SECULARIZATION OF THE WEST & THE REST
The Legacy of Jeremy Bentham

Dr. Harry Hillman Chartrand, PhD
Assistant Professor, Economics
University of New Brunswick Saint John

Inspired by:
Northrop Frye's *The Great Code*, 1982.

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Introduction

How did we get here? How did we get to a planetary civilization with hundreds of artificial satellites circling monitoring the constantly changing state of the planet, a human habitat orbiting above us; footprints on the Moon; Rovers on Mars and a 1970s Voyager still communicating as it crosses into interstellar space?

The simple answer is Science. Indeed the Scientific Revolution of the 1600s planted the seed. Germination, however, required an Institutional Revolution that began in the late 1700s when feudal institutions were progressively modernized, replaced, or, most importantly, entirely new ones created. I argue that the second revolution was spawned by the last great philosophy of the European Enlightenment – Utilitarianism. In the Anglosphere (the geopolitical entity sharing a common language and Common Law) it was fed by Jeremy Bentham's specific brand of Utilitarianism - Ethical Hedonism, that is, ethical pleasure-seeking.

In this note I argue that the first revolution enabled the second precipitating progressive and continuing secularization of human society, that is, the displacement of theology by ideology in the conduct of public affairs. Quite simply theology is an explanation of the way the world works with God; ideology is an explanation of how it works without one. In this regard, it should be recalled that the word 'theory' derives from the Greek meaning a God's eye view.

The Scientific Revolution

After Martin Luther posted his protest against practices of the Church of Rome in 1517, Europe erupted into war. This was, however, a war not only of religion and nations but also of ideas, of worldviews. At the beginning of the conflict the accepted worldview was radically different from today and:

> … we can scarcely imagine this state of mind any more, and we can form no proper conception of what it meant to live in a world that was filled from above with the mysteries of God's wonder, down to the very crucible of the smelter, and was corrupted from below by devilish deception, tainted by original sin, and secretly animated by an autochthonous demon or an *anima mundi* - or by those "sparks of the World Soul" which sprang up as the seeds of life when the Ruach Elohim brooded on the face of the waters. (Jung 1976, 591-592)

The conflict continued, on and off, until 1648 with the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia. In political studies this marks the beginning of the modern nation-state defined by geography not dynastic inheritance. Furthermore it offered protection to religious minorities, that is, Protestants in Catholic countries would no longer be persecuted and *vice-versa*. Among the theological ideas emerging was one proposed by German Pieists and English Puritans. They argued that there

were two holy books, the Bible and the Book of Nature, *i.e.*, the book of God's creation (Merton 1984). Both had to be read.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

This idea came to fruition in England. Unlike other European states England split not two but three ways – Protestant, Catholic and Anglican or Church of England. It was in these troubled times that Francis Bacon in 1605 published his *Of the Proficience and Advancement of Learning Divine and Humane.* He called on Scholars to come down from their ivory towers into the workshops of Mechanics to practice the instrumental experimental method and force Nature to reveal her secrets. She did. The question was first put using instruments developed in the craft workshops of the European Age of Discovery. It was here that Bacon saw the prototype of his 'House of Solomon', the house of wisdom and of knowledge. And, of course, Bacon coined the expression 'knowledge is power'.

Robert Boyle (1627-1691) *& the Latitudinalist Compromise*

In the 1650s, at the height of Cromwell's Commonwealth, Robert Boyle's *Some Considerations touching the Usefulness of experimental natural philosophy* provided the theological rationale for this new way of knowing, Bacon's *Novum Organum Scientiarum* or new instrument of science. He argued that God on creating the physical universe set the laws of Nature in motion then withdrew leaving his handiwork to be experimentally examined by his creatures. There was no more divine intervention in the physical world; no miracles. God's influence became restricted to the human soul and angels. This is the 'Latitudinalist Compromise' (Jacob 1978). Its symbol became Newton's clockwork universe running on the calculus of motion. Isaac Newton (1643 - 1727) publicly supported the compromise defending the Church of England and the Crown against: (i) a superstitious Church of Rome and its ongoing inquisition of the emerging natural & engineering sciences and their practioners; and, (ii) protecting the Crown from the democratizing effect of experimental philosophy in the hands of various Puritan sects.

