way that there was no sharp distinction between the external world and the internal experience of the perceiving self. Reality was a continuing stream of thought and experience in which the mind selected sensations in reference to purposes that stemmed from the innate faculty of judgment. Reid's confidence in the existence of the latter faculty, as in his belief in the existence of an external world, was simply an article of faith. Like most of the Scottish Realists, he assumed what he was attempting to prove. However, his strong belief in the faculty of judgment and in the concept of the subject subtending its object out of the stream of sensations led him very close to the ideas of modern Pragmatism, and a view of probalistic truth testable only by experience. To this Dugald Stewart added a sense of statistical probability for truth, which led Scottish philosophy into the domain of mathematical abstraction, and morals back into the area of the "hedonistic calculus" and utilitarianism. In his analysis of the mind, Thomas Brown sought in physiology the location of the innate faculties, a theme soon to be congenial to the phrenologists. In all, following Hutcheson and Reid, some fifty-one major Scottish thinkers wrestled with the abstruse problems of faculty psychology. In the history of philosophy they can be seen preparing the way for Kantian idealism, Hegelianism, American Pragmatism, and twentieth-century modernism. However, their role in the context of early American history was to provide a scientific avant garde worldview, grounded in morality and principle that enabled old-time religion to be modern and allied with republican virtue at the same time. An example of this is the writings of Scottish philosopher Alexander Bain, whose ideas directly inspired American Pragmatism.

Though Scottish thought is generally believed to have come to America with John Witherspoon, it preceded that worthy's arrival by at least a generation. It formed part of the Great Awakening, as religious leaders in America were in constant contact with Scottish thinkers. The Reverend Jonathan Edwards himself corresponded with a number of Scottish clergymen, the most important of whom was John Erskine. In addition, Edwards carefully read the works of the leading Scottish philosophers. Presbyterian ministers often went to Scotland to receive church orders or to beg donations for American "kirks" and the numerous church academies that were springing up as a result of the Great Awakening. Scores of young men traveled to Scotland to study at its universities, whose renown in medicine and law soon surpassed those of English and continental universities. The famous naturalist circle that developed in Philadelphia by the mid-eighteenth century, making it the scientific capital of the colonies, was largely the product of Scottish influence.

Two members of the Philadelphia naturalist circle stood out as early progenitors of Scottish Enlightenment thought in America. Francis Alison, a protégé of Benjamin Franklin and colleague of the plant collector William Bartram, joined with Anglican minister William Smith to found the College of Pennsylvania in 1755. Alison was a Presbyterian minister, thoroughly familiar with Scottish thought, while Smith, though Anglican, had attended King's College at Aberdeen for four years (1743–1747). Smith, due to the fact that he set down the curricular reforms he had observed at Aberdeen in an imaginative utopian educational pamphlet titled *A General Idea of the College of Miranda*, became provost of the new college while Alison became vice provost and professor of moral philosophy. The two men fought bitterly for years over Anglican versus Presbyterian questions, with Alison ever fearful that Smith would sell out colonial American religious freedom to establishment Anglicanism. At the same time, both educators worked together to make the College of Pennsylvania a bastion of Scottish Enlightenment learning in America.

Alison's course in moral philosophy was almost entirely derived from Hutcheson's Scottish lectures. According to historian Douglas Sloan, "Through the teachings of Francis Alison the full sweep of the reconstruction of moral philosophy, in which Hutcheson played such an important initial role, entered the American college at a very early date." Since Alison published almost nothing, it is difficult to recapture the full sweep of the Alison-Hutcheson "reconstruction of moral philosophy." But starting with Hutcheson's extensive emendations on Locke's *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Alison took his students through the new ontology and epistemology, dissected the mind and its faculties, and established general principles derived from these dissections, which he then applied to virtually every societal institution, attempting to evaluate their efficacy by empirical examination of factual situations. Students generally copied his lecture notes, then either recited or responded to questions or statements the professor had made in class, much in the manner of a modern-day law school. As Sloan put it, "Alison was able to make his own presence at the College of Pennsylvania a primary source of resistance—against Anglicanism, and, eventually, against the British government." One surviving fragment of Alison's writing indicated something of the way he applied his Common Sense philosophy to the pressing issue of late eighteenth-century life—political liberty:

> While the public interests are tolerably secured and consulted it is unjustifiable in any people to have recourse to civil wars and force for lighter causes: but when the public liberty and safety cannot be otherwise secured it is lawful and honorable to make strong efforts for a change of government.

