

Theories of Language in the Eighteenth Century

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Abstract and Keywords

This article notes the persistence of questions that occupied theorists of language in the eighteenth century: How does language evolve from gesture to arbitrary signs? Does language convey propositions or social attitudes? These and other questions are addressed in an account of the main areas of linguistic theory in the eighteenth century: the relationship between language and mind, the origin and progress of language, and language as a means of persuasion and an object of taste. Concluding with a discussion of some likely areas of future research into eighteenth-century linguistic theory (its “cognitivism,” its interest in the human-animal boundary, its interest in language diversity), the article suggests that language studies are crucial to consider when determining what is meant by “the Enlightenment.”

Keywords: eighteenth-century linguistics, Enlightenment philosophy of language, language origins, universal grammar, John Locke, James Harris, James Beattie, Thomas Reid, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac

Introduction

How might the natural gestures employed by people beginning to communicate develop into a language of conventional signs? The two forms of sign are entirely different, one depending on an iconic relationship between the gesture and the referent, the other arbitrary. One proffered solution to this impasse is that the natural, iconic gesture is observed by its intended recipient, who understands the function of the gesture, but not its iconicity. Through imitation the sign is then used in a non-natural, conventional manner by the initial recipient: the possibility of the conventional rather than the iconic sign emerges by accident. The stages of language development from a posited iconic, gestural origin to an arbitrary, conventional system were concerns of many theorists of language in the eighteenth century and have formed a significant part of their reception in academic and philosophical discourse. The explanation provided above, however, is the work of Michael Tomasello, a current specialist in human and primate communication whose particular argument is that the grammars of human languages are constructed out of human interac-

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tion, with people jointly attending to items or events that constitute their common ground.¹

The correspondences between the main lines of research into language in the eighteenth century and research in linguistics in the early twenty-first century are broad and suggestive. A linguist like Pieter Seuren, who takes a more formal and logical approach to language and therefore is antagonistic toward such work as Tomasello's, can also on occasion turn to questions very like those posed by eighteenth-century predecessors: In the evolution of language, which functions of language are primitive or prior, those that assert propositional content, or those that orient humans toward one another in socially binding relations, growing out of their shared needs?² Of course, given the changes in (really the invention of) evolutionary biology and formal logic in the intervening two or three hundred years, there are large differences between the research questions of Tomasello or Seuren and eighteenth-century theorists of language. But bearing in mind the cognitive and the social territory that is being disputed and realizing that it is still disputed territory now should help to sharpen appreciation of the work of the writers discussed in this chapter.

Language and the Powers of the Mind

Locke

It is traditional to begin accounts of eighteenth-century linguistic theory with John Locke, and his treatment of language raises the question of the interrelationship of referential and social functions of language noted above. The socially binding commitment with which Locke is most concerned is that philosophical or scientific discourses should not abuse language in any of the common ways, such as using terms that have no idea or no clear idea attached to them.³ Locke's account of language is geared to the philosophical or scientific scene of speech more than any other scene.⁴ The work of language is said in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) to be the externalizing of internal conceptions, communicating to others the contents of the speaker's mind (ECHU III.i.2, 402; III.ix.1-2, 476). Words only ever refer to the ideas people have in their minds, though the users of words tend to imagine that their words also refer to the things in the world from which they have derived their ideas, and also to ideas about the same things that other people might have (ECHU III.ii.4, 406). It may seem on this basis that Locke has an atomistic sense of what language is—merely a set of individual mappings among words, ideas, and things.⁵ Yet he says that words may affirm or deny, giving the third person of the verb to be and its negation as evidence, and that words articulate the relationship between parts of a sentence and between various sentences in a discourse (ECHU III.vii.1, 471).⁶ These ideas of existence and of relation or dependency are of a different order than those acquired directly by the senses, requiring the capacities of the mind for abstraction and relation described earlier in Locke's text (ECHU II.vii.7, 131; II.25.1-2, 319-320).

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There are, then, clear ways in which Locke's scheme of language extends above the atomic level of individual words, to the segmental and supersegmental levels, to language as discourse rather than language as a set of itemized correspondences. But Locke remains focused on only one discourse type: propositional or philosophical report. Naming, therefore, remains central even to his conception of discourse. Names given to simple ideas may have an external standard or guide in nature, as in experiences of water, say, where the same properties tend to go along with one another in everybody's experience. But more complex ideas, particularly the ideas of mixed modes, have no guide in external nature; there is nothing in the phenomenon experienced that marks, say, various contrasting or incompatible kinds of behavior (sentimentality, aggression, lack of balance, garrulity, etc.) as drunkenness (ECHU III.v.3, 429; Locke's examples are incest and adultery). The existence of such a phenomenon is in the act of gathering the various ideas that compose it together; the purpose for which these ideas are gathered together is ease of communication (ECHU III.v.7, 431–432). That these ideas may vary from people to people is evident, Locke points out, from the variety of untranslatable terms in different languages (ECHU III.v.8, 432–433).

