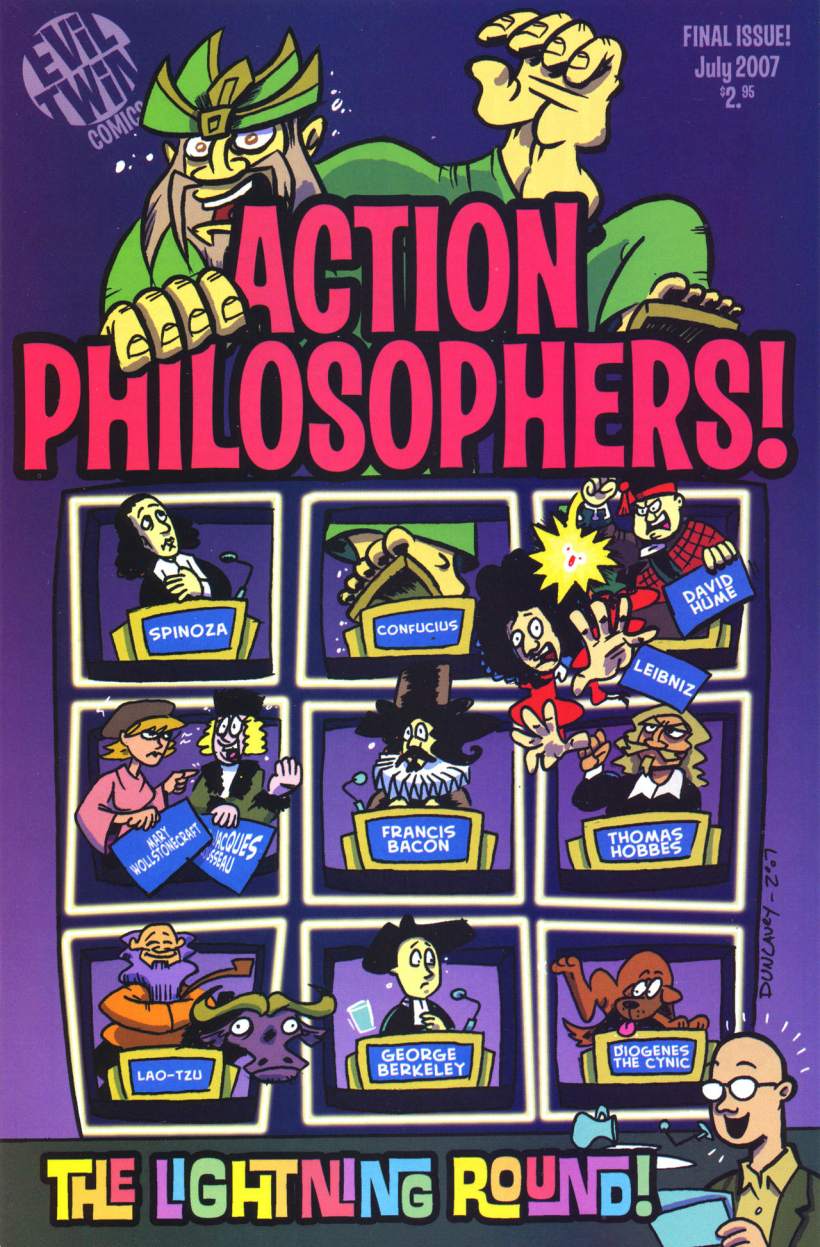
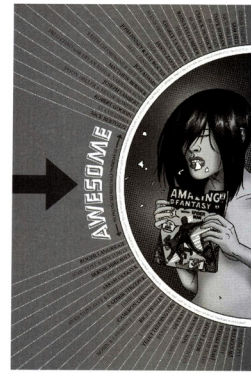

EVIL TWIN COMICS
FINAL ISSUE!
July 2007
$2.95
ACTION PHILOSOPHERS!
SPINOZA
CONFUCIUS
DAVID HUME
LEIBNIZ
MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT
JACQUES ROUSSEAU
FRANCIS BACON
THOMAS HOBBES
LAO-TZU
GEORGE BERKELEY
DIOGENES THE CYNIC
DUNLAVEY - 2007
THE LIGHTNING ROUND!

WE WILL BE *BACK!*

For those of you who haven't heard yet, the comic you hold in your hands, THE LIGHTNING ROUND, is the final issue of ACTION PHILOSOPHERS. The decision to end the series is entirely ours, and made without duress or regrets. Sales have been fine, and, since around #5 or so, surprisingly consistent. It's just that the history of philosophy is a finite thing, and, particularly with the whopping twelve thinkers we manage to cram into this issue, a history we've largely made our intellectual bitch. Sure, it would have been nice to include **William James, Rumi, Epicurus, Maimonides,** and **Auguste Comte**, but other than them we've done a pretty thorough job. (And who knows? When we bring out a complete one-volume COMPLETE ACTION PHILOSOPHERS, maybe we'll include a couple of them as special, brand-new stories.) Besides, at 28-32 pages per issue and nine issues we have, at this point, produced approximately 300 pages of philosophy comics. That's a lot, and we have other interests we'd like to explore.

With that in mind, while ACTION PHILOSOPHERS is over, **Evil Twin Comics** is very much alive and kicking. For one thing, we need to bring out ACTION PHILOSOPHERS GIANT-SIZE THING VOL. 3, the TPB collection of AP #7-9, which will hit shelves just in time for Christmas '07. And we've already mentioned THE COMPLETE ACTION PHILOSOPHERS, which, as the name implies, will be a one-volume collection of the entire series, except with all stories laid out in chronological order, from The Pre-Socratics to Derrida. That will be out late 2008/early 2009.

'Til then, we've got plenty of new non-fiction comedy series to take AP's place in your heart!



You'll get a taste of the next one in October. **AWESOME: THE INDIE SPINNER RACK ANTHOLOGY** ships from ETC that month. Ryan co-edited this collection of brand-new comics from the indy comics scene's brightest stars and hottest up-and-comers with the co-hosts of the popular ISR podcast, Charlito and Mr. Phil. We can only list a few contributors here: **Al Columbia, Renee French, Nick Bertozzi, Bernie Mireault, Raina Telgemeier, Steve Hamaker, Dave Roman, Josh Cotter, Kazimir Strzepek, Liz Prince, Neil Swaab, Robert Goodin, Matt Kindt, Roger Langridge, Sam Hiti, GB Tran, Jamie Tanner, Alec Longstreth** and many, many more, all wrapped up in a twisted cover designed and illustrated by Eisner Award Nominee **Jon Adams**. All net proceeds of the sale of this 208-page TPB go to support the non-profit ISR 'cast and the fine work of the folks at Vermont's **Center of Cartoon Studies**.

Best of all, AWESOME sees the premiere Fred and Ryan's AP follow-up series, COMIC BOOK COMICS, which gives the history of funnybooks the Action Philosophers treatment! And you can see the first episode only in AWESOME.

Preview the book – and even order it! – at the official site:
eviltwincomics.com/awesome/

And **COMIC BOOK COMICS #1** will see the light of day in early 2008! Check the ETC site for the exact date, and then later in the year…

Wait for it…

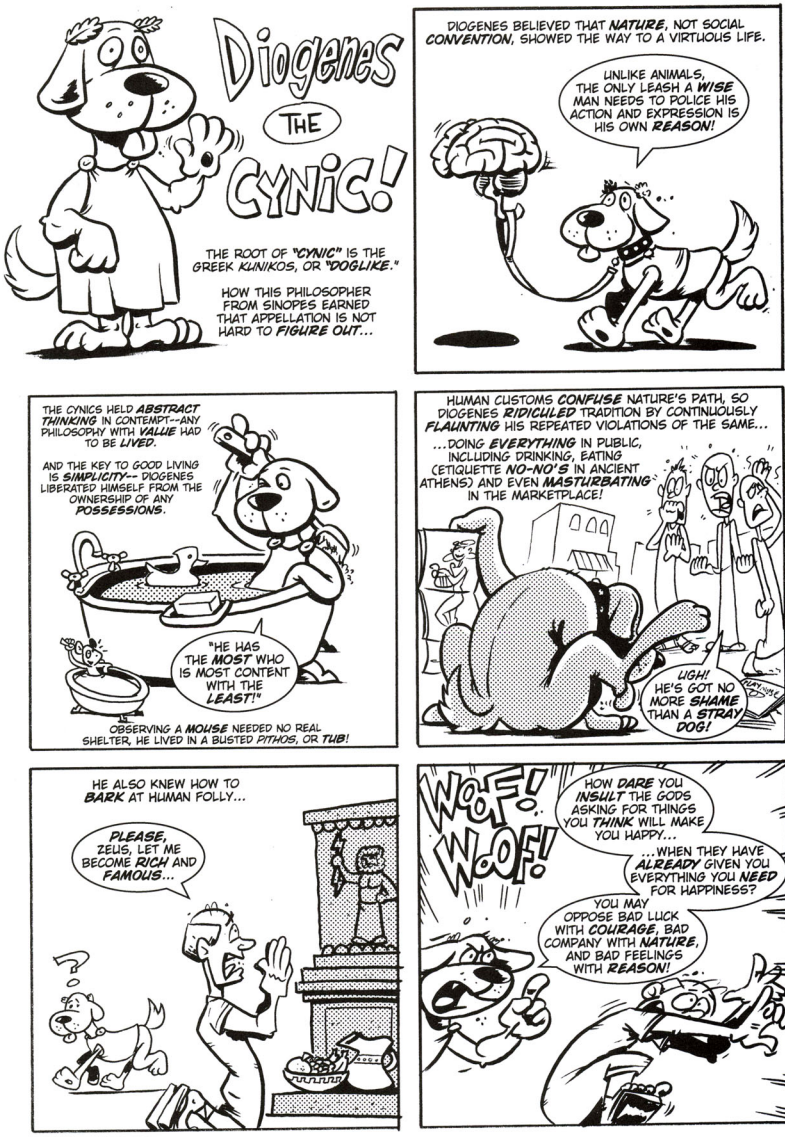
ACTION PRESIDENTS #1 arrives to rock your world! And it is exactly what it sounds like.

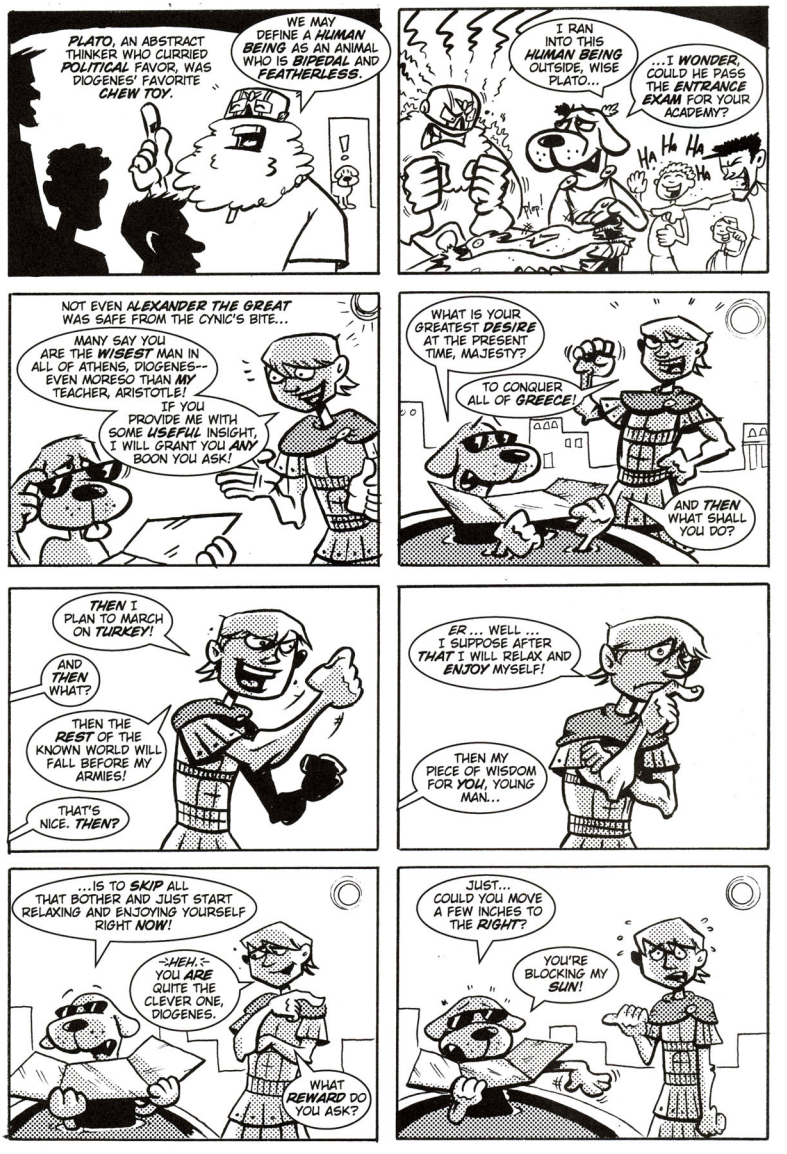
So, thanks for all your support of ACTION PHILOSOPHERS! Though it may be over, we can promise you: You ain't seen nothin' yet.

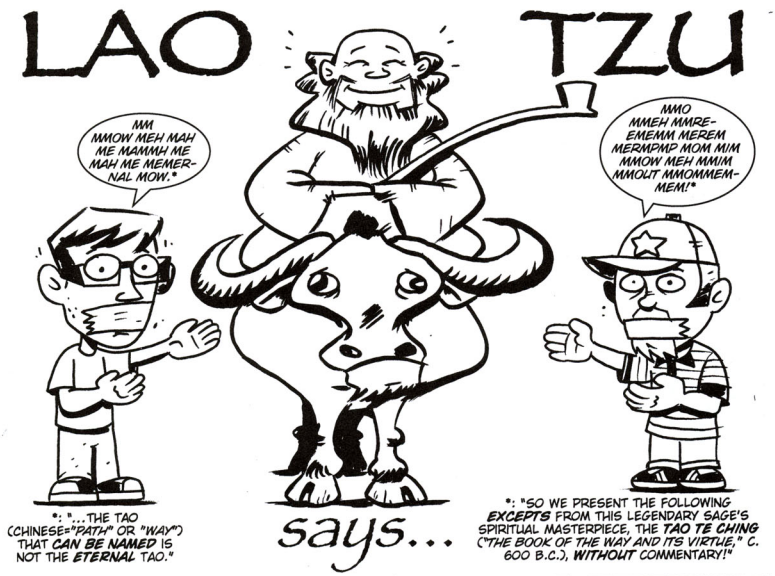
We hope you come along for the ride.

Best,
Fred & Ryan

ACTION PHILOSOPHERS: THE LIGHTNING ROUND IS PUBLISHED BY EVIL TWIN COMICS, 262 FIFTH AVENUE, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11215. CONTENTS ©2007 FRED VAN LENTE AND RYAN DUNLAVEY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PART OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE PRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE COPYRIGHT HOLDERS. FIRST PRINTING: JULY 2007. PRINTED IN CANADA.