Scottish Realism became an even more powerful force in American thought when the Reverend John Witherspoon arrived from Scotland in 1768 to assume the presidency of Princeton. The college had been founded in 1746 as a result of the split between New Light and Old Light Presbyterians during the Great Awakening. Its founders were followers of William Tennent and his Log College New Light evangelical Presbyterianism. By 1768, when the doughty Witherspoon arrived, a refugee from an ongoing series of theological and political confrontations in Scotland, Princeton already had a history of short-lived presidents and religious backsliding. Thus his errand into the New Jersey wilderness was precarious from the outset. The learned Scot found most of his students and faculty caught up in the subtle coils of Berkeleyan idealism, and he was forced to turn them straightaway toward the path of Scottish orthodoxy. In this perilous labor he was overwhelmingly successful. He turned out not only a generation of learned ministers steeped in the Scottish philosophy, but also a generation of political leaders who were instrumental in founding the republic according to their values.

Witherspoon had studied with Thomas Reid and John Stevenson at Edinburgh, but his famous course on moral philosophy seems to have been based entirely upon Francis Hutcheson. From the outset, in the process of stamping out Berkeleyan idealism, Witherspoon emphasized two main themes: Reason and revelation are not antithetical, and empirical observation is the best test of any principle. He felt that not only could mind and nature be examined inductively, but also society and the Bible. All, he believed, would in the end prove "agreeing." Witherspoon declared:

> At first sight it appears that authors differ much more, and more essentially on the principles of moral than natural philosophy. Yet perhaps a time may come when men, treating moral philosophy, as Newton and his successors have done natural, may arrive at a greater precision.

Thus, as a convinced Newtonian as well as a Presbyterian divine, Witherspoon taught science and the Bible as fact subject to inductive examination. His three themes were the literal truth of the Bible, man's innate moral nature, and the value of experience. In the end, his was an ethic of biblical utilitarianism but not a thoroughgoing pragmatism because Witherspoon clung to traditional interpretations of revelation; he believed in sin, and, like Edwards, he believed the moral faculty represented the continuous working of God in the individual.

Witherspoon is perhaps most famous for his pronouncements on government. He favored opposition to tyranny, signed the Declaration of Independence, and was the most active American clergyman in the American Revolution. He also espoused a theory of government derived from Hutcheson and possibly Montesquieu that declared: "The concrete task of the statesman and the political theorist was to devise forms of government that would keep man's antisocial tendencies in bounds and allow his social nature some freedom of expression." He favored written constitutions, limited government, and a system of checks and balances. Two of his favorite pupils, James Madison and James Wilson, incorporated these principles into the drafting of the U.S. Constitution. As Sloan concluded, "Witherspoon linked the demands of the new nation with the requirements of his own political-religious convictions and drew the church and its colleges directly into the task of nation-building."

In the realm of philosophy, perhaps the most interesting of Witherspoon's protégés was his son-in-law, the Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith, who became Witherspoon's successor as president of Princeton during the college's most unruly era. Smith was one of the most profound and imaginative of the school of Scottish philosophers. A tall, elegant man who was such a master of pulpit oratory as to earn himself the sobriquet "velvet mouth," Smith had seen long and varied service by the time he assumed his role as Princeton's intellectual leader in 1795. He had graduated from the college, become a minister and missionary to the wild, brawling Scotch-Irish frontiersmen of western Virginia and Kentucky, founded Hampton-Sidney Institute for blacks in Virginia, and taught moral philosophy at Princeton for sixteen years. Though his years as Princeton's president were punctuated by continual riots among the rebellious postwar student generation, which alienated the trustees and nearly bankrupted the college, Smith somehow remained a favorite with students and faculty alike through all those grim times. Perhaps it was because he spoke their language. He had a wide-ranging scientific curiosity and dabbled in anthropology to the extent that he denied the doctrine of man's total depravity and confidently declared to the students that "polygamy and concubinage were not necessarily moral evils."