A recent reading of Locke notes that as all moral ideas are ideas of mixed modes, the entire fabric of the social and political world is open to being turned away from natural or divine law by means of the errant formation of such ideas.⁷ The emphasis on radical semantic instability in this reading acknowledges the regulatory tone of the *Essay*. Locke is not just reporting what speech is, in an anthropologically neutral manner, but also tells his readers how speech should be formed, proposing a means for its regulation. That regulation is simply to be philosophical when naming and using names, an injunction that was not at all unknown in Locke's time.⁸ Locke's account of the relationship between language and mind must, then, be regarded as a prescription for how to manage discourse, and his recommendation is that all discourse types conform to the mode of word-idea correspondence typical of philosophical discourse.

Universal Grammar

If there was in the seventeenth century a transition from views of language that considered it as atomic to views that considered it as propositional, that transition was not a straightforward chronological progression.⁹ Various texts preceding Locke's *Essay* present a view of mind that is syntactical, that organizes its perceptions into a rational order, articulated as propositions. It is the work of language to express these propositions, rather than to furnish the mind with individual correspondents for items. Language is to be considered in its correspondence to movements of the mind rather than its correspondence to static items of content. In the mid- to late seventeenth century the abbey of Port-Royal in Paris was the location of a collective intellectual enterprise that combined Augustinian theology with Cartesian rationalism. Language was one object of study for the Port-Royal writers, whose *Logic* and *Grammar* provide a syntactical as much as a lexical view of the relationship between mind and language. Those works propose that there are basic mental operations—conceiving, judging, reasoning, and ordering—in which one gets ideas, affirms something of them, forms a judgment by derivation from other affirmations,

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and arranges those judgments.¹⁰ One of the most influential treatises on language published in Britain in the eighteenth century, James Harris's *Hermes* (1751), gives a similar weight to some central ideas of the Port-Royal writers (he refers to the *Grammar* in his work). Logic is essential to all uses of language; the primary distinction to be observed in logic is between subject, or substance, in Harris's terms, and attribute; affirmation of existence is the main burden of propositional speech.¹¹

Harris, though, appears to have a more fully developed sense of the modality of what might be affirmed in any proposition than do the Port-Royal writers: "Speech or Discourse is a *publishing of some Energie or Motion of [man's] Soul*" (*Hermes* 1:223). These publications of energy or motion are either assertive or volitional; that is, they relate to judgments that things are so, or desires that things be so. These categories may themselves be refined into pairs (with one of the latter pair itself being analyzed into a pair):

the INDICATIVE or DECLARATIVE, *to assert what we think certain*; the POTENTIAL, *for the Purposes of whatever we think Contingent*; THE INTERROGATIVE, *when we are doubtful, to procure us Information*; and THE REQUISITIVE, *to assist us in the gratification of our Volitions*. The Requisite too appears under two distinct Species, either as it is IMPERATIVE to inferiors, or PRECATIVE to superiors.

(*Hermes* 1:225, 1:295)

For Harris, then, the phrase structure of a language is not simply or merely propositional or assertive, but also incorporates various attitudinal positions in relation to the matter of the discourse. Moods of phrases make socially binding commitments in addition to the foundational philosophical commitment to tell the truth.

Harris is a practitioner of universal, rational, or general grammar—that is "*that Grammar, which without regarding the several Idioms of particular Languages, only respects those Principles that are essential to them all*" (*Hermes* 1:221).¹² The broader philosophical perspective legitimizing this attitude to grammar is Platonic and posits a hierarchy among the various sentence types Harris identifies, with the indicative at the summit: "[A]s in all Grammars it is the first in order, so is it truly first in dignity and use. It is this, which publishes our sublimest perceptions; which exhibits the Soul in her purest Energies, superior to the Imperfection of desires and wants; which includes the whole of *Time*, and its minutest distinctions" (*Hermes* 1:303). Here grammatical theory proceeds on the basis of an intelligible world that is free of the imperfections of incarnate life such as want or desire.