As Head of both Church and State, Charles II acknowledged the secular and religious legitimacy of experimental philosophy with his 1662 charter to *The Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge* (Jacob 1978; Jacob & Jacob 1980). After its founding the Royal Society made several attempts to realize Bacon's dream of erecting its own 'House of Experiment' (Shapin 1988). All attempts failed. Similarly, Bacon's history of the trades was never completed and quietly faded from view. This turning away from the Baconian vision was the result of certain founding members of the Royal Society called the *Virtuosi*, especially John Eveyln (Houghton Jan. & Apr. 1942).

Nonetheless the die was cast. Experimental philosophy continued to generate new understanding and control of the physical world at an ever accelerating rate. It generated physical technology that, paraphrasing Martin Heidegger (1954), is the enframing of Nature to serve human purpose. Its success led the poet Samuel Coleridge (1772-1834) to ask the philosopher, William Whewell (1794-1866), to rename natural philosophers. In 1833, he did, coining the term 'scientist' (Snyder 2000). The Natural & Engineering Sciences were secularized, decoupled from theology. The physical world was no longer the domain of priests or pastors. Instruments like the thermometer ruled our physical being thereafter, not prayer.

Institutional Revolution

As the Scientific Revolution took hold its success stimulated many scholars and thinkers to extend its methods of thought and findings to the world of human affairs. Everyone longed to become the Newton of the moral sciences, what today are the Humanities & Social Sciences. In England two distinct traditions developed. The first sought in Nature laws and rights to govern human affairs. The second was Utilitarianism which sought laws, rights and new institutions using deduction from a basic principle: the greatest good for the greatest number. Both downplayed or rejected the role of God, *i.e.*, breaking with the Latitudinalist Compromise as rationalism extended to human society.

Natural Law & Rights

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

As Robert Boyle was formulating his Latitudinalist Compromise Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) published his controversial *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* in 1651. He deduced human conduct, specifically the structure of society and government, taking Nature not theology as its source. Hobbes knew Francis Bacon and worked with Rene Descartes, two founders of the Scientific Revolution. Hobbes himself was a scientist investigating the physics of gases and optics.

For Hobbes the state of Nature was one in which the individual had every right and liberty leading to his famous motto *bellum omnium contra omnes* ("the war of all against all"). This could be avoided only by an absolute monarch. In return for peace and security the individual voluntarily gave up certain rights and liberties. This was 'consent of the governed' or a social contract. As to religion, it was up to the absolute monarch to say what was and was not the will of God. Among other things, this earned Hobbes persecution as an atheist by both Catholic and Protestant. It was his former pupil, Charles II, who ultimately protected him from harm, the same monarch who chartered the Royal Society in 1662.

John Locke (1632–1704)

Locke, on the other hand, believed we are born *tabula rasa*, that is, blank slates. It is sensation and experience that educates us but our human nature is reason and tolerance not just the selfishness of Hobbes. In the natural state all were equal, independent and had natural rights to "Life, health, Liberty, or Possessions". Nonetheless conflicts of interest arise and through democratic consent government emerges to guide civil society. Unlike Hobbes' absolute monarch, Locke's government was through a separation of powers, *i.e.*., executive, legislative and judiciary branches.

Locke's influence on political thinkers such as Voltaire, Rousseau and Thomas Jefferson was profound. Thus Jefferson wrote: "Bacon, Locke and Newton... I consider them as the three greatest men that have ever lived, without any exception, and as having laid the foundation of those superstructures which have been raised in the Physical and Moral sciences".

It is Locke's theory of property, however, that takes his work beyond politics into economics. What today we call natural resources have, according to Locke, no intrinsic value. It is human labour that creates value by working them into useful things. This is Locke's labour theory of value. Property is created through 'sweat of the brow' (Dooley 2002). Accordingly property precedes government and should not be taken away arbitrarily, that is, property is a natural right. With the emergence of a money economy, however, property can be bought, sold and accumulated as capital resulting in inequalities of power that government need balance.