Diogenes
THE
CYNIC!
THE ROOT OF "CYNIC" IS THE GREEK KUNIKOS, OR "DOGLIKE."
HOW THIS PHILOSOPHER FROM SINOPES EARNED THAT APPELLATION IS NOT HARD TO FIGURE OUT...
DIOGENES BELIEVED THAT NATURE, NOT SOCIAL CONVENTION, SHOWED THE WAY TO A VIRTUOUS LIFE.
UNLIKE ANIMALS, THE ONLY LEASH A WISE MAN NEEDS TO POLICE HIS ACTION AND EXPRESSION IS HIS OWN REASON!
THE CYNICS HELD ABSTRACT THINKING IN CONTEMPT--ANY PHILOSOPHY WITH VALUE HAD TO BE LIVED.
AND THE KEY TO GOOD LIVING IS SIMPLICITY-- DIOGENES LIBERATED HIMSELF FROM THE OWNERSHIP OF ANY POSSESSIONS.
"HE HAS THE MOST WHO IS MOST CONTENT WITH THE LEAST!"
OBSERVING A MOUSE NEEDED NO REAL SHELTER, HE LIVED IN A BUSTED PITHOS, OR TUB!
HUMAN CUSTOMS CONFUSE NATURE'S PATH, SO DIOGENES RIDICULED TRADITION BY CONTINUOUSLY FLAUNTING HIS REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF THE SAME...
...DOING EVERYTHING IN PUBLIC, INCLUDING DRINKING, EATING (ETIQUETTE NO-NO'S IN ANCIENT ATHENS) AND EVEN MASTURBATING IN THE MARKETPLACE!
UGH! HE'S GOT NO MORE SHAME THAN A STRAY DOG!
HE ALSO KNEW HOW TO BARK AT HUMAN FOLLY...
PLEASE, ZEUS, LET ME BECOME RICH AND FAMOUS...
WOOF! WOOF!
HOW DARE YOU INSULT THE GODS ASKING FOR THINGS YOU THINK WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY...
...WHEN THEY HAVE ALREADY GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR HAPPINESS?
YOU MAY OPPOSE BAD LUCK WITH COURAGE, BAD COMPANY WITH NATURE, AND BAD FEELINGS WITH REASON!


PLATO, AN ABSTRACT THINKER WHO CURRIED POLITICAL FAVOR, WAS DIOGENES' FAVORITE CHEW TOY.
WE MAY DEFINE A HUMAN BEING AS AN ANIMAL WHO IS BIPEDAL AND FEATHERLESS.
I RAN INTO THIS HUMAN BEING OUTSIDE, WISE PLATO...
...I WONDER, COULD HE PASS THE ENTRANCE EXAM FOR YOUR ACADEMY?
HA HA HA
NOT EVEN ALEXANDER THE GREAT WAS SAFE FROM THE CYNIC'S BITE...
MANY SAY YOU ARE THE WISEST MAN IN ALL OF ATHENS, DIOGENES-- EVEN MORESO THAN MY TEACHER, ARISTOTLE!
IF YOU PROVIDE ME WITH SOME USEFUL INSIGHT, I WILL GRANT YOU ANY BOON YOU ASK!
WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST DESIRE AT THE PRESENT TIME, MAJESTY?
TO CONQUER ALL OF GREECE!
AND THEN WHAT SHALL YOU DO?
THEN I PLAN TO MARCH ON TURKEY!
AND THEN WHAT?
THEN THE REST OF THE KNOWN WORLD WILL FALL BEFORE MY ARMIES!
THAT'S NICE. THEN?
ER... WELL... I SUPPOSE AFTER THAT I WILL RELAX AND ENJOY MYSELF!
THEN MY PIECE OF WISDOM FOR YOU, YOUNG MAN...
...IS TO SKIP ALL THAT BOTHER AND JUST START RELAXING AND ENJOYING YOURSELF RIGHT NOW!
-HEH.:- YOU ARE QUITE THE CLEVER ONE, DIOGENES.
WHAT REWARD DO YOU ASK?
JUST... COULD YOU MOVE A FEW INCHES TO THE RIGHT?
YOU'RE BLOCKING MY SUN!

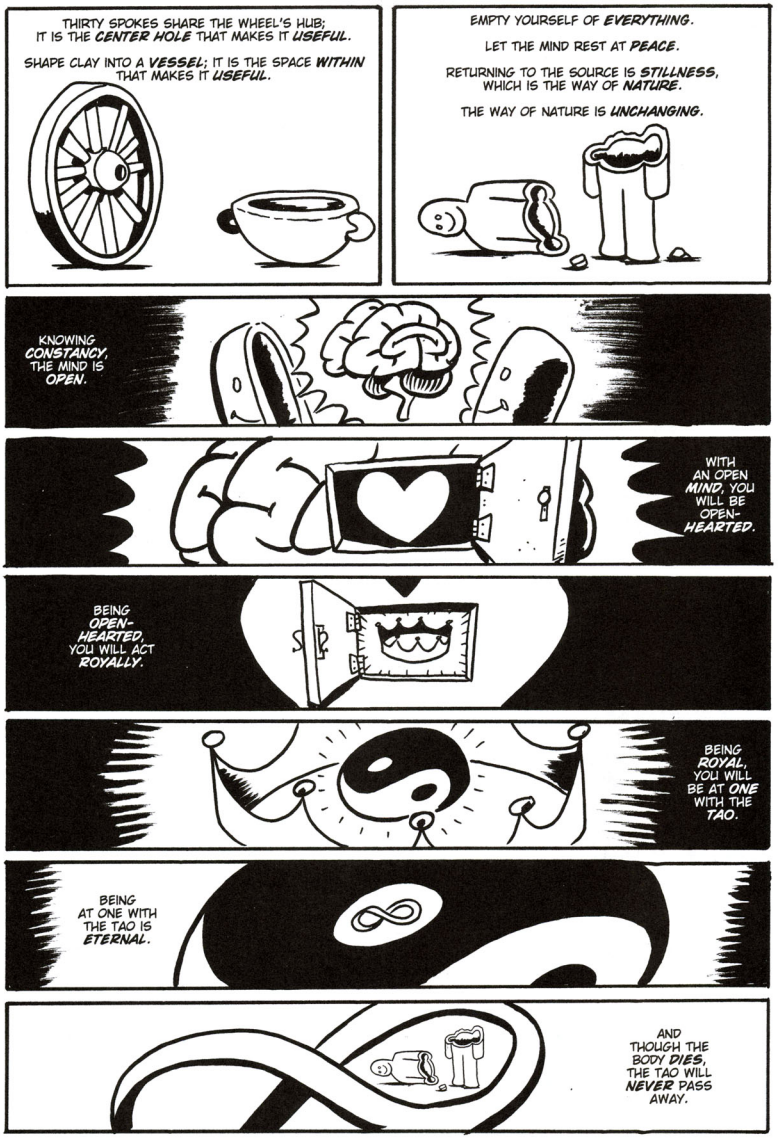

LAO TZU
MM MMOW MEH MAH ME MAMMH ME MAH ME MEMER-NAL MOW.*
NMO MMEH MMRE-EMEMM MEREM MERMPMP MOM MIM MMOW MEH MMIM MMOUT MMOMMEM-MEM!*
says...
*: "...THE TAO (CHINESE="PATH" OR "WAY") THAT CAN BE NAMED IS NOT THE ETERNAL TAO."
*: "SO WE PRESENT THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTS FROM THIS LEGENDARY SAGE'S SPIRITUAL MASTERPIECE, THE TAO TE CHING ("THE BOOK OF THE WAY AND ITS VIRTUE," C. 600 B.C.), WITHOUT COMMENTARY!"


UNDER HEAVEN ALL CAN SEE BEAUTY AS BEAUTY ONLY BECAUSE THERE IS UGLINESS.
ALL CAN KNOW GOOD AS GOOD ONLY BECAUSE THERE IS EVIL.
THEREFORE HAVING AND NOT HAVING ARISE TOGETHER.
DIFFICULT AND EASY COMPLIMENT EACH OTHER.


THEREFORE, THE SAGE GOES ABOUT DOING NOTHING, TEACHING NO-TALKING.
WORK IS DONE, THEN FORGOTTEN.
THEREFORE, IT LASTS FOREVER.
CHIP


WHY DO HEAVEN AND EARTH LAST FOREVER?
THEY ARE UNBORN, SO EVER LIVING.
R.I.P.


DO YOU THINK YOU CAN IMPROVE THE UNIVERSE?
I DO NOT BELIEVE IT CAN BE DONE.
THE UNIVERSE IS SACRED. IF YOU TRY TO CHANGE IT, YOU WILL RUIN IT. IF YOU TRY TO HOLD IT, YOU WILL LOSE IT.

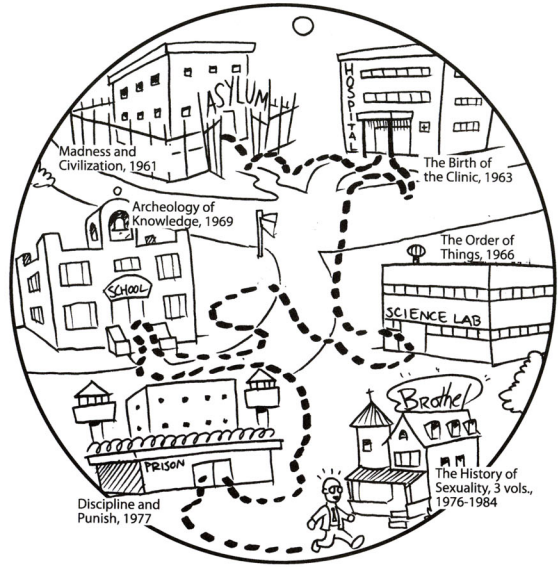

THIRTY SPOKES SHARE THE WHEEL'S HUB;
IT IS THE CENTER HOLE THAT MAKES IT USEFUL.
SHAPE CLAY INTO A VESSEL; IT IS THE SPACE WITHIN
THAT MAKES IT USEFUL.
EMPTY YOURSELF OF EVERYTHING.
LET THE MIND REST AT PEACE.
RETURNING TO THE SOURCE IS STILLNESS,
WHICH IS THE WAY OF NATURE.
THE WAY OF NATURE IS UNCHANGING.
KNOWING CONSTANCY, THE MIND IS OPEN.
WITH AN OPEN MIND, YOU WILL BE OPEN-HEARTED.
BEING OPEN-HEARTED, YOU WILL ACT ROYALLY.
BEING ROYAL, YOU WILL BE AT ONE WITH THE TAO.
BEING AT ONE WITH THE TAO IS ETERNAL.
AND THOUGH THE BODY DIES, THE TAO WILL NEVER PASS AWAY.


KNOWING OTHERS IS WISDOM;
KNOWING THE SELF IS ENLIGHTENMENT.
MASTERING OTHERS REQUIRES FORCE;
MASTERING THE SELF NEEDS STRENGTH.
A TRULY GOOD MAN IS NOT AWARE OF HIS GOODNESS, AND IS THEREFORE GOOD.
A FOOLISH MAN TRIES TO BE GOOD, AND IS THEREFORE NOT GOOD.
THOSE WHO KNOW DO NOT TALK.
THOSE WHO TALK DO NOT KNOW.
KEEP YOUR MOUTH CLOSED. GUARD YOUR SENSES. BE AT ONE WITH THE DUST OF THE EARTH.
THIS IS PRIMAL UNION.
DUDE
YAK YAK YAK
A MAN IS BORN GENTLE AND WEAK. AT HIS DEATH HE IS HARD AND STIFF.
THEREFORE THE STIFF AND UNBENDING IS THE DISCIPLE OF DEATH.
THE GENTLE AND YIELDING IS THE DISCIPLE OF LIFE.
DEATH
'COURSE, MODERN SCHOLARS NOW BELIEVE THAT NO SUCH GUY AS "LAO TZU" (WHICH MEANS "OLD MASTER") EVER REALLY EXISTED --
HIS TAO IS ACTUALLY A COMPILATION OF APHORISMS FROM MULTIPLE AUTHORS!
BUT FOR AN APOCRYPHAL FIGURE HE SURE IS CUTE, AIN'T HE? COOCHIE-COOCHIE-COO!
Tee hee hee!

THE FOUCAULT CIRCUS



"Why yes, my new book is called Discipline & Punish.
How did you guess?"



Michel Foucault (1926-1984) held a chair called "The History of Systems of Thought" at the Collège de France, which aptly sums up his life's work of systematically examining and critiquing the logical structure of social institutions.

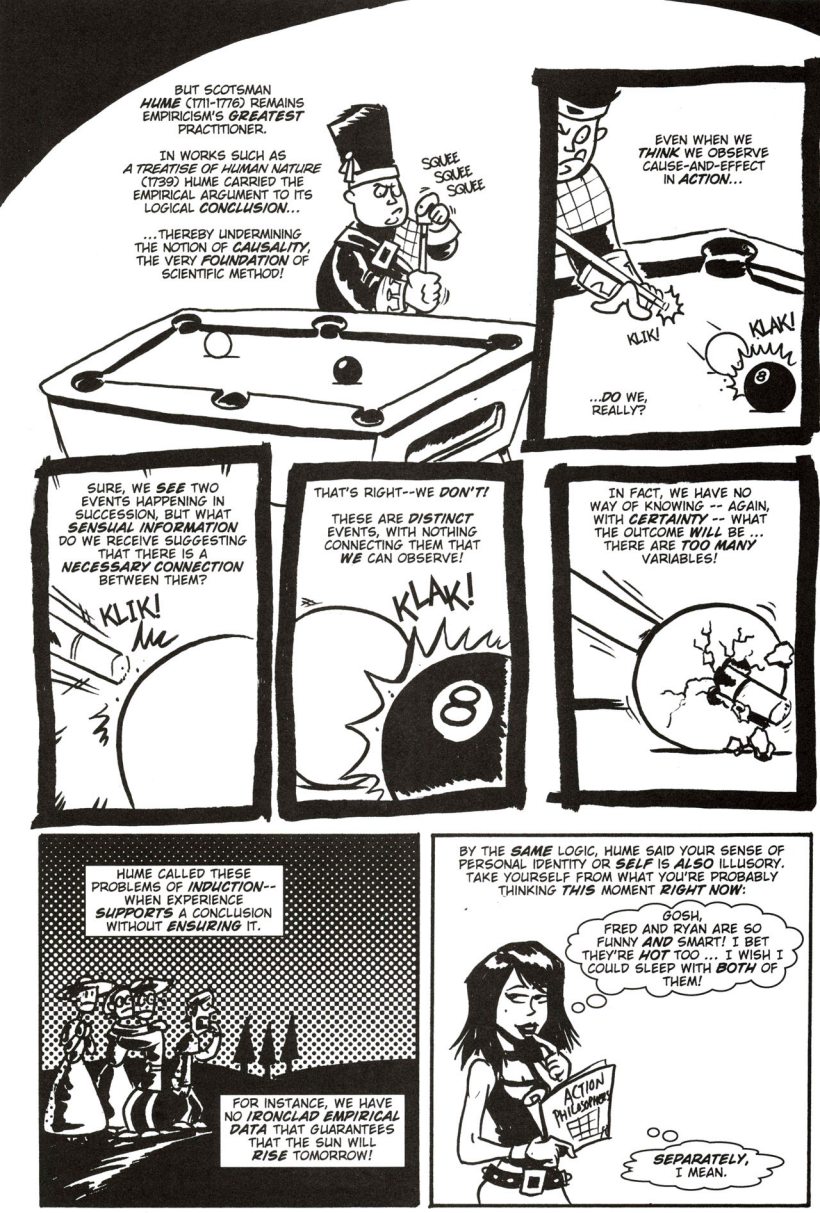


Despite these institutions' claims of holding forth objective or essential knowledge, Foucault says, their assembled "truths" have in fact been subtly constructed by whatever elite happens to be in power at the time, to "reduce social agents to docile bodies" by forcing the powerless to unconsciously internalize the powerful's value system and structures of thought as their own. Furthermore, Foucault suggests that there is no knowledge other than what he calls "power-knowledge."



Not coincidentally, Foucault had some extreme ideas about social freedom, and garnered a reputation as something of a libertine: he was fond of anonymous gay S&M sex (which many believe contributed to his death from AIDS); he was once paid for a debate partially in hashish; and in 1977 he petitioned for France to abolish her age of consent laws (unsuccessfully).