The basic philosophical attitude of universal grammar persists in British thinking about language to the end of the eighteenth century, and no doubt beyond. Indeed, for Thomas Reid, grammar or linguistic structure is the foundation stone of a philosophical practice that proceeds to truths by means of an analysis of egregious errors in the history of philosophy. In *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785), Reid establishes cumulative grounds for a certain picture of mind on the basis of an elaborate and iterative critique of the earlier philosophers of the way of ideas, as the tradition of which Locke was the most

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notable British representative was known. Like Harris, Reid recognizes that the mental operations language reflects are not those of solitary judgment alone, but also include social judgments: "All languages are fitted to express the social as well as the solitary operations of the mind. It may indeed be affirmed, that, to express the former, is the primary and direct intention of language.... In every language, a question, a command, a promise, which are social acts, can be expressed as easily and as properly as judgment, which is a solitary act."¹³ Reid holds that there are three distinct elements to intellection: the mind, its operations, and the objects of those operations. This truth Reid claims to have from introspection and "the structure of all languages" (EIPM 161).

Reid frequently appeals to the "structure of all languages" as evidence of the common sense of humankind, their common means of framing their world:

There are certain common opinions of mankind, upon which the structure and grammar of all languages are founded. While these opinions are common to all men, there will be a great similarity in all languages that are to be found on the face of the earth. Such a similarity there really is; for we find in all languages the same parts of speech, the distinction of nouns and verbs, the distinction of nouns into adjective and substantive, of verbs into active and passive. In verbs we find like tenses, moods, persons and numbers. There are general rules of grammar, the same in all languages. This similarity of structure in all languages shews an uniformity among men in those opinions upon which the structure of language is founded.

If, for instance, we should suppose that there was a nation who believed that the things which we call attributes might exist without a subject, there would be in their language no distinction between adjectives and substantives, nor would it be a rule with them that an adjective has no meaning, unless when joined to a substantive. If there was any nation who did not distinguish between acting and being acted upon, there would in their language be no distinction between active and passive verbs, nor would it be a rule that the active verb must have an agent in the nominative case; but that, in the passive verb, the agent must be in an oblique case. (EIPM 36)¹⁴

The similar structure of languages is good evidence for the universal structure of mental operations.

The evidence is not, however, as Reid's language itself here and elsewhere suggests, beyond challenge. The passage just quoted alternates between identity and comparability between mental operations and the structure of languages, and between language's having the "same" or "similar" structure. Reid would of course have known that there are some languages in which passive and active moods of the verb are not the only options; in ancient Greek there is the middle voice. And Reid himself, from time to time, turns cautious about the value of the structure of all languages as evidence for the ways the mind works. We must, for example, be "upon our guard, that we be not imposed upon by those analogical terms and phrases, by which the operations of the mind are expressed in all

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languages” (EIPM 56). Again, having approved of George Berkeley’s demonstration of the necessity of learning to see a sphere (rather than a circle with some variation of color), Reid notes that there are some universal mental operations that are not captured by the structure of language: “In all languages men speak with equal assurance of their seeing objects to be spherical or cubical, as of their feeling them to be so; nor do they ever dream, that these perceptions of sight were not as early and original as the perceptions they have of the same objects by touch” (EIPM 238). This statement comes despite Reid’s assertion that philosophers can be too fastidious in probing the common sense exhibited in language structure (EIPM 26–27).¹⁵ Reid, then, asserts that there is a common structure to all languages, and that this structure is sound evidence from which to extrapolate the nature of mental operations, yet at the same time produces instances of the failure of universal linguistic structures to reflect the mind.

Language and the Progress of the Mind

The antagonistic reader might then find in Reid grounds to doubt claims of the universality of mental operations and linguistic structures. History is one form the particularity disrupting universality might take, and in particular the long evolutionary history of human development. A chief concern in this respect is whether the mind has made progress, and, if so, what contribution has language made to that progress?¹⁶ One approach to this question in the eighteenth century begins with the contrast between language, which is fundamentally analytical, and experience, which is synthetic. The distinction of fundamental categories such as those of subject and attribute is not a matter of experience, but of analysis into categories of the understanding, or into signs. Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, particularly in the second printing of his *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* (1746), presents a strong version of the thesis of mental progress depending on the use of signs.¹⁷ The subject sustained debate in France: Diderot also states a strong form of the relationship between signs and the development of understanding, when exclaiming, “Ah! monsieur, combien notre entendement est modifié par les signes.”¹⁸ Maupertuis, Turgot, and Maine de Biran continue the discussion.¹⁹