With respect to theology Locke's thought is perhaps best expressed in the second paragraph of the American Declaration of Independence arguably inspired by his thinking:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Isaac Newton (1643-1727)

Before moving on, it is appropriate to consider the poster child of the Scientific Revolution. Publicly Newton supported the Latitudinalist Compromise and after Robert Boyle's death in 1691 promoted the 'Boyle Lectures' the following year 1692 – thirty years after the Charter. The first was delivered at the Church of St. Mary le Bow recently rebuilt by Christopher Wren. Newton's "system of the world" was brought before London's most prosperous congregations. The message, however, went far beyond Science. Thus,

> [t]he same God whose laws of motion Newton had discerned in the natural world would also inevitably insure order, prosperity, and conquest and maintenance of empire in the political world. Adopting the language of the scientific novice, Newton's advocates used his science… to support the social ideology and political goals of the liberal Anglicanism… (Jacob & Jacob 1980, 265).

In private, however, Newton continued to believe in alchemy, miracles and divine intervention (Harrison 1995). In 1936, Sotheby's in London auctioned off a cache of writings by Newton - journals and personal notebooks deemed of no scientific value. The winning bidder was John Maynard Keynes who, after perusing the papers, noted on the tercentenary of Newton's birth, that the supreme figure of seventeenth century science was not the first of the Enlightenment but rather "the Last of the Magicians" and "the last wonder-child to whom the Magi could do sincere and appropriate homage." (Thorndike 1953, 704). In fact Newton practiced 'the Art' of alchemy until his death and considered such work more important than that which has since become the foundation of modern science (Dobbs 1982, 1991).

The Republican Revolution

For 50 years after Newton's death in 1727 the concept of Natural Rights circulated in European thought until it became the rationale for the American Republican Revolution of 1776 expressed in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence quoted above. This resulted in constitutional separation of Church and State and replacement of the Crown yet still under God. Then in 1789 the French Republican Revolution took Natural Rights further expressed in the second clause of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen:

> The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

In France this resulted in the emergence of an explicitly secular republican State with all rights derived from Nature not from God. Of course, France has had five republics interrupted by an Emperor, return of the Crown, return of the republic, another Emperor and a republic since 1870. The overthrow of ancient regimes of subordination by birth by Natural Rights continued through the 1820s with the Bolivarian Revolution in Latin America and the Chinese Republican Revolution of 1910.

Natural rights today are the foundation of the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Utilitarianism

England after the Republican Revolution

The Republican Revolution driven by Natural Rights left England and the Second British Empire shaken but intact. The Crown was not overthrown. It had, in fact, been constitutionalized after the Glorious Revolution of 1689. Two qualifications are necessary, however, to distinguish constitutional monarchy then and now.

First, the Church of England - from the time of Henry VIII's assumption of Caesarpapism, *a.k.a.*, the Divine Right of Kings - was an integral part of the Crown. Crown and Church were one. The moral and institutional influence of the Church of England was not diminished but arguably enhanced by the Glorious Revolution. As an example access to the two universities – Oxford and Cambridge – remained available only to members of the Church of England and only to men until late in the 1800s.

Second, there were, according to Bentham, 'sinister interests' (Pratt 1955). In addition to lawyers, these included the Monarch's ongoing power to appoint many officials in the military and bureaucracy. In fact the Lord Chamberlin, the highest official in the royal household, remained the official censor of theatre in England until the Theatre Act of 1968. Such appointments were not always made on the basis of competence but often by purchase. In addition, the hereditary aristocracy retained many special privileges in their own right including the legislative powers of the House of Lords Spiritual and Temporal.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)

During the fifty years after Newton's death another philosophy began to percolate within Western and especially English consciousness - Utilitarianism. A series of thinkers progressively explored its meaning including Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), John Gay (1699–1745), David Hume (1711-1776) and William Paley (1743-1805). It arguably reached critical mass, however, in the works and thought of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and especially through his disciples called the Philosophic Radicals. This group evolved into the Liberal Party of Great Britain. In what follows I consider not the works of Jeremy Bentham but rather his legacy, the ongoing impact of his thought on the fabric of the Anglosphere.

Vs. Boyle, Hobbes & Locke

Bentham like Boyle held a corpuscular theory of matter, *i.e.*, it is made up of atoms. Unlike Boyle, Bentham did not believe atoms were driven by divine motivation but rather by an atheist Nature. In fact Bentham was suspected of *odium theologicum* (Palmer 1941, 859)

Like Hobbes, Bentham believed in absolute government but of the legislature not the executive. And unlike Hobbes who saw strife as the natural state, Bentham saw pleasure and pain as the sovereign rulers of the State.