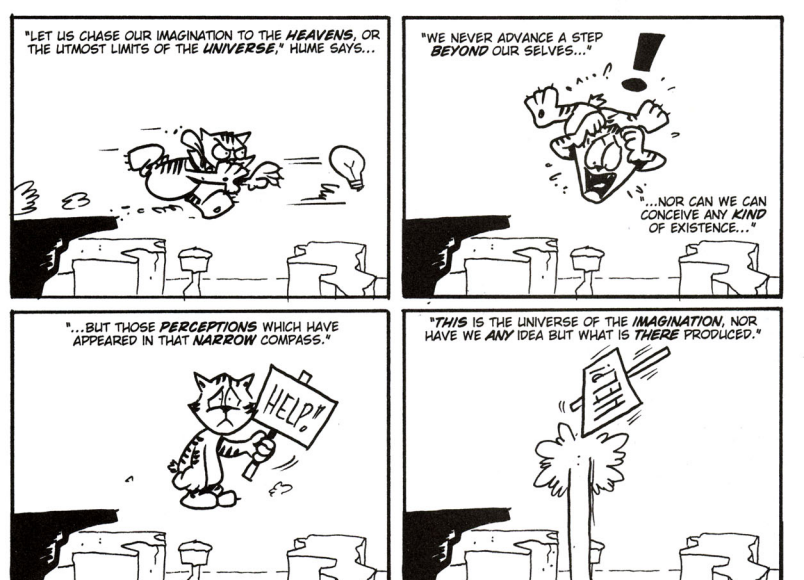

DAVID HUME
IF IT'S NOT EMPIRRRICAL, IT'S CRRRAP!
THE BRANCH OF PHILOSOPHY KNOWN AS EMPIRICISM HAS BEEN PRACTICED PRIMARILY IN THE BRITISH ISLES.
"IF WE TAKE IN OUR HAND ANY VOLUME OF DIVINITY OR SCHOOL OF METAPHYSICS... LET US ASK:"
"DOES IT CONTAIN ANY ABSTRACT REASONING CONCERNING QUANTITY OR NUMBER?"
ENGLISHMAN JOHN LOCKE'S (1632-1704) ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING (1690) INSPIRED IT...
AAAAAAH!
NO? IT'S CRRRAP!
FWOOSH!
...FOR, LOCKE ASSERTS, CONTRARY TO THE INTELLECTUAL OPTIMISM OF A BACON OR DESCARTES, THE SCOPE OF OUR KNOWLEDGE IS LIMITED BY EXPERIENCE.
"DOES IT CONTAIN ANY EXPERIMENTAL REASONING CONCERNING MATTER OF FACT AND EXISTENCE?"
THERE IS A WALL BEYOND WHICH HUMAN REASON IS INCAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING!
NO? CRRAP!!
IF NOT, "COMMIT IT TO THE FLAMES: FOR IT CONTAINS NOTHING BUT SOPHISTRY AND ILLUSION!"*
*: D.H., ENQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING (1748)
FWOOSH!

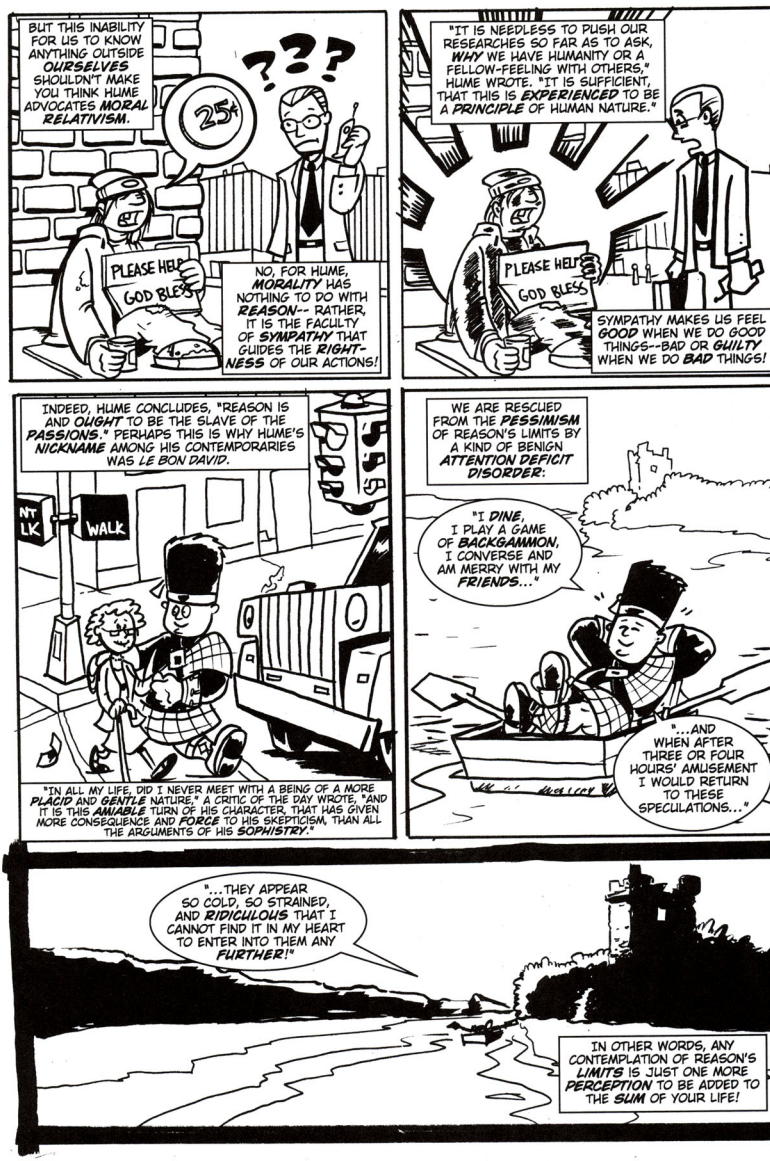

BUT SCOTSMAN *HUME* (1711-1776) REMAINS EMPIRICISM'S *GREATEST* PRACTITIONER.
IN WORKS SUCH AS *A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE* (1739) HUME CARRIED THE EMPIRICAL ARGUMENT TO ITS LOGICAL *CONCLUSION*...
...THEREBY UNDERMINING THE NOTION OF *CAUSALITY*, THE VERY *FOUNDATION* OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD!
SQUEE SQUEE SQUEE
EVEN WHEN WE *THINK* WE OBSERVE CAUSE-AND-EFFECT IN *ACTION*...
KLIK!
KLAK!
...*DO* WE, REALLY?
SURE, WE *SEE* TWO EVENTS HAPPENING IN SUCCESSION, BUT WHAT *SENSUAL INFORMATION* DO WE RECEIVE SUGGESTING THAT THERE IS A *NECESSARY CONNECTION* BETWEEN THEM?
KLIK!
THAT'S RIGHT--WE *DON'T!*
THESE ARE *DISTINCT* EVENTS, WITH NOTHING CONNECTING THEM THAT *WE* CAN OBSERVE!
KLAK!
IN FACT, WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING -- AGAIN, WITH *CERTAINTY* -- WHAT THE OUTCOME *WILL* BE ... THERE ARE *TOO MANY* VARIABLES!
HUME CALLED THESE PROBLEMS OF *INDUCTION*-- WHEN EXPERIENCE *SUPPORTS* A CONCLUSION WITHOUT *ENSURING* IT.
FOR INSTANCE, WE HAVE NO *IRONCLAD EMPIRICAL DATA* THAT GUARANTEES THAT THE SUN WILL *RISE* TOMORROW!
BY THE *SAME* LOGIC, HUME SAID YOUR SENSE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY OR *SELF* IS *ALSO* ILLUSORY. TAKE YOURSELF FROM WHAT YOU'RE PROBABLY THINKING *THIS* MOMENT *RIGHT NOW*:
GOSH, FRED AND RYAN ARE SO FUNNY *AND* SMART! I BET THEY'RE *HOT* TOO ... I WISH I COULD SLEEP WITH *BOTH* OF THEM!
ACTION PHILOSOPHERS
SEPARATELY, I MEAN.

"WHEN I ENTER *MOST* ***INTIMATELY*** INTO WHAT I CALL ***MYSELF***," HUME WRITES, "I ALWAYS STUMBLE ON SOME PARTICULAR ***PERCEPTION*** OR OTHER, OF HEAT OR COLD, LOVE OR HATRED, PAIN OR PLEASURE. I NEVER CAN CATCH ***MYSELF*** AT ANY TIME ***WITHOUT*** A PERCEPTION AND NEVER CAN OBSERVE ANYTHING ***BUT*** THE PERCEPTION."



IN OTHER WORDS, OUR ALLEGED ***IDENTITIES*** ARE NOTHING MORE THAN THE SUM OF THE ***PERCEPTIONS*** WE'VE ACCUMULATED -- IT IS ONLY THAT "HABIT OF ***ASSOCIATION***" THAT CREATES CAUSE-AND-EFFECT THAT LEADS US TO BELIEVE WE HAVE ONE ***CONTINUOUS SELF*** -- THAT WE ARE THE ***SAME PERSON*** IN ***EACH*** OF THE MOMENTS OF OUR LIVES!



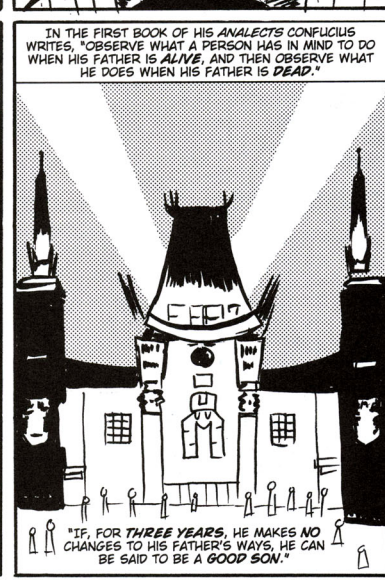

BUT THIS INABILITY FOR US TO KNOW ANYTHING OUTSIDE OURSELVES SHOULDN'T MAKE YOU THINK HUME ADVOCATES MORAL RELATIVISM.
???
25¢
PLEASE HELP
GOD BLESS
NO, FOR HUME, MORALITY HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH REASON-- RATHER, IT IS THE FACULTY OF SYMPATHY THAT GUIDES THE RIGHTNESS OF OUR ACTIONS!
"IT IS NEEDLESS TO PUSH OUR RESEARCHES SO FAR AS TO ASK, WHY WE HAVE HUMANITY OR A FELLOW-FEELING WITH OTHERS," HUME WROTE. "IT IS SUFFICIENT, THAT THIS IS EXPERIENCED TO BE A PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN NATURE."
PLEASE HELP
GOD BLESS
SYMPATHY MAKES US FEEL GOOD WHEN WE DO GOOD THINGS--BAD OR GUILTY WHEN WE DO BAD THINGS!
INDEED, HUME CONCLUDES, "REASON IS AND OUGHT TO BE THE SLAVE OF THE PASSIONS." PERHAPS THIS IS WHY HUME'S NICKNAME AMONG HIS CONTEMPORARIES WAS LE BON DAVID.
NT LK
WALK
"IN ALL MY LIFE, DID I NEVER MEET WITH A BEING OF A MORE PLACID AND GENTLE NATURE," A CRITIC OF THE DAY WROTE, "AND IT IS THIS AMIABLE TURN OF HIS CHARACTER, THAT HAS GIVEN MORE CONSEQUENCE AND FORCE TO HIS SKEPTICISM, THAN ALL THE ARGUMENTS OF HIS SOPHISTRY."
WE ARE RESCUED FROM THE PESSIMISM OF REASON'S LIMITS BY A KIND OF BENIGN ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER:
"I DINE, I PLAY A GAME OF BACKGAMMON, I CONVERSE AND AM MERRY WITH MY FRIENDS..."
"...AND WHEN AFTER THREE OR FOUR HOURS' AMUSEMENT I WOULD RETURN TO THESE SPECULATIONS..."
"...THEY APPEAR SO COLD, SO STRAINED, AND RIDICULOUS THAT I CANNOT FIND IT IN MY HEART TO ENTER INTO THEM ANY FURTHER!"
IN OTHER WORDS, ANY CONTEMPLATION OF REASON'S LIMITS IS JUST ONE MORE PERCEPTION TO BE ADDED TO THE SUM OF YOUR LIFE!

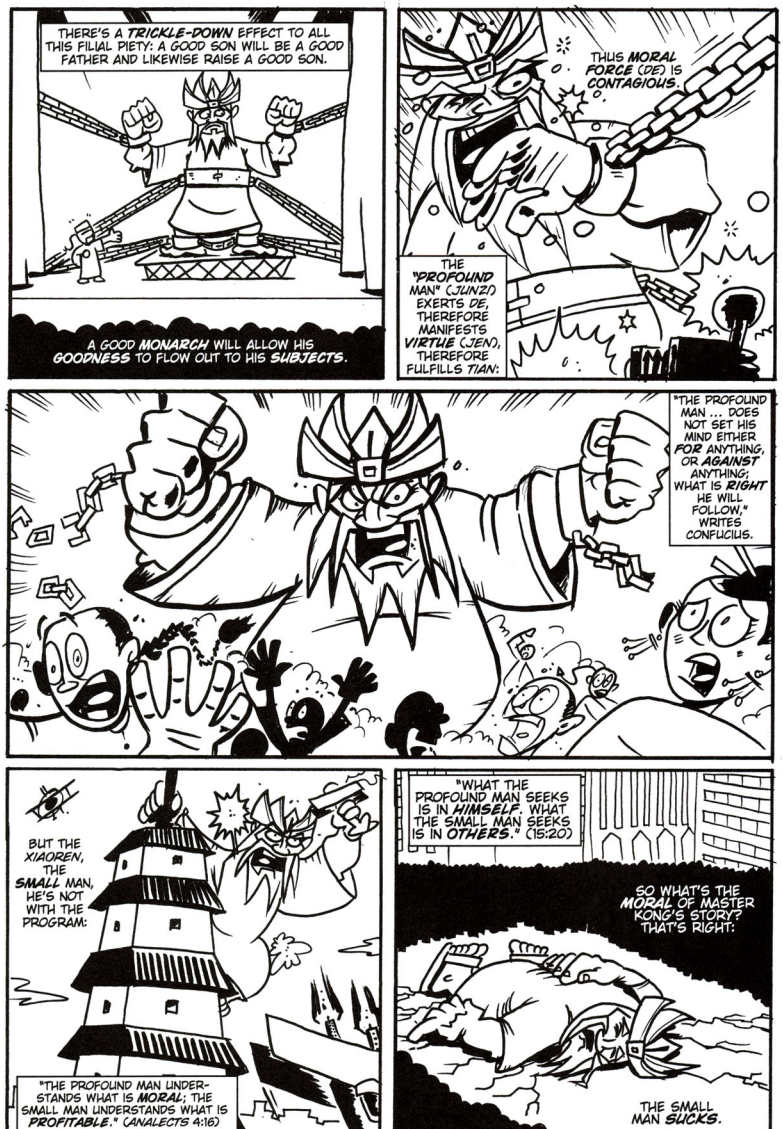

THOUGH KNOWN IN THE WEST AS CONFUCIUS (551-479 B.C.), THIS LEGENDARY CHINESE THINKER IS BETTER KNOWN IN HIS NATIVE LAND AS KONGZI, WHICH LITERALLY TRANSLATES TO...
MASTER KONG
WHAT LITTLE IS KNOWN OF CONFUCIUS'S LIFE SUGGESTS HE SERVED AS A SHI, OR MIDDLE-CLASS RETAINER, DURING CHINA'S "DAYS OF SPRING AND AUTUMN" (800-400 B.C.) ...
...WHEN PETTY TRIBAL KINGS WARRED OVER THE FRAGMENTS OF THE COLLAPSED ZHOU DYNASTY.
THESE FEUDAL THUGS WERE EAGER TO ADD LEGITIMACY AND RESPECTABILITY TO THEIR REIGNS BY LEARNING THE COURT ETIQUETTE AND DIPLOMATIC PROTOCOL OF THE ZHOUS FROM ITERANT SCHOLARS LIKE CONFUCIUS.
CONFUCIUS'S TEACHINGS WERE COLLECTED IN THE "FIVE CLASSICS", WHICH ULTIMATELY BECAME THE NATIONAL STANDARD OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE ETHICS.
AS EARLY AS 136 B.C., THE FIVE CLASSICS WERE MANDATORY READING FOR ALL WOULD-BE CIVIL SERVANTS.