This topic seems to receive relatively little treatment in British discussions of language. Adam Smith, for example, in his “Considerations Concerning the First Formation of Languages” (1748?–1751, first published in 1767) considers analyticity as a fact of language development, but not as a fact of the development of the relationship between mind and language. He takes the (presumed) shift from ancient languages that express relations through case and conjugation, to modern analytical languages that express relations through prepositions and combinations of auxiliary verbs, to be a retrograde step, an inversion of the improvement in mechanical design with which he draws an analogy.²⁰ This step is largely a result of the movements of people through trade and migration that requires the learning of other languages, and their consequent reduction to as few different words as possible, no matter if more of those words must be used. Smith posits the analysis of events into their metaphysical elements in order to avoid an insupportable proliferation of terms:

[I]n the beginnings of language, men seem to have attempted to express every particular event, which they had occasion to take notice of, by a particular word, which expressed at once the whole of that event. But as the number of words must, in this case, have become really infinite, in consequence of the really infinite variety of events, men found themselves partly compelled by necessity, and partly conducted by nature, to divide every event into what may be called its metaphysical elements, and to institute words, which should denote not so much the events, as the elements of which they were composed.²¹

This account posits metaphysical elements that are distinct from both the act of perception and language, yet in relation to which the language may adapt itself. The analysis of experiences into their metaphysical elements is part of the history of the unfolding of the human mind in its sensory experience of the world, an opportunity for the mind to express some of its latent potential through its work on reality, but it is not dependent upon signs: people already have their metaphysics and powers of abstraction before it is possible to institute the use of adjectives.²² Mind does not depend on language; language follows mind.

Language from a Historical Perspective

Divine or Natural, Social or Solitary Origins?

Discussion of whether and how the invention and use of signs might have influenced the development of mind through the long course of human history clearly evokes the larger question of the origin and progress of human language. Narratives of the origin and progress of specific human institutions have been called conjectural histories, and as with all histories, both the historical content chosen and the manner of its narration imply (or advocate) views of the purpose and current state of the institution in question.²³ The institution of language is certainly a subject of many such conjectural histories, but it is not simple to sift writers on language in the eighteenth century into distinct schools of thought, as their work tends to touch on a range of shared questions, offering subtly different emphases rather than neat doctrinal distinctions.²⁴ James Beattie, for example, notes in his *Theory of Language* (1783) that the use of language has probably had an important effect on the development of mind: “We speak, in order to communicate our thoughts to one another; which our social affections incline us powerfully to do: and the practice of speaking improves our natural faculty of separating, arranging, and comparing our ideas.”²⁵ One might imagine that such an affirmation makes Beattie a historicist or naturalist when it comes to describing the origin and development of language, that he might offer a proto-evolutionary account such as is found in Lucretius, which was not at all uncommon in the eighteenth century. But on the contrary, Beattie asserts the divine origins of human capacities, and the stability, not the evolutionary flux, of the human being. He thinks that biblical history, and the rationally deduced impossibility of beastly natures acquiring of their own power the capacity to use language, argue for the transhistorical nature of speech: “[R]eason, as well as history, intimates, that mankind in all ages

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must have been speaking animals" (TL 304).²⁶ The occasional appearance of a historical, naturalistic tendency in Beattie is countered by a strongly held cognitive universalism, even less historically inflected than that of Smith:

[A]s the miracle at Babel introduced no material change into human nature; and as, ever since the flood, men have had the same faculties, have been placed in the same or in like circumstances, have felt the same wants, found comfort in the same gratifications, and acted from the influence of the same motives; it is reasonable to infer, that the *thoughts* of men must in all ages have been nearly the same.... Now, as human thoughts discover themselves by language, and as the thoughts of men in one age and nation are similar to those in another, is it not probable, that there may be in all human languages some general points of resemblance, in structure at least, if not in sound? Since, for example, all men in all ages must have had occasion to speak of acting, and of being acted upon, of good and bad qualities, and of the various objects of outward sense, must there not in every language be verbs, and adjectives and nouns? (TL 306–307)

Language reflects underlying cognitive processes that are themselves reflective of the metaphysical structure of the world, just as in Reid, Beattie's colleague at Aberdeen.