Like Locke Bentham believed we were born blank slates, *tabula rasa*, written on by experience but that Natural Rights were nonsense and impresciptable Natural Rights were nonsense on stilts. Like Locke, Bentham believed in a legislature but unlike Locke it was to be an absolute one with no real separation of powers. Parliament is supreme, *a.k.a.*, the Notwithstanding Clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And unlike Locke who believed reason and tolerance was our natural state, Bentham saw pleasure and pain as the sovereign rulers.

Epistemology

Like other moral philosophers of his day Bentham aspired to be the Newton of moral philosophy which mutated into the moral sciences or what today are the Humanities & Social Sciences. His epistemology is the atomic materialism of Epicurus (341-271 B.C.E.). He acquired this view from the *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things) by the Roman Epicurean poet Lucretius (99-55 B.C.E.), whose work, unlike that of Epicurus, survived the fall of the Roman Empire and the censorial fires of the Church.

Like Epicurus, Bentham believed physical sensation was the foundation of all knowledge. Knowledge, including preconceptions of 'body,' 'person,' 'usefulness,' and 'truth', form in the material brain as the result of repeated sense-experience of similar objects. Ideas are formed by analogy between or compounding such basic concepts (O'Keefe 2001).

For Bentham sense experiences involved a unit measure of pleasure and pain called the 'utile' from which the philosophical school of thought known as 'Utilitarianism' emerged. Utiles would, according to Bentham, eventually be subject to physical measurement and he proposed a 'felicitous calculus' of human happiness to match Newton's celestial mechanics.

A corollary to the utile, however, is that customs, traditions and taste cease to be independent variables. Compulsory standard education would have children taken at birth from their mothers and placed in state-operated crèches. A child was born *tabula rasa* - blank. Bentham believed socializing consumption would ensure everyone's customs, traditions and taste would eventually become identical and therefore irrelevant.

In simple terms, Bentham believed that human existence was simply the search for pleasure and the avoidance of pain. This he expressed as 'pleasure and pain are the sovereign rulers of the State'. Thus Bentham is radically materialistic; there is no room for God, just calculation. In many ways, Bentham makes Marx

look like a weak-kneed bleeding heart liberal! Marx at least admired John Lennon's working class hero. Bentham, on the other hand, wanted to socialize not just the means of production but also of consumption. For Bentham the Mao suit or 'GI' issue - one size fits all - was the style of the future. It was only the terrors of the French Revolution that drew Bentham back from the edge of perfect communism (Marshall 1920, 628-9). For Marx, of course, Revolution was the instrument of change. In a sense Marx was the son that Bentham never had.

Institutional Inspirations

Bentham deduced from the principle that the greatest good (or the greatest happiness) for the greatest number was a moral imperative. Further he assumed people rationally calculate maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain, *i.e.*, maximize utiles or utility. He deduced a plethora of institutions to achieve this objective in many fields of human conduct. In Law he proposed constitutional, criminal and civil reforms including abolition of slavery and universal suffrage for men and women of all colours and kinds. With respect to governance, he advocated centralization of government including municipal reform; decolonization, a professional public service, responsible government and statistical services. He advocated a Ministry of Health as well as municipal sanitation and the spread of regional hospitals. In Education he proposed compulsory primary and secondary education and, at the tertiary level, inspired the first English research university – now University College London - in 1828. This was, however, nearly twenty years after the first research university – the University of Berlin – was founded by Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1809. UCL was also the first English university to accept students of all faiths and gender. With respect to Public Welfare he advocated the industrialization and urbanization of the old Elizabethan Poor Laws into workhouses, poorhouses and madhouses. He found able supporters to actualize his deductions, the so-called Philosophic Radicals who eventually became the Liberal Party of Great Britain.

At a minimum,

> [w]hat indeed was remarkable about Bentham was not so much his influence over numerous men, but the foresight, the clarity, and the logic with which he expressed those truths which other forces, far stronger than his own ideas, would bring to pass. He saw more comprehensively than his contemporaries the necessity of an expanded administrative state. He saw the anachronisms and inefficiencies in English law and administration, and the need to reform both. He saw the importance of government by paid, professional civil servants. He saw the failures of local government and the need of a stronger central administration. And since, like so many Englishmen, he feared an over-bearing centralization, he realized that the necessary central controls could be best applied through central inspection (Roberts 1959, 208).