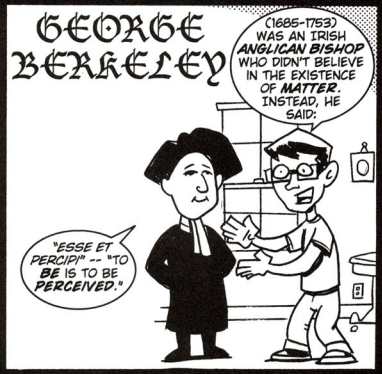

CENTRAL TO CONFUCIAN THOUGHT IS THE IDEA THAT THE MANDATE OF TIAN ("HEAVEN") IS THE SAME AS MORAL GOOD...
...BUT ONLY THROUGH HUMAN AGENCY MAY THAT MANDATE BE ACTUALIZED HERE ON EARTH!

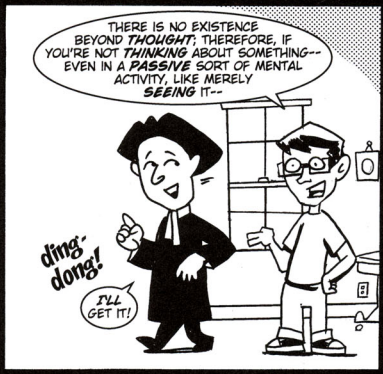

THUS, CONFUCIANISM IS FUNDAMENTALLY DIDACTIC, REINFORCING AESTHETIC, MORAL AND SOCIAL ORDER VIA LI, OR RITUAL PROPRIETY.
GOOD MANNERS, FOR INSTANCE, SATISFY ALL THREE FORMS OF ORDER: THEY LOOK GOOD (AESTHETIC), AND THEY MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD (MORAL) BECAUSE THEY MAKE OTHERS FEEL GOOD (SOCIAL).


KEEPING IN MIND THIS IDEA OF CONTINUITY OF ORDER, THEN, IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE TO LEARN THAT CONFUCIUS UPHELD OBEDIENCE TO ONE'S ELDERS (XIAO, OR "FILIAL PIETY") AS THE HIGHEST VIRTUE.

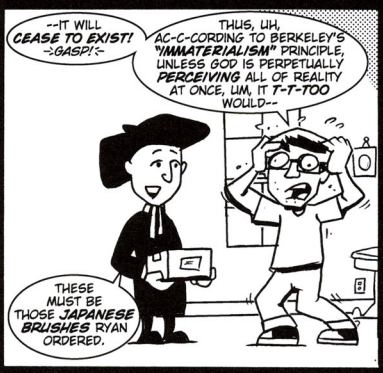

IN THE FIRST BOOK OF HIS ANALECTS CONFUCIUS WRITES, "OBSERVE WHAT A PERSON HAS IN MIND TO DO WHEN HIS FATHER IS ALIVE, AND THEN OBSERVE WHAT HE DOES WHEN HIS FATHER IS DEAD."
"IF, FOR THREE YEARS, HE MAKES NO CHANGES TO HIS FATHER'S WAYS, HE CAN BE SAID TO BE A GOOD SON."


THERE'S A TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT TO ALL THIS FILIAL PIETY: A GOOD SON WILL BE A GOOD FATHER AND LIKEWISE RAISE A GOOD SON.
A GOOD MONARCH WILL ALLOW HIS GOODNESS TO FLOW OUT TO HIS SUBJECTS.
THUS MORAL FORCE (DE) IS CONTAGIOUS.
THE "PROFOUND MAN" (JUNZI) EXERTS DE, THEREFORE MANIFESTS VIRTUE (JEN), THEREFORE FULFILLS TIAN:
"THE PROFOUND MAN ... DOES NOT SET HIS MIND EITHER FOR ANYTHING, OR AGAINST ANYTHING; WHAT IS RIGHT HE WILL FOLLOW," WRITES CONFUCIUS.
BUT THE XIAOREN, THE SMALL MAN, HE'S NOT WITH THE PROGRAM:
"THE PROFOUND MAN UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS MORAL; THE SMALL MAN UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS PROFITABLE." (ANALECTS 4:16)
"WHAT THE PROFOUND MAN SEEKS IS IN HIMSELF. WHAT THE SMALL MAN SEEKS IS IN OTHERS." (15:20)
SO WHAT'S THE MORAL OF MASTER KONG'S STORY? THAT'S RIGHT:
THE SMALL MAN SUCKS.


GEORGE BERKELEY
(1685-1753) WAS AN IRISH ANGLICAN BISHOP WHO DIDN'T BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF MATTER. INSTEAD, HE SAID:
"ESSE ET PERCIPI" -- "TO BE IS TO BE PERCEIVED."

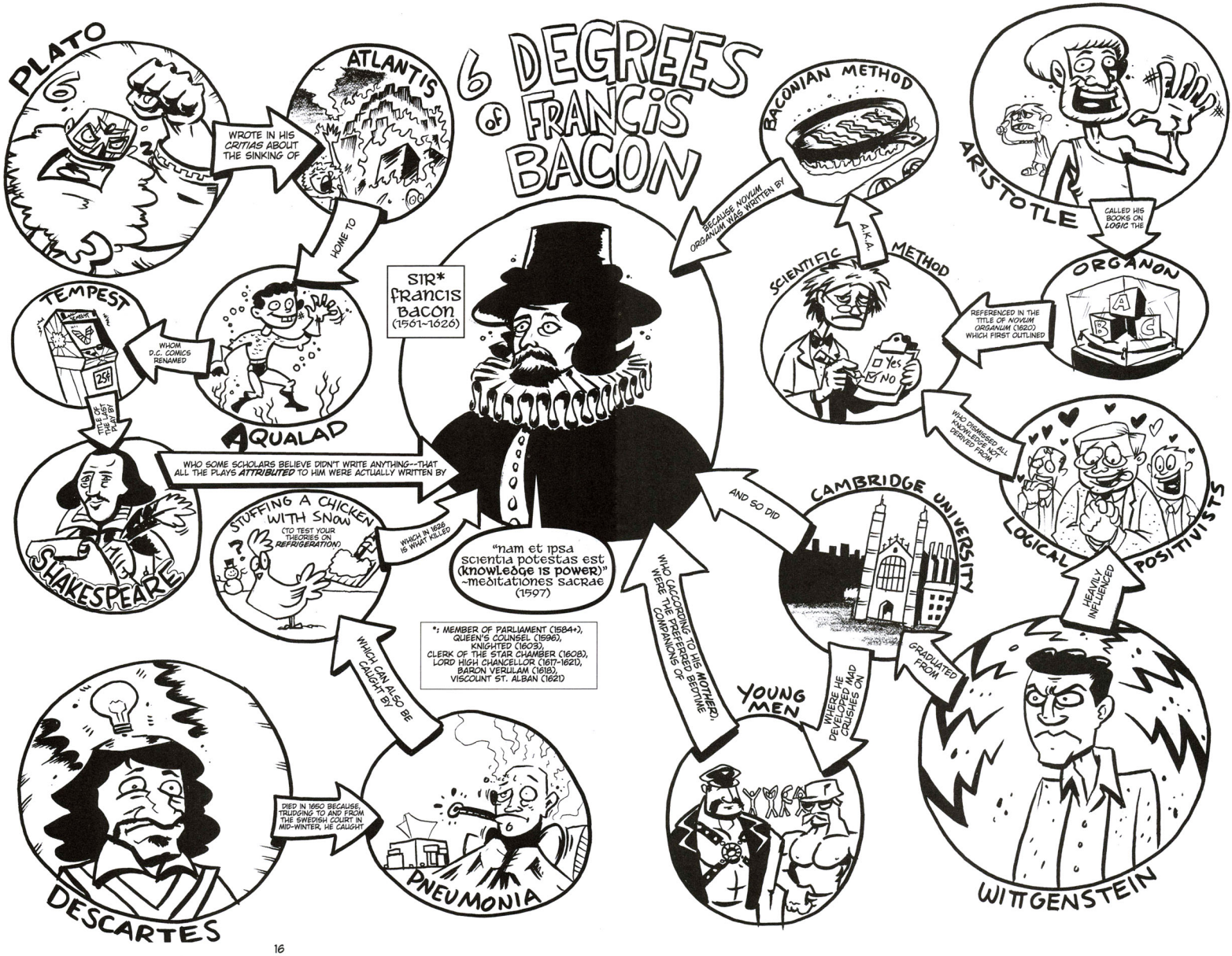

THERE IS NO EXISTENCE BEYOND THOUGHT; THEREFORE, IF YOU'RE NOT THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING--- EVEN IN A PASSIVE SORT OF MENTAL ACTIVITY, LIKE MERELY SEEING IT--
ding-dong!
I'LL GET IT!

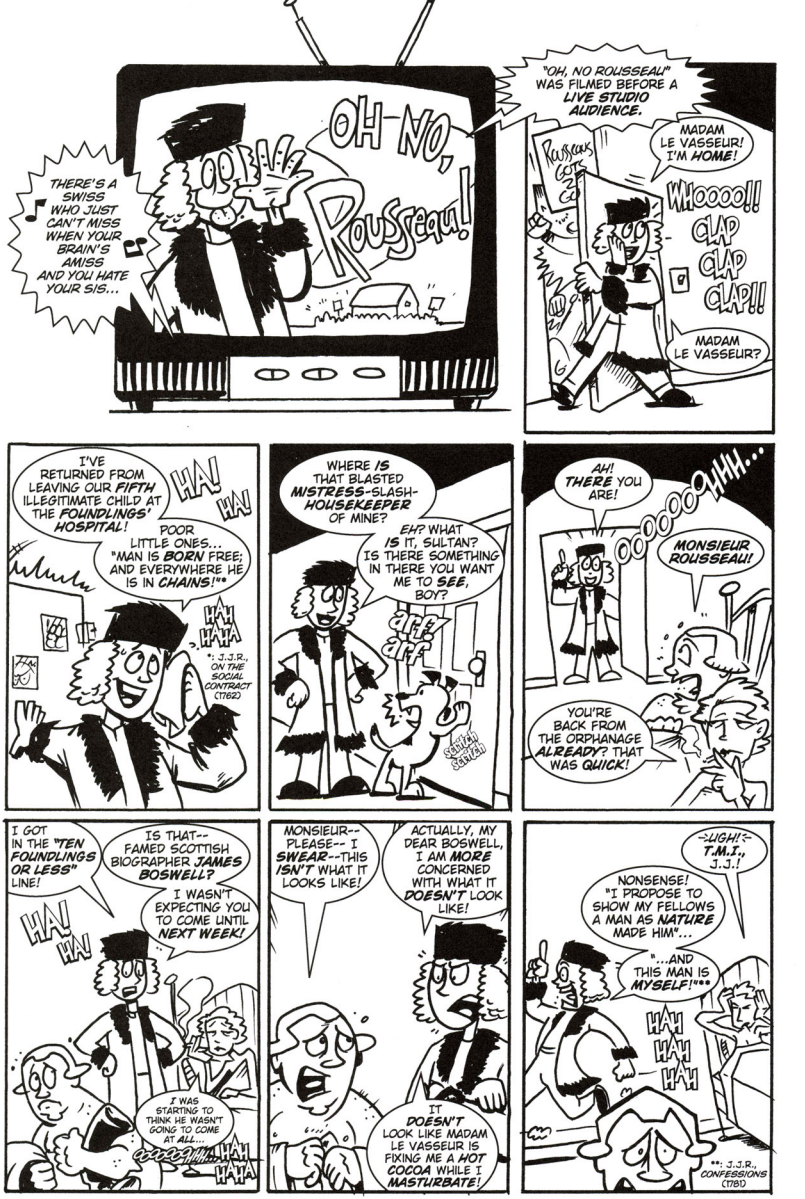

PACKAGE FOR DUNLAVEY.
HE'S NOT HERE-- I'LL SIGN FOR IT.

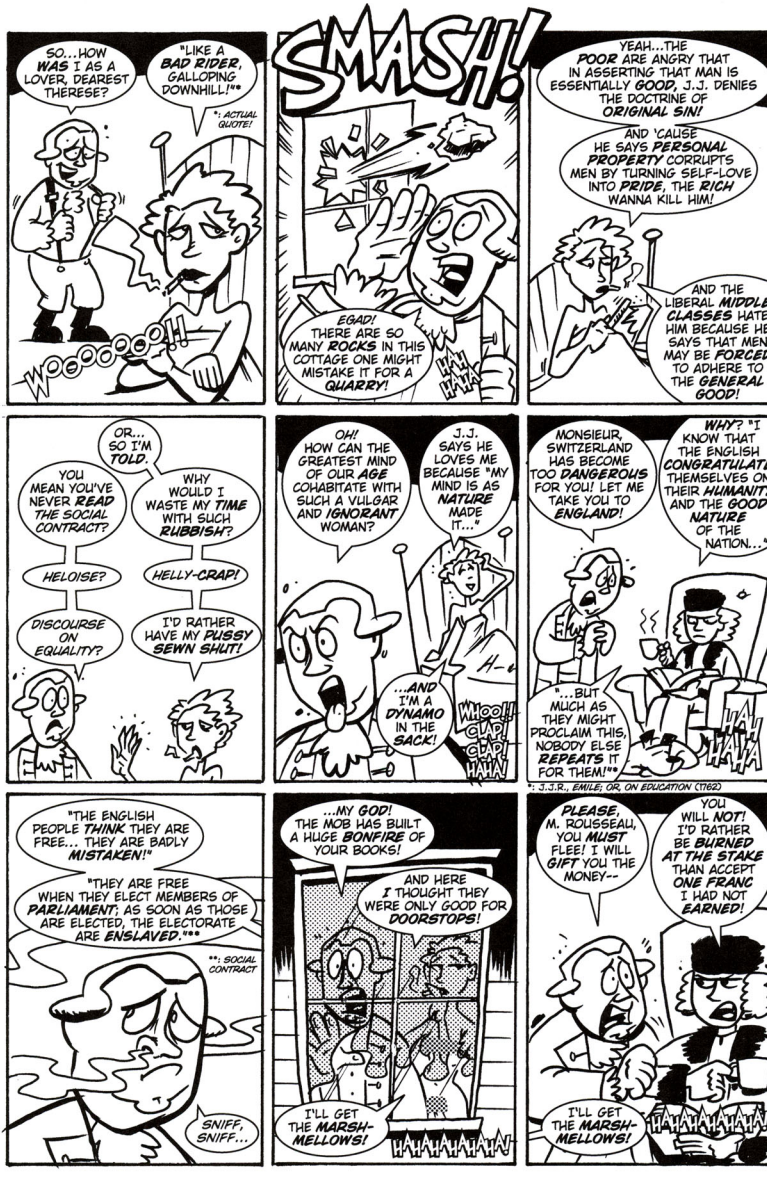

--IT WILL CEASE TO EXIST! -:GASP!:-
THUS, UH, AC-C-CORDING TO BERKELEY'S "IMMATERIALISM" PRINCIPLE, UNLESS GOD IS PERPETUALLY PERCEIVING ALL OF REALITY AT ONCE, UM, IT T-T-TOO WOULD--
THESE MUST BE THOSE JAPANESE BRUSHES RYAN ORDERED.