In 1787 he published an address to the American Philosophical Society, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*, which flatly declared that blacks and Indians were members of the human family after all. He boldly espoused the evolutionary doctrines of the inheritance of acquired characteristics that came to be associated with the infidel Jean Baptiste Lamarck, and saw all mankind evolving from a common human family with a common moral sense, subject to the common moral law, and differing only by virtue of their exposure to different climates and environments. A black person's life after many generations under the long, hot sunshine of the tropics had caused him to have dark skin, which Smith called "an universal freckle." This was in sharp contrast to Thomas Jefferson's doubts as to whether a black person was a man at all, and Benjamin Rush's theory that he had been the victim of some strange variety of leprosy. To Smith, of course, the inclusion of the Indian in the human family was not remarkable. It was simply logical and necessary. If there was more than one species of man, then the moral law would be relative, and the Great Chain of Being potentially wasteful. From observation he knew the moral law to be common and universal; ergo, there was only one species of man. Ever a devotee of science, Smith sought to bring the new learning to the service of religion whenever he could. As such, his views, except in special instances, reflected almost perfectly the merger of Enlightenment ideas and religious orthodoxy that made up the mainstream of philosophical thought in the new republic.

Like that of all Scottish philosophers, Smith's main objective was the accurate delineation of the moral law. To this end, he was a critic of early Enlightenment naturalism. He followed the Scots in believing that inductive science had not been carried far enough. It had discovered laws underlying natural phenomena, but it had not gone sufficiently into the realm of human consciousness, leaving Locke's work incomplete. And neither Hume's skepticism nor Berkeley's idealism had done anything to aid the cause of true inductive inquiry into the human mind. Thus, like the other realists, he called for accurate observation of man's behavior, thought processes, reflections, and knowledge-gathering activities. In insisting that the empirical methods of science be carried into the study of man's mind, Smith was searching for the common laws of behavior—mental and moral truths upon which generalizations could be made with sufficiently verifiable certainty as to be the basis for moral action. This was the meaning of "common" in the Common Sense philosophy.

In pursuing his study of the common sense of all mankind, Smith laid down five rules:

1. That no law should be admitted on hypothesis, but should rest solely on an induction of facts.

2. That laws collected from an ample and accurate induction of facts should be deemed universal, till other facts occur to invalidate, or limit, the conclusions that have been drawn from them.
3. That laws founded on a partial induction of facts should not be extended beyond the limits to which they are certainly known to apply.
4. That similar appearance should, because of the uniformity of nature, be referred as far as possible to the same causes.
5. That the testimony of our senses and of all our simple perceptions ought to be admitted as true, and no ulterior evidence be required of the reality, or the nature of the facts they confirm.

His rules depended upon a doctrine of uniformitarianism. Long before most geologists realized that by observing the nature and pace of processes in the present, one could reconstruct the geologic past and to an extent predict the future, the Scottish Realists had come to the same conclusion about man. Also, in a true spirit of scientific sophistication, they grasped the idea of limited but useful truth. Their search for common or uniform principles would never really be finished. Some ninety-five years after Smith wrote, latter-day Scottish Realist James McCosh was still proclaiming:

> It should be freely admitted that the Scottish school has not discovered all truth, nor even all discoverable truth, in philosophy; that it does not pretend to have done so is one of its excellencies.
>
> . . . Let them [the Scots] acknowledge that they have proceeded in time past in the patient method of induction, and announce openly, and without shame, that they mean to do so in time to come. Let it be their claim, that if they have not discovered all truth, they have discovered and settled some truth.

In such a spirit of inquiry, and in the idea expressed by most of the Realists that the truth is what one is prepared to act upon as if it is scientifically or morally verifiable, lay the basis of American Pragmatism and the concept of the open-ended universe.

Smith and other thinkers of the Scottish school also touched upon such modern concepts as the calculus of scientific probabilities—“perhaps, we ought to rest satisfied with only probable evidence" and a definition of free will involving the ability to select or self-determine one's own motive, or sequence of internal and external sensations from all those that continually flow through the mind as it perceives reality. The latter, of course, flew in the face of Calvinism, which denied man's free will. Smith's theology looked instead toward the romantic perfectionism or optimism of a new generation of Presbyterian evangelists, while at the same time his philosophy anticipated the "stream of consciousness" and individualistic pragmatism of William James, as late as 1890.

Convinced of the existential and comprehensible reality of the external world, which distinguished them from idealists like Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, Smith and his fellow Scottish Realists nonetheless devoted their major attention to the hidden wellsprings of true morality in every man's innate common moral sense. The latter, indeed, was perhaps the main thrust of their philosophy as they sought to buttress orthodox religion and at the same time standardize right conduct in the new republic. Smith considered the entire corpus of his famous *Lectures on Moral and Political Philosophy* (1812) as a "volume of moral experiment."