At a maximum, Bentham's work provided

> … the mine from which a whole new system of English Government and of the relation between English central and local government was extracted in the years that followed the Reform Bill of 1832… the New Poor Law of 1834, … Municipal Reform Act of 1835… the Act establishing a scientific system of vital statistics in 1836… logical division of work between the government departments, for Ministries of Health, and Education, and Police, and Transport, in connection with corresponding municipal committees and expert municipal officials, and-most wonderful of all when one thinks of the patronage arrangements of the time - a Civil Service recruited by competitive examination, access to which was to be made possible to the poorest boy of talent by a great system of educational scholarships (Wallas 1923, 54).

It is important to note Bentham's institutional impact on the Second British Empire that became the British Commonwealth of Nations which includes, today, 54 countries spanning six continents with a population of 2.1 billion people, *i.e.*, a third of world population. With respect to India, Lord William Bentinck, the newly appointed Governor General wrote to Bentham in 1827:

> "I am going to British India, but I shall not be Governor General. It is you who will be Governor General."… [And] If ever we march out of India and leave behind us anything better than mountains of empty soda-water bottles, it may be that this principle of Bentham's will prove to be our most permanent contribution to Indian civilization (Wallas 1923, 55).

With respect to Canada, "six years after Bentham's death his disciples made the principle the basis of that new Canadian polity which soon spread to the other Dominions" (Wallas 1923, 56). In Canada we call it 'responsible government'.

Furthermore, while the Republic of the United States of America broke with the Crown and thereby with the Church of England and hereditary aristocracy, it remains part of the Anglosphere sharing not only a common language but also the Common Law that the U.S.A. adopted on independence. It also shows Bentham's rationalizing imprint on its law and administration.

Economics

In the fifty years following Bentham's death in 1832 his disciples grew his ideas into modern Liberalism in the hands of John Stuart Mill (*On Liberty*, 1859; *The Subjugation of Women*, 1869) as well as others. With respect to economic theory:

> On the whole the most influential of the immediate successors of Adam Smith was Bentham. He wrote little on economics himself, but he went far towards setting the tone of the rising school of English economists at the beginning of the nineteenth century ...[who] therefore were inclined to think that the influence of custom and sentiment in business affairs was harmful,

> that in England at least it had diminished, was diminishing, and would soon vanish away: and the disciples of Bentham were not slow to conclude that they need not concern themselves much about custom. It was enough for them to discuss the tendencies of man's action on the supposition that everyone was always on the alert to find out what course would best promote his own interest and was free and quick to follow it (Marshall 1920, 628-9).

Since Adam Smith economics had primarily concerned itself with the growth and distribution of national wealth among owners of factors of production – land (natural resources) that collected rent, labour that collected wages and capital that collected interest or profits. Adam Smith and his immediate successors from Ricardo to John Stuart Mill form the Classical School of economics. Its vocabulary was of aggregates and of classes. In this sense Marx was a 'classical' economist. Ironically, Marx named all those who came before him as the 'Classical School'.

Fifty years after Bentham's death in 1832 economics was changed forever by the Marginalist Revolution. The whole vocabulary changed. It split political economics into Market and Marxist economics. In a very real sense it allowed Market Economics to catch up with the politics of the Republican Revolution. It shifted focus from class to the individual 'atomized' consumer and producer. It shifted attention from economic growth and distribution of national wealth to allocative efficiency in consumption and production.

This was made possible by the marriage of Newton's calculus of motion and Jeremy Bentham's calculus of human happiness. And this required an act of reification. To reify is to make concrete that which abstract. Quite simply, Bentham explicitly assumed that the abstraction called 'human happiness' is made concrete as money. More specifically, a consumer's willingness to pay measures the utility derived from a good or service. In short, the presence of money brings pleasure; its absence brings pain.

It was, however, in the hands of Francis Ysidro Edgeworth (1845-1926) that the calculus of human happiness was successfully married to the calculus of motion in his 1881 *Mathematical Psychics.* It came to completed form, however, in the hands of Alfred Marshall at Cambridge University where economics was taught as a moral science (Boulding 1969). Again it shifted the focus from class to the individual 'atomized' consumer and producer generating today's university courses in Micro Economics or Prices & Markets. It shifted attention from economic growth and distribution of national wealth to allocative efficiency in consumption and production. In many ways it shut down debate about Macro Economic problems until the 1930s with Keynes' General Theory (1936).