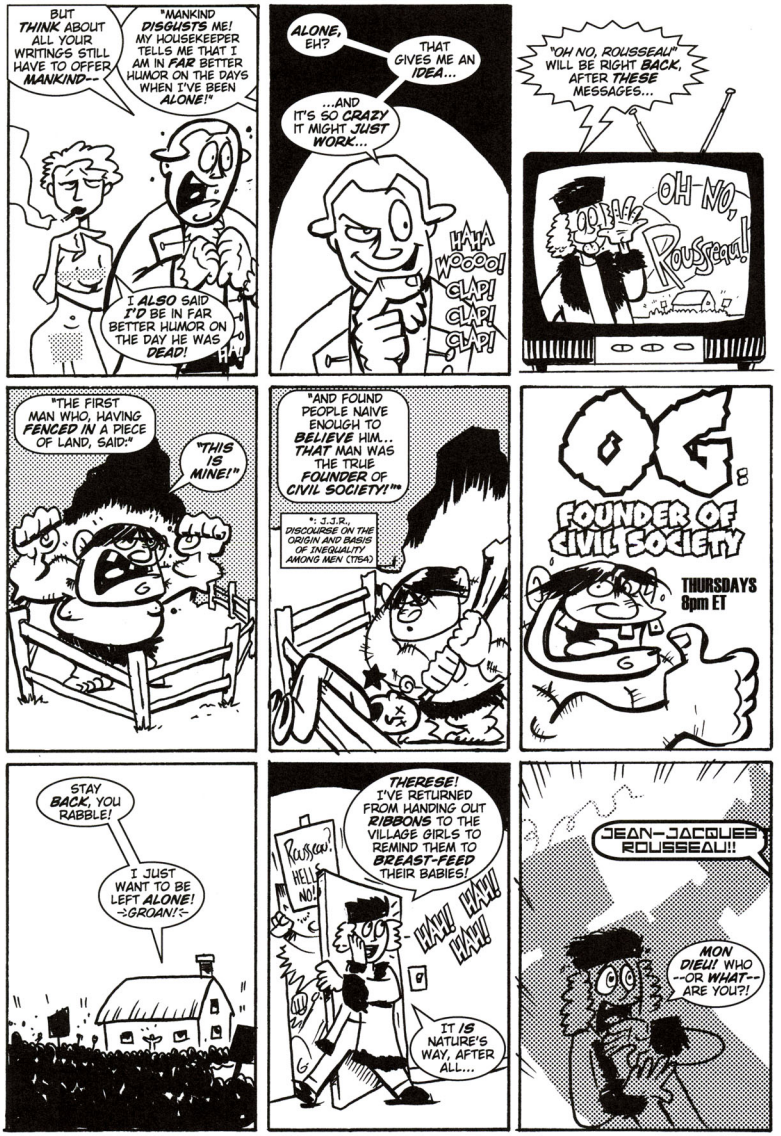

I'LL JUST LEAVE THEM ON HIS DRAWING TABLE.


UNLESS YOU KNOW A BETTER PLACE--
STOP DOING THAT!!!

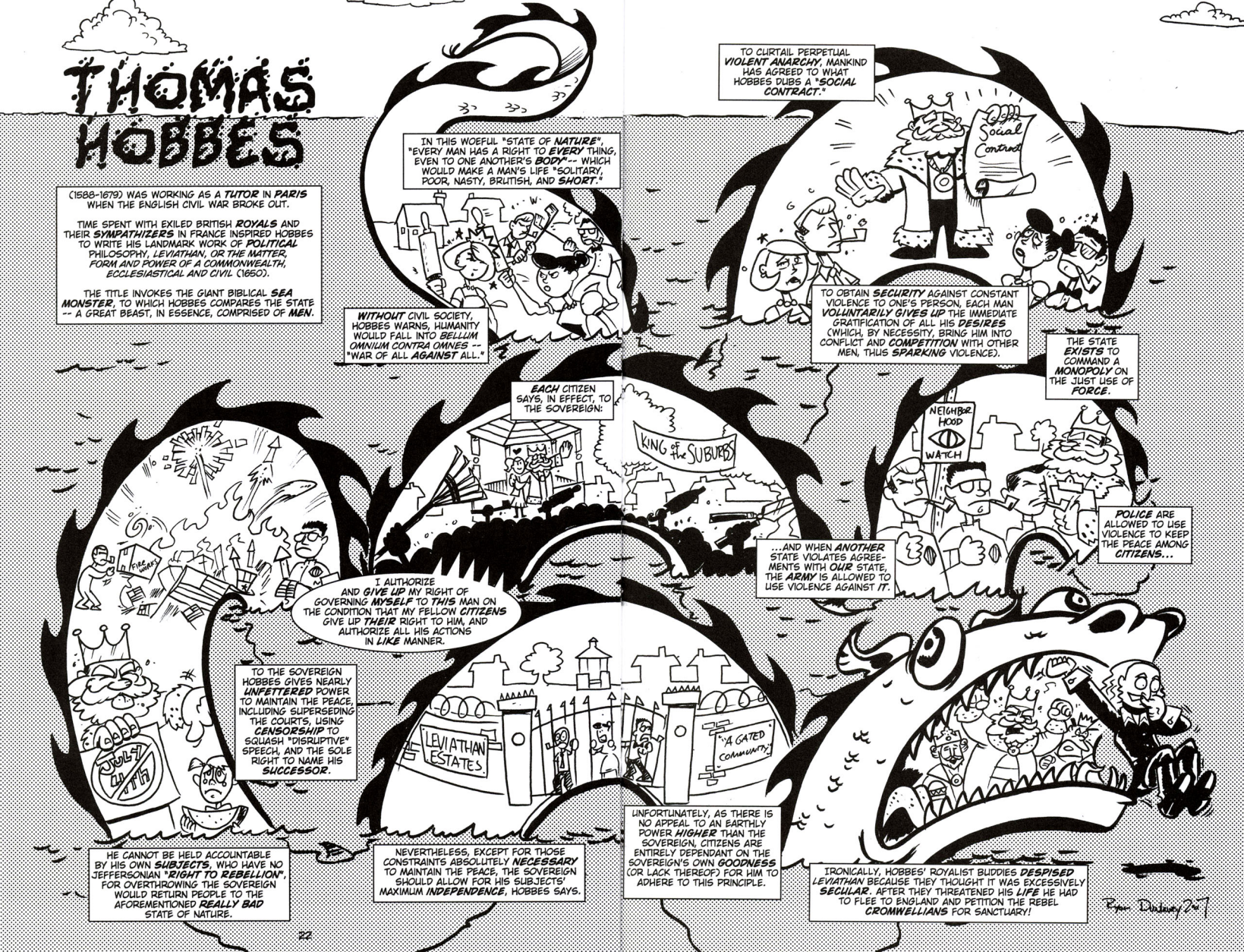

6 DEGREES OF FRANCIS BACON
PLATO
6
WROTE IN HIS CRITIAS ABOUT THE SINKING OF
ATLANTIS
HOME TO
AQUALAD
WHOM D.C. COMICS RENAMED
TEMPEST
THE BARD OF THE TITLE OF
SHAKESPEARE
WHO SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE DIDN'T WRITE ANYTHING---THAT ALL THE PLAYS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM WERE ACTUALLY WRITTEN BY
SIR* FRANCIS BACON (1561~1626)
"nam et ipsa scientia potestas est (knowledge is power)" ~meditationes sacrae (1597)
STUFFING A CHICKEN WITH SNOW
(TO TEST YOUR THEORIES ON REFRIGERATION)
WHICH IN 1626 IS WHAT KILLED
WHICH CAN ALSO BE CAUGHT BY
PNEUMONIA
DIED IN 1650 BECAUSE, TRUDGING TO AND FROM THE SWEDISH COURT IN MID-WINTER, HE CAUGHT
DESCARTES
*: MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (1584+), QUEEN'S COUNSEL (1596), KNIGHTED (1603), CLERK OF THE STAR CHAMBER (1608), LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR (1617-1621), BARON VERULAM (1618), VISCOUNT ST. ALBAN (1621)
BECAUSE NOVUM ORGANUM WAS WRITTEN BY
BACONIAN METHOD
A.K.A.
SCIENTIFIC METHOD
Yes
NO
REFERENCED IN THE TITLE OF NOVUM ORGANUM (1620) WHICH FIRST OUTLINED
ORGANON
A
B
C
CALLED HIS BOOKS ON LOGIC THE
ARISTOTLE
WHO DISMISSED ALL KNOWLEDGE NOT DERIVED FROM
LOGICAL POSITIVISTS
HEAVILY INFLUENCED
GRADUATED FROM
WITTGENSTEIN
WHERE HE DEVELOPED MAD CRUSHES ON
YOUNG MEN
WHO (ACCORDING TO HIS MOTHER) WERE THE PREFERRED BEDTIME COMPANIONS OF
AND SO DID
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

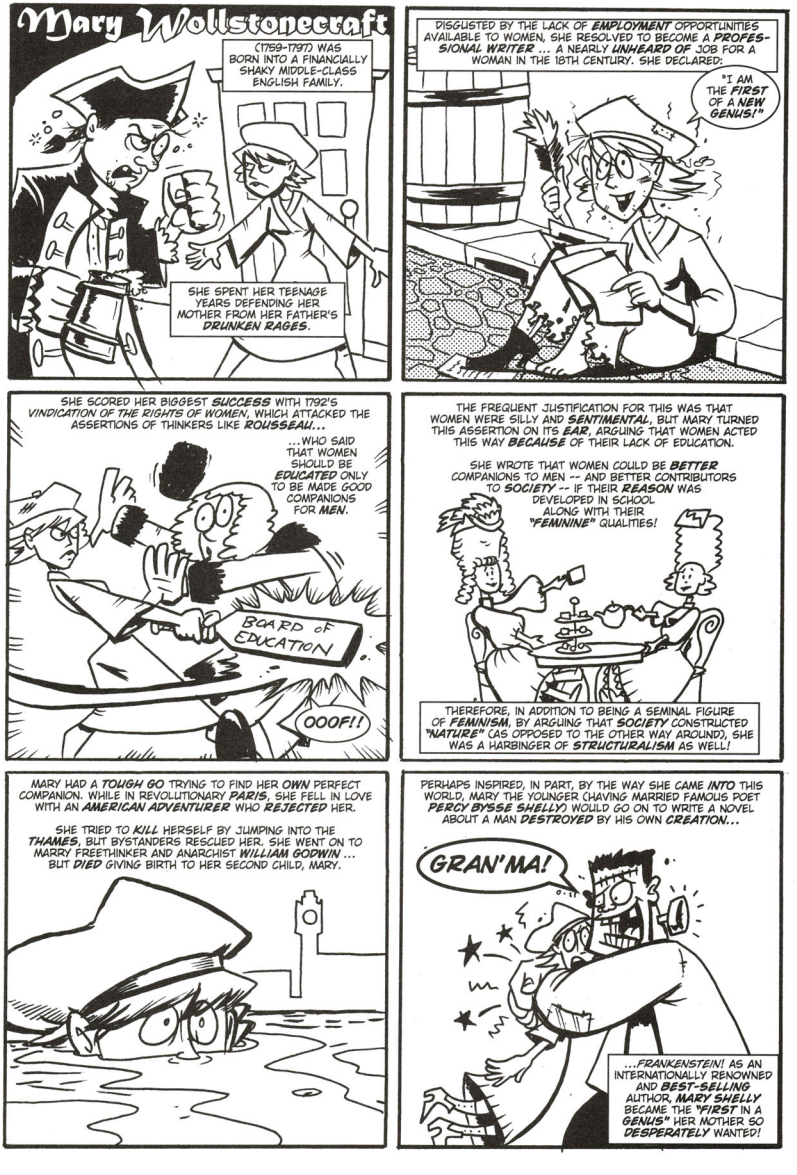

THERE'S A SWISS WHO JUST CAN'T MISS WHEN YOUR BRAIN'S AMISS AND YOU HATE YOUR SIS...
OH NO, Rousseau!
"OH, NO ROUSSEAU!" WAS FILMED BEFORE A LIVE STUDIO AUDIENCE.
MADAM LE VASSEUR! I'M HOME!
WHOOOO!! CLAP CLAP CLAP!!
MADAM LE VASSEUR?
I'VE RETURNED FROM LEAVING OUR FIFTH ILLEGITIMATE CHILD AT THE FOUNDLINGS' HOSPITAL!
HA! HA!
POOR LITTLE ONES... "MAN IS BORN FREE; AND EVERYWHERE HE IS IN CHAINS!"*
HA! HA! HA!
*: J.J.R., ON THE SOCIAL CONTRACT (1762)
WHERE IS THAT BLASTED MISTRESS-SLASH-HOUSEKEEPER OF MINE?
EH? WHAT IS IT, SULTAN? IS THERE SOMETHING IN THERE YOU WANT ME TO SEE, BOY?
AFF! AFF!
SCRITCH! SCRITCH!
AH! THERE YOU ARE!
OOOOOOHHH...
MONSIEUR ROUSSEAU!
YOU'RE BACK FROM THE ORPHANAGE ALREADY? THAT WAS QUICK!
I GOT IN THE "TEN FOUNDLINGS OR LESS" LINE!
HA! HA!
IS THAT-- FAMED SCOTTISH BIOGRAPHER JAMES BOSWELL?
I WASN'T EXPECTING YOU TO COME UNTIL NEXT WEEK!
I WAS STARTING TO THINK HE WASN'T GOING TO COME AT ALL....
HA! HA! HA!
MONSIEUR-- PLEASE-- I SWEAR--THIS ISN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!
ACTUALLY, MY DEAR BOSWELL, I AM MORE CONCERNED WITH WHAT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE!
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MADAM LE VASSEUR IS FIXING ME A HOT COCOA WHILE I MASTURBATE!
-UGH!- T.M.I., J.J.!
NONSENSE! "I PROPOSE TO SHOW MY FELLOWS A MAN AS NATURE MADE HIM"...
"...AND THIS MAN IS MYSELF!"**
HAH! HAH! HAH!
**: J.J.R., CONFESSIONS (1781)


SO...HOW WAS I AS A LOVER, DEAREST THERESE?
"LIKE A BAD RIDER, GALLOPING DOWNHILL!"*
*: ACTUAL QUOTE!
WOOOOOO!!!
SMASH!
EGAD! THERE ARE SO MANY ROCKS IN THIS COTTAGE ONE MIGHT MISTAKE IT FOR A QUARRY!
HA HA HA HA
YEAH...THE POOR ARE ANGRY THAT IN ASSERTING THAT MAN IS ESSENTIALLY GOOD, J.J. DENIES THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN!
AND 'CAUSE HE SAYS PERSONAL PROPERTY CORRUPTS MEN BY TURNING SELF-LOVE INTO PRIDE, THE RICH WANNA KILL HIM!
AND THE LIBERAL MIDDLE CLASSES HATE HIM BECAUSE HE SAYS THAT MEN MAY BE FORCED TO ADHERE TO THE GENERAL GOOD!
OR... SO I'M TOLD.
YOU MEAN YOU'VE NEVER READ THE SOCIAL CONTRACT?
WHY WOULD I WASTE MY TIME WITH SUCH RUBBISH?
HELOISE?
HELLY-CRAP!
DISCOURSE ON EQUALITY?
I'D RATHER HAVE MY PUSSY SEWN SHUT!
OH! HOW CAN THE GREATEST MIND OF OUR AGE COHABITATE WITH SUCH A VULGAR AND IGNORANT WOMAN?
J.J. SAYS HE LOVES ME BECAUSE "MY MIND IS AS NATURE MADE IT..."
...AND I'M A DYNAMO IN THE SACK!
WHOOSH! CLAP CLAP HAHA
MONSIEUR, SWITZERLAND HAS BECOME TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU! LET ME TAKE YOU TO ENGLAND!
WHY? "I KNOW THAT THE ENGLISH CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES ON THEIR HUMANITY AND THE GOOD NATURE OF THE NATION..."
"...BUT MUCH AS THEY MIGHT PROCLAIM THIS, NOBODY ELSE REPEATS IT FOR THEM!"*
HA HA HA HA
*: J.J.R., EMILE; OR, ON EDUCATION (1762)
"THE ENGLISH PEOPLE THINK THEY ARE FREE... THEY ARE BADLY MISTAKEN!"
"THEY ARE FREE WHEN THEY ELECT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT; AS SOON AS THOSE ARE ELECTED, THE ELECTORATE ARE ENSLAVED."**
**: SOCIAL CONTRACT
SNIFF, SNIFF...
...MY GOD! THE MOB HAS BUILT A HUGE BONFIRE OF YOUR BOOKS!
AND HERE I THOUGHT THEY WERE ONLY GOOD FOR DOORSTOPS!
I'LL GET THE MARSH-MELLOWS!
HAHAHAHAHAHA
PLEASE, M. ROUSSEAU, YOU MUST FLEE! I WILL GIFT YOU THE MONEY--
YOU WILL NOT! I'D RATHER BE BURNED AT THE STAKE THAN ACCEPT ONE FRANC I HAD NOT EARNED!
I'LL GET THE MARSH-MELLOWS!
HAHAHAHAHAHA


BUT THINK ABOUT ALL YOUR WRITINGS STILL HAVE TO OFFER MANKIND--
"MANKIND DISGUSTS ME! MY HOUSEKEEPER TELLS ME THAT I AM IN FAR BETTER HUMOR ON THE DAYS WHEN I'VE BEEN ALONE!"
I ALSO SAID I'D BE IN FAR BETTER HUMOR ON THE DAY HE WAS DEAD!
HA!
ALONE, EH?
THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA...
...AND IT'S SO CRAZY IT MIGHT JUST WORK...
HAHA WOOOO! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!
"OH NO, ROUSSEAU!" WILL BE RIGHT BACK, AFTER THESE MESSAGES...
OH NO, Rousseau!
"THE FIRST MAN WHO, HAVING FENCED IN A PIECE OF LAND, SAID:"
"THIS IS MINE!"
"AND FOUND PEOPLE NAIVE ENOUGH TO BELIEVE HIM... THAT MAN WAS THE TRUE FOUNDER OF CIVIL SOCIETY!"*
*: J.J.R., DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGIN AND BASIS OF INEQUALITY AMONG MEN (1754)
OG
FOUNDER OF CIVIL SOCIETY
THURSDAYS 8pm ET
STAY BACK, YOU RABBLE!
I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE! -:GROAN!:-
THERESE! I'VE RETURNED FROM HANDING OUT RIBBONS TO THE VILLAGE GIRLS TO REMIND THEM TO BREAST-FEED THEIR BABIES!
Rousseau! HELP! NO!
HAH! HAH! HAH!
IT IS NATURE'S WAY, AFTER ALL...
JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU!!
MON DIEU! WHO --OR WHAT-- ARE YOU?!