Beattie is clear on the divine origins of language; other historians of language in Britain are less so.²⁷ Hugh Blair, for example, in a work published in 1783 but based on lectures delivered since the 1770s, notes the difficulty of establishing a sound causal chain producing human language, as its invention seems to require powers of the mind that themselves imply the prior existence of language. This impasse, Blair suggests, is itself a reason for believing language has a divine origin, is gifted by God to humans.²⁸ Blair, that is, offers a supernatural explanation for a problem in the conjectural history of language perhaps now most strongly associated with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *A Discourse on Inequality* (1755): "[I]f men needed speech in order to learn to think, they needed still more to know how to think in order to discover the art of speech."²⁹ Rousseau was not alone in confronting this problem. It is the problem that gives parameters to Condillac's history of human mind. According to Condillac human language originates as expressive gesture and vocalization in the face of fear, and then desire. His vision of the grand arc of language evolution runs from this expressive origin to a philosophical present, in which language has gained analytical accuracy, but lost vivacity and immediacy. The language arts, and even more strongly the associated arts of music, dance, and mime, retain some of the flavor of the original language of action, through prosody, accent, gesture, and so forth. Rousseau, then, shares a historical view of the origins of language with Condillac that may with reasonable justification be called evolutionary.³⁰

It may be, however, that where Rousseau differs from the majority of his near contemporaries writing on the conjectural history of language is not in the source from which he thinks language arises, but in the scene in which he thinks language is first used. It is an explicit axiom of much writing on the origin and progress of human institutions that humans are sociable animals, created with a desire to interact. Rousseau does not hold this

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belief, and he knows that this fundamental difference distinguishes him from thinkers such as Condillac. He poses another version of the genetic paradox, whereby both language and society require one another in order to be instituted, so neither of them can be said to be a cause of the other.³¹ Even a positive reader of Rousseau like James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, who affirms his agreement with Rousseau's picture of the early stages of human life, only goes so far as to suggest that humans have an amphibious nature, capable of both solitary and sociable life.³² And Rousseau himself, in an essay written sometime between 1753 and 1761 and published posthumously, seems also to entertain a more social view of the origins of language:

As soon as one man was recognized by another as a sentient, thinking being similar to himself, the desire or need to communicate his feelings and thoughts made him seek the means to do so.³³

This picture of an inherent desire rather than a functional need to communicate still, however, preserves Rousseau's idiosyncrasy, as the needs of humans drive them apart only for their passions to reunite them:

It seems then that need dictated the first gestures, while the passions stimulated the first words.... The natural effect of the first needs was to separate men, and not to reunite them.

(Essay 11)

Necessity can be communicated by gesture, but the transmission or evocation of passion requires a spoken language. Need, which Rousseau presents as the need for access to resources (water and food, and therefore land), encourages the spread of population over the surface of the earth. Passions, on the contrary, bring humans back into proximity with one another. This (perhaps perverse) separation of human social and sexual desire from other things needful for the maintenance and reproduction of life makes Rousseau's distinction between speech and gesture different from the same distinction found in Condillac: it is a distinction between more or less social states, not a distinction between poetic and philosophical habits of mind.

Primitive Poetry

Rousseau nonetheless associates early speech and features of poetic language. Condillac had suggested that the first words might be for objects of mutual fear, such as a threatening animal.³⁴ In Rousseau's "Essay on the Origin of Languages," another human is such an object of fear:

Upon meeting others, a savage man will initially be frightened. Because of his fear he sees the others as bigger and stronger than himself. He calls them *giants*. After many experiences, he recognizes that these so-called giants are neither bigger nor stronger than he. Their stature does not approach the idea he had initially attached to the word *giant*. So he invents another name common to them and to

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him, such as the name *man*, for example, and leaves *giant* to the fictitious object that had impressed him during his illusion. That is how the figurative word is born before the literal word, when our gaze is held in passionate fascination; and how it is that the first idea it conveys to us is not that of the truth.

(Essay 13)

Rousseau envisages the scene of encounter between early humans as a scene of terror. This terror produces a form of poetry, whereby the object in front of the person designating it receives a name that would be more appropriate for another, indeed, in this case a fictional object. The terror of human interaction leads to the first acts of designation being acts of poetic designation, acts in which for some reason the wrong name is given.