One of their number was perhaps America's first "mental hygienist." About the time Diderot became interested in Rameau's crazy nephew, Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, a Scottish-trained physician, began to relate the faculty psychology to cases of mental disorder he had observed. Rush was nothing if not dogmatic, though he believed himself to be something of an empiricist as well as a rationalist. In combining the two, Rush believed he had modified the moral philosophy for the better. He flatly rejected pure induction in favor of hypothesis, declaring that most of Newton's discoveries "were the result of pre-conceived hypotheses." And he asserted, "To observe is to think and to think is to reason in medicine," thus emphasizing the critical and judgmental faculties that other Realists such as James Beattie had also noted. History has not been kind (perhaps appropriately enough) to Rush's theory of physical disease, to which he attributed a single cause—"vascular convulsion"—and prescribed only a pair of remedies—bleeding and purging. But his theory of mental illness has proven more interesting as an application of the Common Sense philosophy to the abnormal. He first enumerated nine mental faculties: understanding, memory, imagination, passions, the principle of faith, will, the moral faculty, conscience, and the sense of the deity. Then he argued that "the cause of madness is seated primarily in the blood vessels of the brain, and it depends upon the same kind of morbid and irregular actions that constitute other arterial diseases." Thus if in one section of the brain there was a vascular or arterial malfunction, then the faculty or faculties located in that section would also malfunction, causing what is termed madness. For Rush, "derangement" was clearly not sin, demonic possession, or crime, but an illness resulting from vascular malfunction that was related to every part of the body. Such illness stemming from physical causes and bad environment could result in extinguishing or blocking the faculties, including the moral faculties, thus causing lying, kleptomania, drunkenness, suicide, and murder—behavior not conventionally linked to madness. For Rush, moral turpitude was, or could be, a form of insanity. But this, in turn, was a function of the body and the physical, social, and political environment, which had caused the excitement and the "vascular constriction in the first place."

An ardent revolutionary who had recommended the title for the pamphlet *Common Sense* to his friend Tom Paine, Rush was, like Paine, essentially a moral utopian. A "born again" republic with free institutions, such as Rush envisioned for America, was crucial to mental as well as moral health. For him, they were the same thing. As important as the hospitals and medical schools, which he helped to found, were representative governments and free presses, which, as he put it, "serve like chimneys in a house, to conduct for the individual and public mind, all the discontents, vexation, and resentment which have been generated in the passions by real or supposed evils."

At about the same time Rush was using the faculty psychology to diagnose individual and societal ills, far to the north in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Unitarian Conscience was born. Growing out of liberal religion of the sort espoused by Jonathan Mayhew and Charles Chauncey, the Scottish philosophy had first been upheld at Harvard by David Tappan, a moderate Calvinist who held the Hollis Professorship of Divinity for thirteen years. In 1803, upon his death, he was succeeded after a bitter political struggle by Henry Ware, a Unitarian. Soon afterward, Harvard had a Unitarian president in Samuel Webber, and following on this the new Alford Chair of Moral Philosophy received the first in a long line of Scottish Realists—Levi Frisbie. As the nineteenth century opened, Harvard had been delivered into the hands of rational religion. From that point on, each holder of the Chair of Moral Philosophy—Levi Frisbie, Levi Hedge, James Walker (also president of Harvard), and Francis Bowen—was a devotee of rational Christianity and an avid disciple of Thomas Reid and the Scottish moralists.

By 1820, it must have seemed as if the whole nation had turned to Common Sense. As far as Cambridge was concerned, however, a new orthodoxy had been born, buttressed by the rational, scientifically derived principles of Scottish Realism. It seduced New England's greats—Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Andrews Norton, William Ellery Channing—and came to represent the institutionalized aspects of the collective conscience of New England's elite. As such it formed the foundation for the first phase of the region's literary renaissance, as well as Federalism, Whiggery, and the genteel aspects of the antislavery movement. Perhaps it is most famous, however, as the foil for the Transcendentalist movement that was to include Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, Theodore Parker, George Ripley, Margaret Fuller, and a number of New England's great romantics. It was to be a fascinating struggle over consciousness, perception, and the moral nature of America, in which the knights of Germany stood forth against the champions of Scotland and English Latitudinarianism, and the outcome of the battle has to this day remained inconclusive.