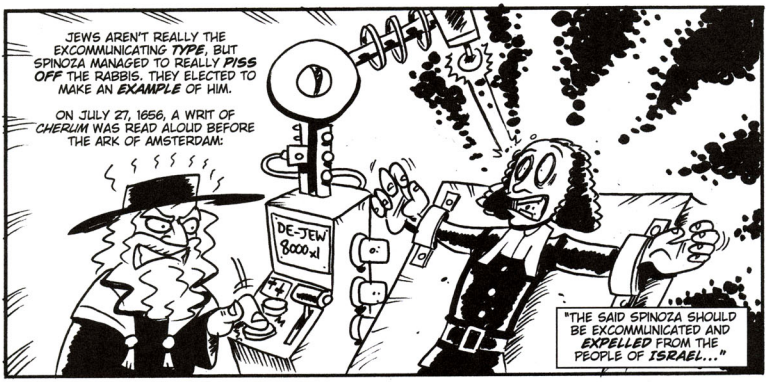

MY NAME IS BILL GATES! IN FOUR HUNDRED YEARS MY "DIFFERENCE ENGINES" WILL MAKE ME THE RICHEST OVERLORD IN THE GALAXY!!
ONLY YOU CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE 21ST CENTURY!
COME AND LIVE IN SOLITUDE IN MY KINGDOM OF SEA-AT-TULL!
RETURN TO THE FUTURE WITH ME IN MY "TIME SACK!"
STOP! UNHAND ME!
TIME SAK
HAW-HAW-HAW!
CRASH!
BONK!
UGH!
M. BOSWELL! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?
I WILL NOT ACCEPT YOUR CHARITY--
DR. JOHNSON... IS THAT YOU...? -GROAN-
arf! arf!
WHAT...? OH, SULTAN! HOW ADORABLE YOU LOOK!
DOES THIS MEAN YOU WANT TO GO INTO EXILE WITH DADDY TO ENGLAND?
arf! arf!
AWWWWWWWWW!!
HOW CAN I SAY NO TO SUCH A CUTE LITTLE FUR BABY?
THERESE! GOOD NEWS! WE'RE GOING TO ENGLAND!
arf! arf!
THAT'S ALL YOU HAD TO DO TO CONINVCE HIM? SEW A CUTE DOG COSTUME?
HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED? FOR A GENIUS, J.J. IS KIND OF AN IDIOT!
CLAP! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!
HA HA HA HA!!
THERE'S A SWISS WHO JUST CAN'T MISS WHEN YOUR BRAIN'S AMISS AND YOU HATE YOUR SIS...
Executive Producers: FRED VAN LENTE RYAN DUNLAVEY


THOMAS HOBBES
(1588-1679) WAS WORKING AS A TUTOR IN PARIS WHEN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR BROKE OUT.
TIME SPENT WITH EXILED BRITISH ROYALS AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS IN FRANCE INSPIRED HOBBES TO WRITE HIS LANDMARK WORK OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, LEVIATHAN, OR THE MATTER, FORM AND POWER OF A COMMONWEALTH, ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVIL (1650).
THE TITLE INVOKES THE GIANT BIBLICAL SEA MONSTER, TO WHICH HOBBES COMPARES THE STATE -- A GREAT BEAST, IN ESSENCE, COMPRISED OF MEN.
IN THIS WOEFUL "STATE OF NATURE", "EVERY MAN HAS A RIGHT TO EVERY THING, EVEN TO ONE ANOTHER'S BODY" -- WHICH WOULD MAKE A MAN'S LIFE "SOLITARY, POOR, NASTY, BRUTISH, AND SHORT."
WITHOUT CIVIL SOCIETY, HOBBES WARNS, HUMANITY WOULD FALL INTO BELLUM OMNIUM CONTRA OMNES -- "WAR OF ALL AGAINST ALL."
TO CURTAIL PERPETUAL VIOLENT ANARCHY, MANKIND HAS AGREED TO WHAT HOBBES DUBS A "SOCIAL CONTRACT."
Social Contract
TO OBTAIN SECURITY AGAINST CONSTANT VIOLENCE TO ONE'S PERSON, EACH MAN VOLUNTARILY GIVES UP THE IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION OF ALL HIS DESIRES (WHICH, BY NECESSITY, BRING HIM INTO CONFLICT AND COMPETITION WITH OTHER MEN, THUS SPARKING VIOLENCE).
THE STATE EXISTS TO COMMAND A MONOPOLY ON THE JUST USE OF FORCE.
NEIGHBOR HOOD WATCH
POLICE ARE ALLOWED TO USE VIOLENCE TO KEEP THE PEACE AMONG CITIZENS...
...AND WHEN ANOTHER STATE VIOLATES AGREEMENTS WITH OUR STATE, THE ARMY IS ALLOWED TO USE VIOLENCE AGAINST IT.
EACH CITIZEN SAYS, IN EFFECT, TO THE SOVEREIGN:
KING OF THE SUBURBS
I AUTHORIZE AND GIVE UP MY RIGHT OF GOVERNING MYSELF TO THIS MAN ON THE CONDITION THAT MY FELLOW CITIZENS GIVE UP THEIR RIGHT TO HIM, AND AUTHORIZE ALL HIS ACTIONS IN LIKE MANNER.
TO THE SOVEREIGN HOBBES GIVES NEARLY UNFETTERED POWER TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE, INCLUDING SUPERSEDING THE COURTS, USING CENSORSHIP TO SQUASH "DISRUPTIVE" SPEECH, AND THE SOLE RIGHT TO NAME HIS SUCCESSOR.
LEVIATHAN ESTATES
A GATED COMMUNITY
HE CANNOT BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE BY HIS OWN SUBJECTS, WHO HAVE NO JEFFERSONIAN "RIGHT TO REBELLION", FOR OVERTHROWING THE SOVEREIGN WOULD RETURN PEOPLE TO THE AFOREMENTIONED REALLY BAD STATE OF NATURE.
NEVERTHELESS, EXCEPT FOR THOSE CONSTRAINTS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE, THE SOVEREIGN SHOULD ALLOW FOR HIS SUBJECTS' MAXIMUM INDEPENDENCE, HOBBES SAYS.
UNFORTUNATELY, AS THERE IS NO APPEAL TO AN EARTHLY POWER HIGHER THAN THE SOVEREIGN, CITIZENS ARE ENTIRELY DEPENDANT ON THE SOVEREIGN'S OWN GOODNESS (OR LACK THEREOF) FOR HIM TO ADHERE TO THIS PRINCIPLE.
IRONICALLY, HOBBES' ROYALIST BUDDIES DESPISED LEVIATHAN BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT IT WAS EXCESSIVELY SECULAR. AFTER THEY THREATENED HIS LIFE HE HAD TO FLEE TO ENGLAND AND PETITION THE REBEL CROMWELLIANS FOR SANCTUARY!
Ryan Dunlavey 2007

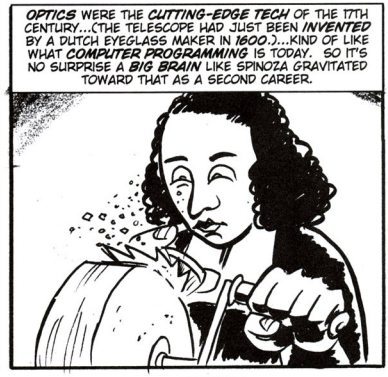

Mary Wollstonecraft
(1759-1797) WAS BORN INTO A FINANCIALLY SHAKY MIDDLE-CLASS ENGLISH FAMILY.
SHE SPENT HER TEENAGE YEARS DEFENDING HER MOTHER FROM HER FATHER'S DRUNKEN RAGES.
DISGUSTED BY THE LACK OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO WOMEN, SHE RESOLVED TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL WRITER ... A NEARLY UNHEARD OF JOB FOR A WOMAN IN THE 18TH CENTURY. SHE DECLARED:
"I AM THE FIRST OF A NEW GENUS!"
SHE SCORED HER BIGGEST SUCCESS WITH 1792'S VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN, WHICH ATTACKED THE ASSERTIONS OF THINKERS LIKE ROUSSEAU...
...WHO SAID THAT WOMEN SHOULD BE EDUCATED ONLY TO BE MADE GOOD COMPANIONS FOR MEN.
BOARD of EDUCATION
OOOF!!
THE FREQUENT JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS WAS THAT WOMEN WERE SILLY AND SENTIMENTAL, BUT MARY TURNED THIS ASSERTION ON ITS EAR, ARGUING THAT WOMEN ACTED THIS WAY BECAUSE OF THEIR LACK OF EDUCATION.
SHE WROTE THAT WOMEN COULD BE BETTER COMPANIONS TO MEN -- AND BETTER CONTRIBUTORS TO SOCIETY -- IF THEIR REASON WAS DEVELOPED IN SCHOOL ALONG WITH THEIR "FEMININE" QUALITIES!
THEREFORE, IN ADDITION TO BEING A SEMINAL FIGURE OF FEMINISM, BY ARGUING THAT SOCIETY CONSTRUCTED "NATURE" (AS OPPOSED TO THE OTHER WAY AROUND), SHE WAS A HARBINGER OF STRUCTURALISM AS WELL!
MARY HAD A TOUGH GO TRYING TO FIND HER OWN PERFECT COMPANION. WHILE IN REVOLUTIONARY PARIS, SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH AN AMERICAN ADVENTURER WHO REJECTED HER.
SHE TRIED TO KILL HERSELF BY JUMPING INTO THE THAMES, BUT BYSTANDERS RESCUED HER. SHE WENT ON TO MARRY FREETHINKER AND ANARCHIST WILLIAM GODWIN ... BUT DIED GIVING BIRTH TO HER SECOND CHILD, MARY.
PERHAPS INSPIRED, IN PART, BY THE WAY SHE CAME INTO THIS WORLD, MARY THE YOUNGER (HAVING MARRIED FAMOUS POET PERCY BYSSE SHELLY) WOULD GO ON TO WRITE A NOVEL ABOUT A MAN DESTROYED BY HIS OWN CREATION...
GRAN'MA!
...FRANKENSTEIN! AS AN INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED AND BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, MARY SHELLY BECAME THE "FIRST IN A GENUS" HER MOTHER SO DESPERATELY WANTED!


Baruch Spinoza
(1632-1677) HAD A POETICALLY APPROPRIATE DAY JOB FOR A PHILOSOPHER...
...HE CRAFTED GLASS LENSES FOR TELESCOPES, SO THE HEAVENS MIGHT BE BETTER VIEWED.
BORN INTO A PROSPEROUS JEWISH MERCANTILE FAMILY, SPINOZA SHOULD HAVE ENJOYED A MUCH MORE LUXURIOUS LIFESTYLE THAN THAT OF HUMBLE ARTISAN.
UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OF THE NOSIER MEMBERS OF HIS AMSTERDAM TEMPLE HAD HEARD RUMORS ABOUT THE CONCLUSIONS SPINOZA HAD REACHED IN HIS AMATEUR PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS.
COME NOW, BENTO, TELL US YOUR REAL VIEWS. YOU CAN TRUST US. ARE WE NOT YOUR FRIENDS?
IF ONE READS THE TALMUD, IT WOULD SEEM THE SOUL IS NOT IMMORTAL--THAT THERE ARE NO ANGELS--AND THAT GOD HAS A CORPOREAL BODY.
BARELY TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OLD, SPINOZA HAD NOT YET LEARNED THE VALUE OF CAUTION OVER PRIDE.
"I CONFESS THAT SINCE NOTHING IS TO BE FOUND IN THE BIBLE ABOUT THE IMMATERIAL OR INCORPOREAL, THERE IS NOTHING OBJECTIONABLE IN BELIEVING THAT GOD IS A BODY."
"ALL THE MORE SO SINCE, AS IT SAYS IN PSALMS (48:1), 'GOD IS GREAT,' AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPREHEND GREATNESS WITHOUT EXTENSION, AND, THEREFORE, WITHOUT BODY."


SPINOZA SPOKE OF OTHER HERETICAL THINGS -- THAT THE EXISTENCE OF ANGELS AND OTHER SPIRITS AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED BY SCRIPTURE.
HE REALIZED HE OVERSPOKE WHEN AN UNKNOWN ASSASSIN TRIED TO STAB HIM AS HE LEFT TEMPLE!
BENTO KEPT THE COAT FROM THAT DAY WITH HIM, TEAR AND ALL...
...PERHAPS TO REMIND HIM THAT THE LIFE OF THE MIND IS NOT ALWAYS THE PEACEFUL LIFE!
DUTCH JEWS WERE IN AN ODD POSITION IN THE MID-1600'S. HOLLAND HAD AGREED TO TAKE THEM IN AFTER SPAIN'S KING FERDINAND EXPELLED THEM FROM THE IBERIAN PENINSULA (SPINOZA'S FAMILY WAS ETHNICALLY PORTUGUESE) ONLY SO LONG AS THEY DIDN'T STIR UP RELIGIOUS TROUBLE.
EUROPEAN CHRISTIANS HAD ENOUGH PROBLEMS OF THEIR OWN WITH THE BLOODY PROTESTANT/ CATHOLIC SCHISM WITHOUT SHOULDERING THE BLASPHEMIES OF OTHER FAITHS.
AMSTERDAM'S RABBIS HAD ASSUMED THAT, AS SPINOZA WAS SUCH A LEARNED YOUTH, HE WAS ALSO PIOUS.
WAAA! BENTO SAID WE'RE NOT IMMORTAL!
AND HE DOUBTS MOSES WROTE THE WHOLE TORAH! WAAA!
HIS ENEMIES SOON CONVINCED THEM OTHERWISE.
HAULED BEFORE THE LEADERS OF DUTCH JEWRY, SPINOZA WAS OFFERED THE AWESOME SUM OF ONE THOUSAND GUILDERS TO PUBLICLY RECANT.
HIS REPLY?
"IN RETURN FOR THE TROUBLE YOU HAVE TAKEN TO TEACH ME THE HEBREW LANGUAGE, I AM QUITE WILLING TO SHOW YOU HOW TO EXCOMMUNICATE ME."*
*: ACTUAL QUOTE!