The conceptual key is the term 'marginal', hence the name of the revolution. In effect what in calculus is a derivative – first order, the rate of change; second order, the rate of change of the rate of change – is the margin in Market Economics. Decision-making takes place at the margin. Hence 'marginal utility' is the additional satisfaction of an extra unit in consumption while 'marginal product' is the additional output of an extra unit input in production. The outcomes can be demonstrated in mathematics, geometry and words – the three languages of economics.

From Bentham's calculus a consumer's indifference curve measuring utility was derived and then subjected to a budget constraint – constrained maximization. Similarly the producer's isoquant curve measuring output was derived and subjected to a cost constraint – constrained maximization. In brief, the budget (income and prices) constrains maximization of pleasure by the consumer yielding a demand curve while the cost constrained profit maximization of the firm yields its supply curve. Put together they form the 'Marshallian scissors' of supply and demand. X marks the spot where a determinant geometric, mathematically precise equilibrium exists generating the greatest good for the greatest number, where, at one and the same time, consumers maximize pleasure and producers maximize profit; both subject to constraint but everyone is happy! It is an ideology framed by an 'X' - the intersection of market supply and demand. It is Perfect Competition, the Market Economic equivalent of Marx's Perfect Communism. And ironically, like Perfect Communism with its withering away of the State, there is no role for Government if Perfect Competition rules!

The result is a model and method that satisfies requirements of a true science according to Rene Descartes, one of the 17th century founders of the Scientific Revolution. It is based on a set of simple assumptions from which mathematically provable and geometrically demonstrable deductions may be drawn. Thus Thomas Kuhn in his seminal work *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions* (1996) places economics the closest of the social sciences to 'normal science'.

There is, however, also great disquiet around the world about an ideology that reduces human choice to atomistic calculation of profit and loss, not just in the marketplace, but in all human activities ranging from marriage and child rearing to art, education and culture. Before the Republican Revolution, the economy was embedded in society through guilds and a class structure of subordination by birth. Today, some fear that human society itself is being embedded into a global economy in which everything is for sale – hearts, kidneys, lungs as well as the entire natural and human built environment – much as Karl Polanyi suggested in his 1944 *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Block 2001). In a way, the Republican Revolution sought political freedom for the individual and in the process spawned the free self-regulating market as its

economic corollary. The Communist Revolution, on the other hand, sought economic freedom for the individual (each according to one's need) through a centrally controlled command economy and spawned the one-party Leninist state with dictatorship of the proletariat and the Party as vanguard of the revolution as its political corollaries. Arguably both freedoms – political and economic - are required to realize full human potential.

It was not, and is not, however, just the far Left that has concerns about Bentham's felicitous calculus and the standard model of market economics. Joseph Schumpeter (1950) of creative destruction fame called it "the shallowest of all conceivable philosophies of life that stands indeed in a position of irreconcilable antagonism to the rest of them" (Schumpeter 1954, 132-4). John Maynard Keynes went further identifying its dangerous ideological flaws:

> I do now regard that as the worm which has been gnawing at the insides of modern civilization and is responsible for its present moral decay. We used to regard the Christians as the enemy, because they appeared as the representatives of tradition, convention and hocus-pocus. In truth, it was the Benthamite calculus, based on an over-valuation of the economic criterion, which was destroying the quality of the popular Ideal. Moreover, it was this escape from Bentham… which has served to protect the whole lot of us from the final *reductio ad absurdum* of Benthamism known as Marxism.
>
> (Keynes 1949, 96-7)

In fact, each generation of economist since his death has tried to escape Bentham's thrall. Nonetheless, his felicitous calculus survives. Like a vampire it won't die! There are at least four reasons.

First, it is elegant - meaning simple and effective. Second, it is flexible. Even altruism can be accommodated. How much money you are willing to give to the Save the Whatever Fund is the measure of utiles you get in return. There are no selfless deeds. Third, it is, in a sense, politically correct. Concepts like consumer sovereignty and dollar democracy resonate with our political roots. And economic growth defined as more money in one's pocket is a unifying principle in a multicultural world where most people do not agree about many things, *e.g.*, language and religion. Fourth, it is exportable. The concept of constrained maximization has been transported into Law, Sociology, Social Work and other disciplines and practices. Finally, it is also the last ideology standing after the collapse of Communism. What's next?

End of Part I

"the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever…" (Genesis 3.22)

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