Despite the flowering of the Scottish philosophy in America, when he made his celebrated visit to the United States in 1835, Count Alexis de Tocqueville concluded that in no part of the civilized world was less attention paid to philosophy than in this country.

That he missed the widespread impact of Scottish philosophy on American thought is not entirely surprising. Fundamentally the Scottish philosophy was laissez-faire. Ontologically it posited a dualistic world of mind and matter, but epistemologically, beyond its worship of the scientific method of induction from observable facts, Scottish philosophy was a knowledge-processing structure that was open-ended and flexible. It could lead any-where the facts took it and hence took on a great variety of forms and subforms reinforcing evangelicalism and Unitarianism alike. The same phenomenon occurred in Scotland itself. In his monumental treatise on the Scottish philosophy, President James McCosh of Princeton had analyzed the work of the major Scottish thinkers, each differing to some degree from the other. So it was in America: William Smith and Francis Alison at Pennsylvania College frequently quarreled, and their ideas differed greatly from those of Eliphalet Nott of Union Seminary, Francis Wayland of Brown, Noah Porter of Yale, and Levi Hedge of Harvard. Though all subscribed to religion and the moral law, some investigators stressed passion and intuition over reason and the careful calculus of probabilities. Infinite adaptability was a weakness of Scottish Realism, but also its strength.

Scottish Realism officially eschewed esoteric, metaphysical system-building, but each philosopher was ultimately forced to build his own, often out of parts borrowed from the Scottish "prophets" or emerging continental eclectics, such as Victor Cousin, whose something-for-everyone amalgam drawn from the English, Scots, and Germans he forthrightly named the Eclectic Philosophy. Some standard elements emerged, however. The course on moral philosophy that appeared in every college, academy, and seminary gradually established moral philosophy as a regular profession in America, where a gentleman, even if he were not of the cloth, could make a career. Along with the professionalization of philosophy, textbooks appeared. The most widely used of all was Francis Wayland's *Elements of Moral Science*, which sold more than two hundred thousand copies. It was published in 1835, the very year that Tocqueville could find no American interest in philosophy. Literary and artistic taste, too, became somewhat standardized as Scottish rhetoric books, with their emphasis on classical verities, became standard fare in American colleges and schools.

The appeal of Scottish Realism thus was not only its scientific modernity—the way in which it stated the "old truths of the heart" in newer, more comprehensible language. It was also the disarming reliance on apparent fact—the tangible, the convincing, the common sense rather than the airy, elitist metaphysics of the Idealist or Platonist, who was forced to create his own language to describe a vast, comprehensive system nearly impossible to grasp in its entirety. And in restoring God to his heaven, in proving the enduring value of the old moralistic truths, in coming out foursquare for free will and instrumentalism, in joining the army of hope and the march of progress in the New World, as the Edinburgh Circle had done in the Scotland of the Industrial Revolution of Matthew Boulton, James Watts, and Adam Smith, the American Scottish Realists caught perfectly the spirit and optimism of the new utopian republic. If they raised questions they never answered, so too had America, whose canals, then being built, as Perry Miller has reminded us, all "flowed into the future."

Though the philosophers seemed high-minded, one cannot resist pointing out that the Scots and Scotch-Irish were also among the first frontiersmen. They were continually moving west through the Carolinas and over the Appalachian Mountains. Drawing upon their constant combat with the English lords, they became great Indian-fighters and for that matter duelists, family feudists, and just plain unruly. They were called rednecks, but they brought the Pennsylvania log cabin to backwoods America and invented bourbon and rye whiskey based on corn and rye, which were native to the country. And as Arthur Herman noted, they often changed the language: "neckid," "widder," "critter," and children as "little shits." Local streams or landmarks were sometimes named Cutthroat Gap, Tickle Cunt Branch, or Fucking Creek. Captain William Lynch of Virginia became famous because of his invention—lynching. Yet the "rednecks" or "crackers" produced such distinguished men as Daniel Boone, James K. Polk, Thomas Hart Benton, and Sam Houston, as well as William Tennent, Yale man and founder of the famous Log College in the backwoods of western Pennsylvania, where many fiery Presbyterian ministers "growed up" and set out on their evangelical missions.