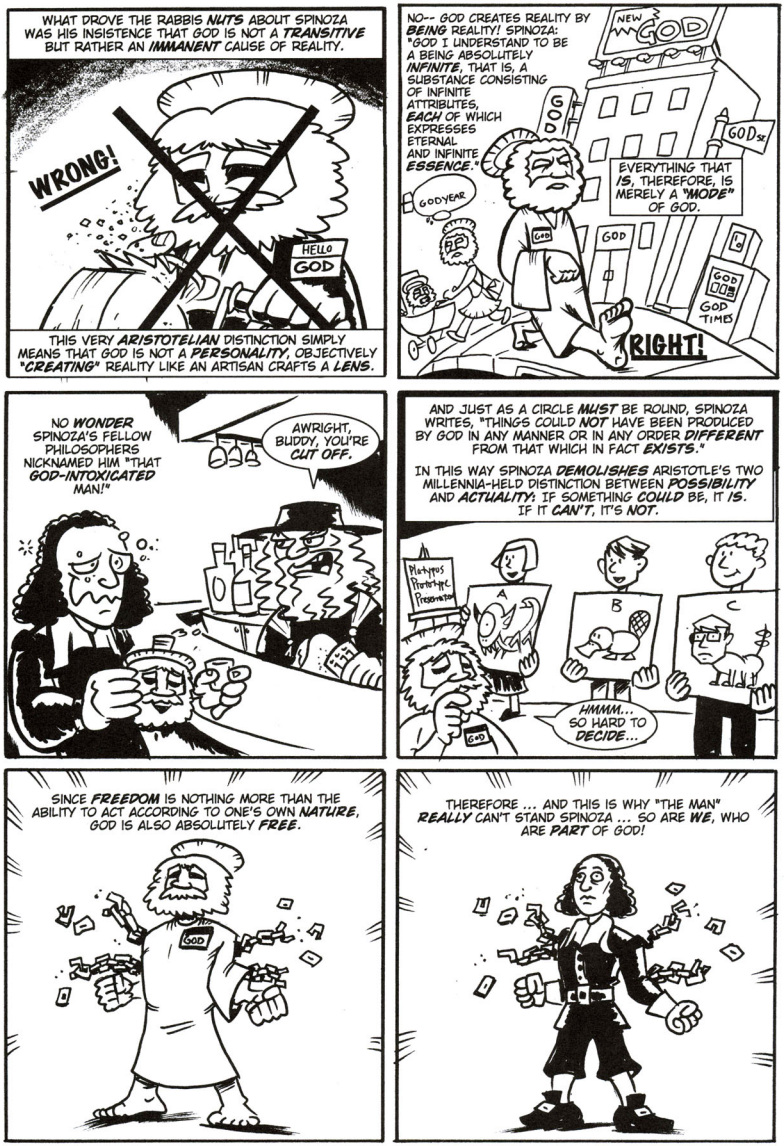

JEWS AREN'T REALLY THE EXCOMMUNICATING *TYPE*, BUT SPINOZA MANAGED TO REALLY *PISS OFF* THE RABBIS. THEY ELECTED TO MAKE AN *EXAMPLE* OF HIM.
ON JULY 27, 1656, A WRIT OF *CHERUM* WAS READ ALOUD BEFORE THE ARK OF AMSTERDAM:
DE-JEW 8000 xl
"THE SAID SPINOZA SHOULD BE EXCOMMUNICATED AND *EXPELLED* FROM THE PEOPLE OF *ISRAEL*..."

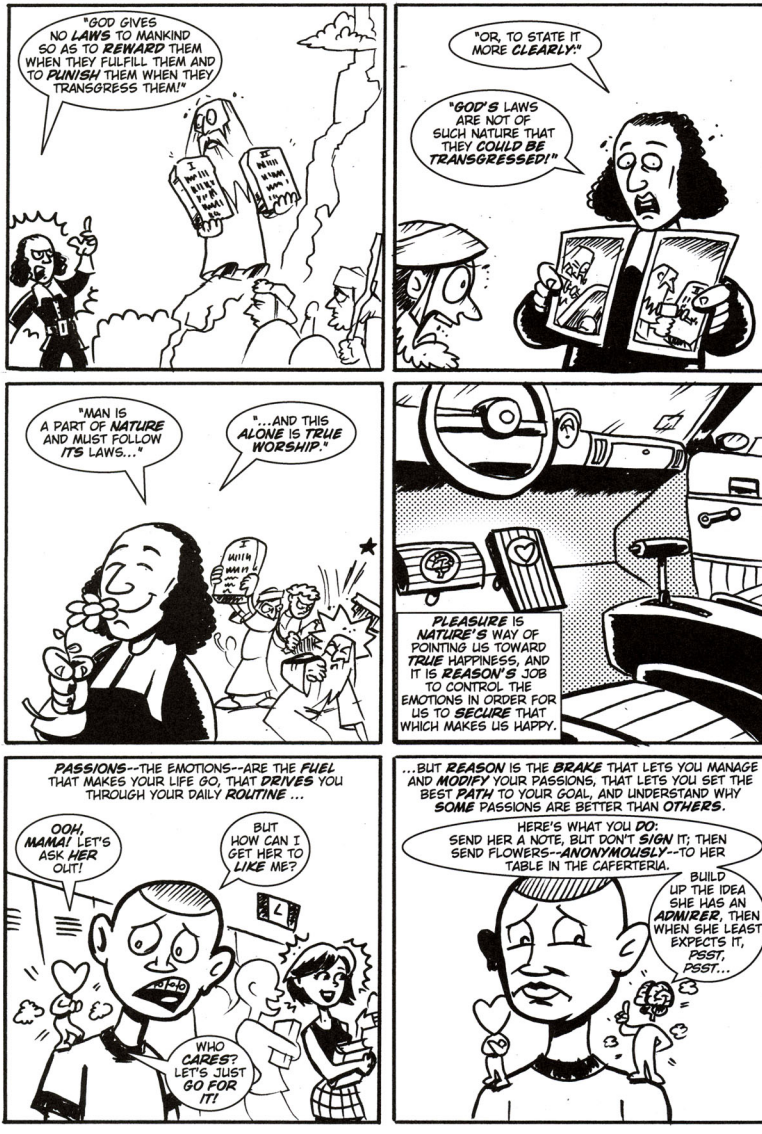

"...THE ANGER OF THE LORD AND HIS *JEALOUSY* SHALL SMOKE *AGAINST* THAT MAN, AND ALL THE *CURSES* THAT ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK SHALL LIE UPON HIM, AND THE LORD SHALL *BLOT OUT HIS NAME* FROM UNDER *HEAVEN*."
Spinoza DRY GOODS
100% off!
THE *CHERUM* ALSO FORBADE ANY JEW FROM COMING WITHIN *SIX FEET* OF HIM ... SO SPINOZA HAD TO GET OUT OF THE *MERCHANT* GAME!

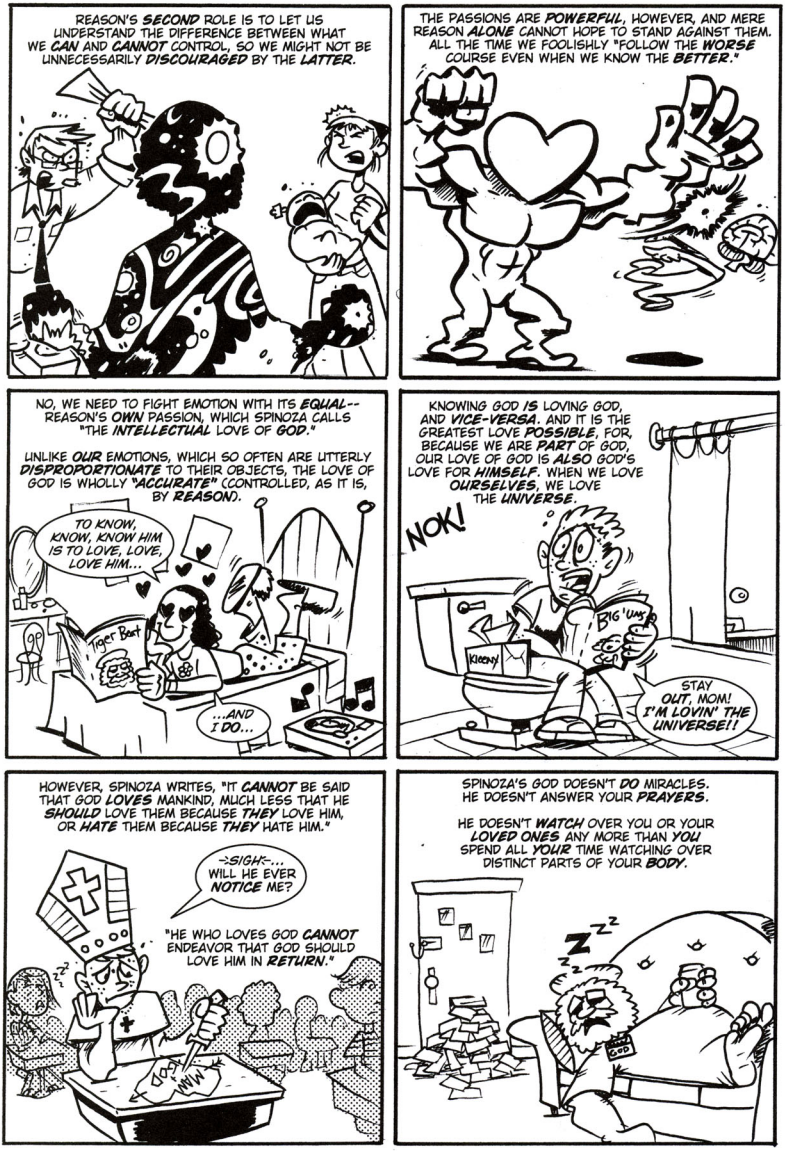

OPTICS WERE THE *CUTTING-EDGE TECH* OF THE 17TH CENTURY...(THE TELESCOPE HAD JUST BEEN *INVENTED* BY A DUTCH EYEGLASS MAKER IN *1600*.)...KIND OF LIKE WHAT *COMPUTER PROGRAMMING* IS TODAY. SO IT'S NO SURPRISE A *BIG BRAIN* LIKE SPINOZA GRAVITATED TOWARD THAT AS A SECOND CAREER.


IN THE ENSUING DECADES SPENT REFINING *GLASS*, SPINOZA WOULD ALSO REFINE HIS *IDEAS* INTO TWO GREAT WORKS, THE *TRACTATUS THEOLOGICO-POLITICUS* AND *ETHICS*.
HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE *STOICS*, SPINOZA TOLD A FRIEND:
"I DO NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN *GOD* AND *NATURE* IN THE WAY THAT ALL THOSE KNOWN TO ME HAVE DONE."
GOD
HIS FORMULATION WAS *DEUS SIVE NATURA*--"GOD OR NATURE"--SIX OF ONE, HALF DOZEN OF THE OTHER!

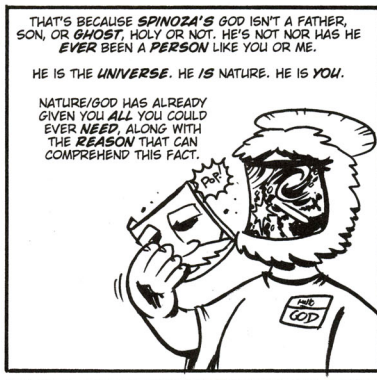

AS THE NATURE OF A *CIRCLE*, FOR EXAMPLE, LIES IN ITS *ROUNDNESS*...
...*"ALL* THINGS, I SAY, ARE *IN* GOD AND *MOVE* IN GOD."
GOD
"WHATEVER *IS*, IS *IN* GOD, AND NOTHING CAN EXIST OR CONCEIVED *WITHOUT* GOD."


WHAT DROVE THE RABBIS NUTS ABOUT SPINOZA WAS HIS INSISTENCE THAT GOD IS NOT A TRANSITIVE BUT RATHER AN IMMANENT CAUSE OF REALITY.
WRONG!
HELLO GOD
THIS VERY ARISTOTELIAN DISTINCTION SIMPLY MEANS THAT GOD IS NOT A PERSONALITY, OBJECTIVELY "CREATING" REALITY LIKE AN ARTISAN CRAFTS A LENS.
NO-- GOD CREATES REALITY BY BEING REALITY! SPINOZA: "GOD I UNDERSTAND TO BE A BEING ABSOLUTELY INFINITE, THAT IS, A SUBSTANCE CONSISTING OF INFINITE ATTRIBUTES, EACH OF WHICH EXPRESSES ETERNAL AND INFINITE ESSENCE."
NEW GOD
GOD
GOD
GOD
GOD
GOD
GODYEAR
EVERYTHING THAT IS, THEREFORE, IS MERELY A "MODE" OF GOD.
GOD TIMES
RIGHT!
NO WONDER SPINOZA'S FELLOW PHILOSOPHERS NICKNAMED HIM "THAT GOD-INTOXICATED MAN!"
AWRIGHT, BUDDY, YOU'RE CUT OFF.
AND JUST AS A CIRCLE MUST BE ROUND, SPINOZA WRITES, "THINGS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PRODUCED BY GOD IN ANY MANNER OR IN ANY ORDER DIFFERENT FROM THAT WHICH IN FACT EXISTS."
IN THIS WAY SPINOZA DEMOLISHES ARISTOTLE'S TWO MILLENNIA-HELD DISTINCTION BETWEEN POSSIBILITY AND ACTUALITY: IF SOMETHING COULD BE, IT IS. IF IT CAN'T, IT'S NOT.
Platypus Prototypic Preservation
A
B
C
HMMM... SO HARD TO DECIDE...
GOD
SINCE FREEDOM IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE ABILITY TO ACT ACCORDING TO ONE'S OWN NATURE, GOD IS ALSO ABSOLUTELY FREE.
GOD
THEREFORE ... AND THIS IS WHY "THE MAN" REALLY CAN'T STAND SPINOZA ... SO ARE WE, WHO ARE PART OF GOD!

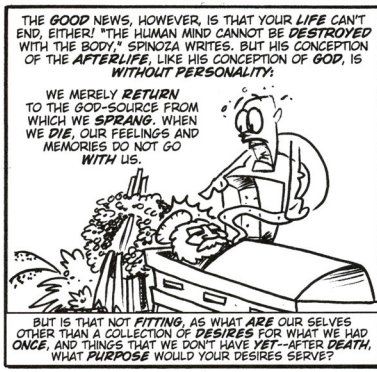

"GOD GIVES NO LAWS TO MANKIND SO AS TO REWARD THEM WHEN THEY FULFILL THEM AND TO PUNISH THEM WHEN THEY TRANSGRESS THEM!"
"OR, TO STATE IT MORE CLEARLY:"
"GOD'S LAWS ARE NOT OF SUCH NATURE THAT THEY COULD BE TRANSGRESSED!"
"MAN IS A PART OF NATURE AND MUST FOLLOW ITS LAWS..."
"...AND THIS ALONE IS TRUE WORSHIP."
PLEASURE IS NATURE'S WAY OF POINTING US TOWARD TRUE HAPPINESS, AND IT IS REASON'S JOB TO CONTROL THE EMOTIONS IN ORDER FOR US TO SECURE THAT WHICH MAKES US HAPPY.
PASSIONS--THE EMOTIONS--ARE THE FUEL THAT MAKES YOUR LIFE GO, THAT DRIVES YOU THROUGH YOUR DAILY ROUTINE ...
OOH, MAMA! LET'S ASK HER OUT!
BUT HOW CAN I GET HER TO LIKE ME?
WHO CARES? LET'S JUST GO FOR IT!
...BUT REASON IS THE BRAKE THAT LETS YOU MANAGE AND MODIFY YOUR PASSIONS, THAT LETS YOU SET THE BEST PATH TO YOUR GOAL, AND UNDERSTAND WHY SOME PASSIONS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS.
HERE'S WHAT YOU DO: SEND HER A NOTE, BUT DON'T SIGN IT; THEN SEND FLOWERS--ANONYMOUSLY--TO HER TABLE IN THE CAFETERIA.
BUILD UP THE IDEA SHE HAS AN ADMIRER, THEN WHEN SHE LEAST EXPECTS IT, PSST, PSST...


REASON'S SECOND ROLE IS TO LET US UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT CONTROL, SO WE MIGHT NOT BE UNNECESSARILY DISCOURAGED BY THE LATTER.
THE PASSIONS ARE POWERFUL, HOWEVER, AND MERE REASON ALONE CANNOT HOPE TO STAND AGAINST THEM. ALL THE TIME WE FOOLISHLY "FOLLOW THE WORSE COURSE EVEN WHEN WE KNOW THE BETTER."
NO, WE NEED TO FIGHT EMOTION WITH ITS EQUAL-- REASON'S OWN PASSION, WHICH SPINOZA CALLS "THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD."
UNLIKE OUR EMOTIONS, WHICH SO OFTEN ARE UTTERLY DISPROPORTIONATE TO THEIR OBJECTS, THE LOVE OF GOD IS WHOLLY "ACCURATE" (CONTROLLED, AS IT IS, BY REASON).
TO KNOW, KNOW, KNOW HIM IS TO LOVE, LOVE, LOVE HIM...
Tiger Boat
...AND I DO...
KNOWING GOD IS LOVING GOD, AND VICE-VERSA. AND IT IS THE GREATEST LOVE POSSIBLE, FOR, BECAUSE WE ARE PART OF GOD, OUR LOVE OF GOD IS ALSO GOD'S LOVE FOR HIMSELF. WHEN WE LOVE OURSELVES, WE LOVE THE UNIVERSE.
NOK!
BIG 'UNS
Kleeny
STAY OUT, MOM! I'M LOVIN' THE UNIVERSE!!
HOWEVER, SPINOZA WRITES, "IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT GOD LOVES MANKIND, MUCH LESS THAT HE SHOULD LOVE THEM BECAUSE THEY LOVE HIM, OR HATE THEM BECAUSE THEY HATE HIM."
-SIGH-... WILL HE EVER NOTICE ME?
"HE WHO LOVES GOD CANNOT ENDEAVOR THAT GOD SHOULD LOVE HIM IN RETURN."
GOD
SPINOZA'S GOD DOESN'T DO MIRACLES. HE DOESN'T ANSWER YOUR PRAYERS.
HE DOESN'T WATCH OVER YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONES ANY MORE THAN YOU SPEND ALL YOUR TIME WATCHING OVER DISTINCT PARTS OF YOUR BODY.
Z z z
GOD

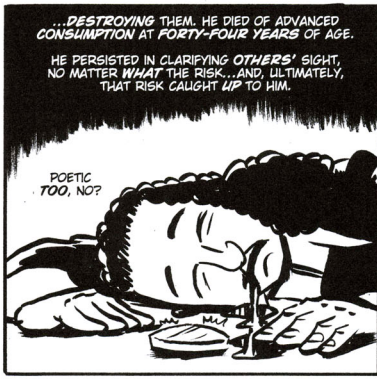

NOK! NOK!
STAY OUT, MOM! I'M WATCHIN' OVER A DISTINCT PART OF MY BODY!!
BIG 'UNS
KLEENEX
OH, STOP. YOU KNOW WHAT WE MEAN...

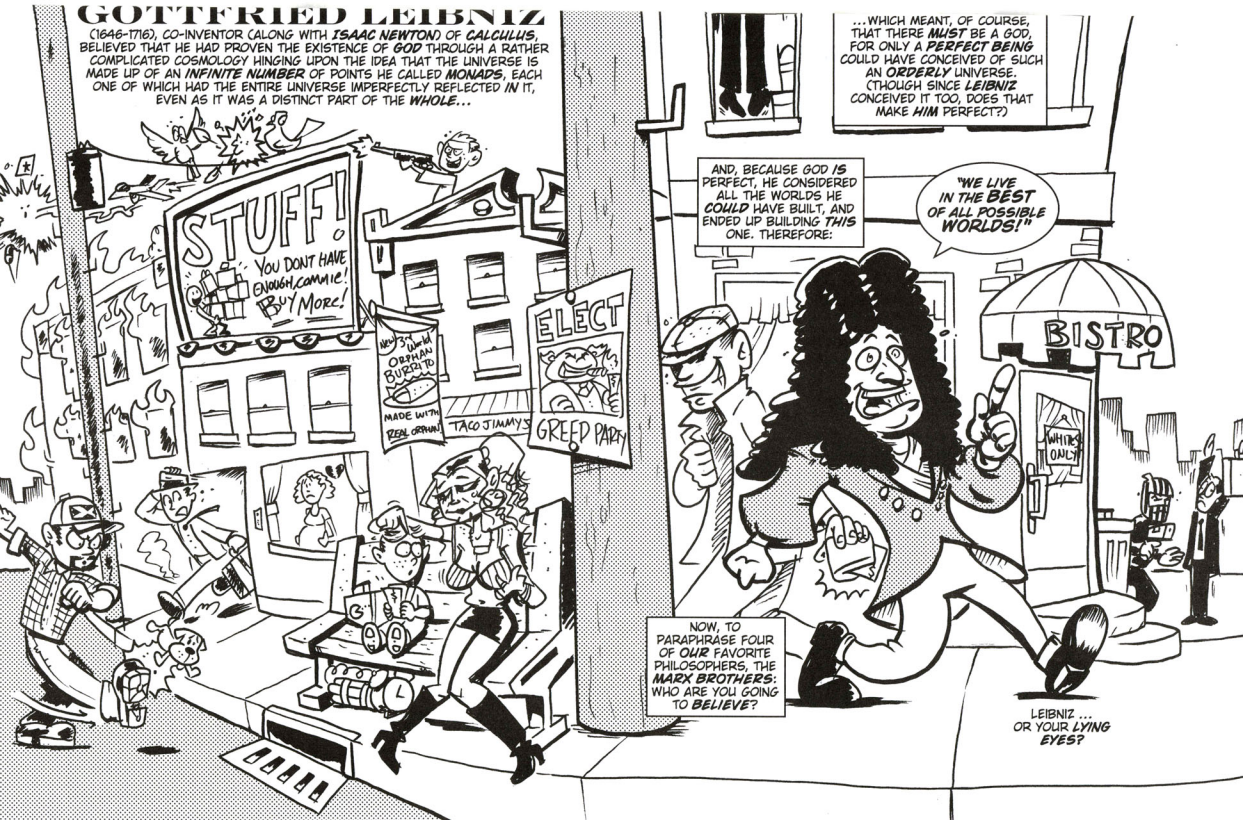

THAT'S BECAUSE SPINOZA'S GOD ISN'T A FATHER, SON, OR GHOST, HOLY OR NOT. HE'S NOT NOR HAS HE EVER BEEN A PERSON LIKE YOU OR ME.
HE IS THE UNIVERSE. HE IS NATURE. HE IS YOU.
NATURE/GOD HAS ALREADY GIVEN YOU ALL YOU COULD EVER NEED, ALONG WITH THE REASON THAT CAN COMPREHEND THIS FACT.
POP!
THE GOD


BECAUSE EVERYTHING THAT IS IS AS IT MUST BE, THERE IS NO "PURPOSE" TO LIFE -- WE'RE NOT "MOVING TOWARDS" ANY END, AS WE HUMANS CONSTANTLY WONDER AND/OR HOPE.
WE'RE ALREADY THERE!

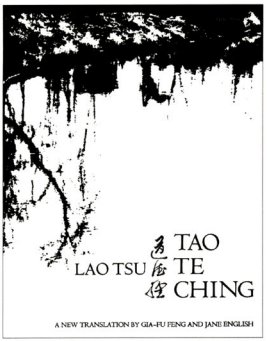

THE GOOD NEWS, HOWEVER, IS THAT YOUR LIFE CAN'T END, EITHER! "THE HUMAN MIND CANNOT BE DESTROYED WITH THE BODY," SPINOZA WRITES. BUT HIS CONCEPTION OF THE AFTERLIFE, LIKE HIS CONCEPTION OF GOD, IS WITHOUT PERSONALITY:
WE MERELY RETURN TO THE GOD-SOURCE FROM WHICH WE SPRANG. WHEN WE DIE, OUR FEELINGS AND MEMORIES DO NOT GO WITH US.
BUT IS THAT NOT FITTING, AS WHAT ARE OUR SELVES OTHER THAN A COLLECTION OF DESIRES FOR WHAT WE HAD ONCE, AND THINGS THAT WE DON'T HAVE YET--AFTER DEATH, WHAT PURPOSE WOULD YOUR DESIRES SERVE?

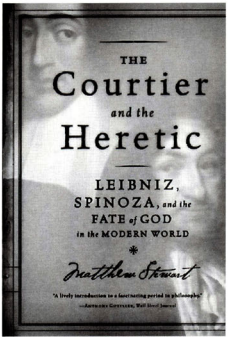

ON FEBRUARY 21, 1677, SPINOZA'S PROTESTANT LANDLORD RETURNED HOME FROM CHURCH TO FIND THE GREAT PHILOSOPHER DEAD.
THE NEARLY MICROSCOPIC GLASS DUST FROM TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF LENS GRINDING HAD FLOATED UP, INTO HIS LUNGS...

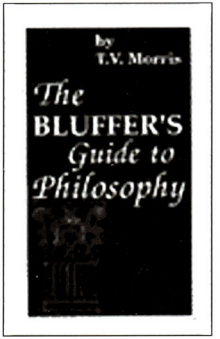

...DESTROYING THEM. HE DIED OF ADVANCED CONSUMPTION AT FORTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE.
HE PERSISTED IN CLARIFYING OTHERS' SIGHT, NO MATTER WHAT THE RISK...AND, ULTIMATELY, THAT RISK CAUGHT UP TO HIM.
POETIC TOO, NO?


GOTTFRIED LEIBNIZ
(1646-1716), CO-INVENTOR (ALONG WITH ISAAC NEWTON) OF CALCULUS, BELIEVED THAT HE HAD PROVEN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD THROUGH A RATHER COMPLICATED COSMOLOGY HINGING UPON THE IDEA THAT THE UNIVERSE IS MADE UP OF AN INFINITE NUMBER OF POINTS HE CALLED MONADS, EACH ONE OF WHICH HAD THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE IMPERFECTLY REFLECTED IN IT, EVEN AS IT WAS A DISTINCT PART OF THE WHOLE...
STUFF!
YOU DONT HAVE ENOUGH, COMMIE! BUY MORE!
NOW 3 FOR 1! ORPHAN BURRITO
MADE WITH REAL ORPHAN!
TACO JIMMY'S
ELECT
GREED PARTY
...WHICH MEANT, OF COURSE, THAT THERE MUST BE A GOD, FOR ONLY A PERFECT BEING COULD HAVE CONCEIVED OF SUCH AN ORDERLY UNIVERSE. (THOUGH SINCE LEIBNIZ CONCEIVED IT TOO, DOES THAT MAKE HIM PERFECT?)
AND, BECAUSE GOD IS PERFECT, HE CONSIDERED ALL THE WORLDS HE COULD HAVE BUILT, AND ENDED UP BUILDING THIS ONE. THEREFORE:
"WE LIVE IN THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS!"
BISTRO
WHITES ONLY
NOW, TO PARAPHRASE FOUR OF OUR FAVORITE PHILOSOPHERS, THE MARX BROTHERS: WHO ARE YOU GOING TO BELIEVE?
LEIBNIZ ... OR YOUR LYING EYES?

RECOMMENDED READING FOR THE GENIUS-ON-THE-GO





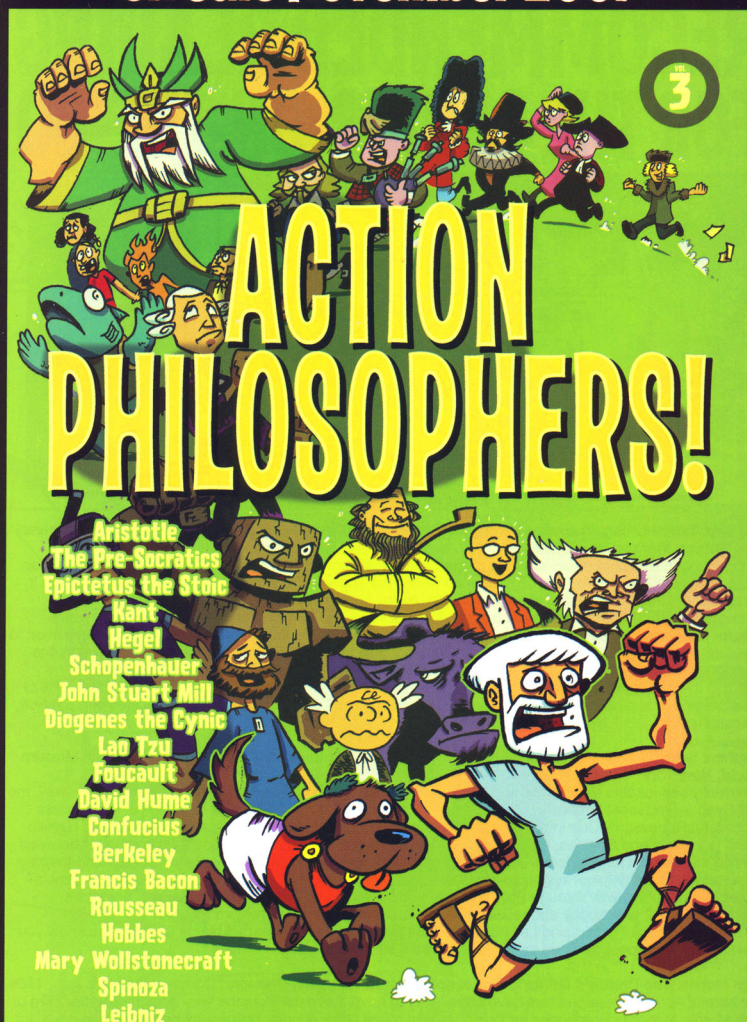


Lao Tzu. Tao te Ching. Translated from the Chinese by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English. 25th Anniversary Edition Vintage Books Edition, 1997.
I actually got a little choked up when, in preparation for writing AP #9, I stumbled across this edition of Lao Tzu's spiritual classic on Amazon. I bought an earlier printing years ago at the local New Age bookstore in Syracuse, my freshman year of college. This big, floppy book, with its elegant black and white nature photographs; the Chinese original on one page of a spread, the English translation on the other, with a chapter per spread, is the perfect way to experience the Tao for the first time. Lao Tzu was real revelation to me when I was 18 years old, and I was not surprised to read in the new introduction that this version has sold 500,000 copies since it was first published in 1972 (the year I was born).
Reading it again, almost a decade later, and at the end of this series, reinforced my firm belief that 80% of the problems of two-plus millennia of Western philosophy can be solved by one month of studying Eastern philosophy.

Matthew Stewart. The Courtier and the Heretic: Leibniz, Spinoza and the Fate of God in the Modern World. New York: W. W. Norton 2006.
A perfectly serviceable entry in the ever-growing popular historio-philosophy genre pioneered by — well, me and Ryan — and most famously by Edmonds & Eidinow's Wittgenstein's Poker (q.v. AP #6 – E&E's less successful Rousseau's Dog informed the Rousseau and Hume stories in this issue), Courtier and Heretic refers to Leibniz and Spinoza, respectively, and is structured around an afternoon-long encounter between the two thinkers not long before the latter's death. It employs the psuedo-suspenseful-crosscutting-to-drag-out-what-was-a-fairly-minor-historical-episode technique that bugged the hell out of me in Wittgenstein's Poker. But about halfway through Stewart really takes off, doing a terrific job of explaining Spinoza's "God-intoxicated" philosophy and relating it to the later movements of Western thought.
He's less successful explicating Leibniz, but I don't blame Stewart for that – I blame Leibniz. You know you have a crappy philosophy when even Hegel thinks it's stupid.

Tom Morris. The Bluffer's Guide to Philosophy. South Bend, IN: Diamond Communications, Inc., 1989.
We here at ActPhilo headquarters have been lucky to have a booster from the very beginning in the form of Tom Morris, author of Philosophy for Dummies and many other popular philosophy books and the co-editor of Superheroes and Philosophy. He kindly sent us a signed copy of the latter book when AP #1 first solicited, along with this fun little tome that has been on my desk ever since. One humorous page per philosopher, it served me well as a handy guide to choosing which thinkers to profile in the series, not to mention a great quick-reference for dates, titles of major works and such. Tom was kind enough to lend us pull quotes you've seen on the back of our GIANT-SIZE THINGS, so we'll return the favor by giving him a shout-out here!

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