The poetic is also present in more sociable ways in Rousseau's account of the early stages of language. He imagines the sinking of wells in warm countries to be another primal scene of language: people of more than one family must come together to sink the well and to draw water from it. These people will require a language more developed than the minimal forms of expression that arise in single-family groupings. The language is primarily required to court people from other families, and the passions that form the utterance leave their mark on the means of articulating them: "[V]erse, singing, and speech have a common origin. Around the fountains of which I spoke, the first discourses were the first songs. The periodic recurrences and measures of rhythm, the melodious modulations of accent, gave birth to poetry and music along with language." (Essay 44–45; quotation from 50.) That humans are and/or human language is poetic from their beginnings is an assertion common to many writers who consider language from a historical perspective. Blair asserts: "Man is both a Poet, and a Musician, by nature" (LRBL 427). Adam Ferguson has it that "when we attend to the language which savages employ on any solemn occasion, it appears that man is a poet by nature."³⁵ It should be more widely noted that many varieties of Enlightenment-era thinking about human nature insist on the fundamentally poetic character of human speech, whether by insisting on the expressive and gestural origins of all human speech; on the daring, figurative transfer of meaning evident in the metaphorical modes of early poetry; or on the persistence of prosody in speech, right up to the point at which "a philosopher who did not wish to submit to the rules of poetry became the first who ventured to write in prose."³⁶ This historical view of language can, then, present a very different idea of what is foundational than is to be found in Locke. The gestural, the passionate, and the poetic are the original discourse types—even if they do not serve as models for others.

Eighteenth-Century Historical Linguistics?

Intense interest in the prehistory, origins, and early development of language in the eighteenth century goes along with a sense that languages are historical entities, and relations between them are best explained by historical study. Certainly texts of the second half of the period allude to the derivation of alphabetical from original hieroglyphic systems of writing, or remark that similarities between languages suggest derivation from a

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common historical ancestor.³⁷ As has already been seen, differences between languages, understood as systems of nomenclature, were considered evidence of the arbitrariness of the constitution of certain types of idea in Locke's work. Understanding language change, and language difference as historical phenomena connected to geopolitical questions is also a feature of Smith's work: it is the movement of people from one area to another, and the need to acquire a language, that produces the move from synthetic to analytic languages. Language change is related to historical events, whether biblical, such as the flood or Babel, or based on conjectural or well-documented movements of peoples. One important figure in the development of these lines of thought is the Neapolitan academic Giambattista Vico, whose direct influence on British linguistic thought is difficult to demonstrate, despite the many parallels that tempt historians to infer it.³⁸

In his *New Science* (1725/1744), Vico describes the coming into being of the human through the institution of three practices (religion, marriage, burial of the dead) so universal that they cannot be the product of cultural diffusion, but must rather be the gift of providence, manifested in humans as common sense (in a different understanding of that term than is found in Reid). These institutions are called into being by acts of poetic creation, and distinctive states of knowledge that go along with the early form of institutional human life are poetic: "[P]oetic wisdom, the first wisdom of the gentile world, must have begun with a metaphysics not rational and abstract like that of learned men now, but felt and imagined as that of these first men must have been, who, without power or ratiocination, were all robust sense and vigorous imagination."³⁹ At the outset of his work Vico defines philology as "the doctrine of all the institutions that depend on human choice; for example, all histories of the language, customs, and deeds of peoples in war and peace," and his method involves the analysis of related terms in romance languages in order to derive the prehistory of current human institutions from their conjectured earlier states.⁴⁰ It is this method, bearing comparison to the "phylogenetic-comparative method" of early historical linguistics at the turn of the nineteenth century, that suggests Vico may be a hidden forebear.⁴¹ Vico's work, studying relationships between languages with a sense of the history of human institutions extending back as far as the origin of the species, unifies philology and philosophical history. The broader philosophical careers of many of the theorists I have been citing (e.g., Smith and Ferguson) exemplify the historical investigation of human institutions in a parallel manner.

The British theorist of language of the eighteenth century most closely associated with, although by no means the first to hint at, the phylogenetic-comparative method is the Welsh orientalist William Jones. Comparative study of Sanskrit and the classical languages prompts Jones to posit a lost Indo-European antecedent:

The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologist could examine them all three, without

believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists[.]⁴²

Jones acquired his knowledge of Sanskrit in India, where he worked as a judge on the Bengal Supreme Court. He was already a prominent scholar of Persian language and literature, and he recognized that language expertise is closely related to the social and economic ambitions of a society. In his grammar of Persian he notes that the necessity of East India Company traders negotiating with Persian-speaking aristocrats has increased interest in the study of the language.⁴³ Jones was well aware of the force of necessity operating on language acquisition and transmission, at the same time recognizing the deep historical connections between languages. His orientalism has been said to combine an interest in universal grammar (he refers approvingly to Harris in his Persian grammar) and the historical particularities of languages, commitments to the universality of human nature, and the diversity of its expression in the historical cultures of the world.⁴⁴

From the Forum to the Literary Marketplace

In drawing a distinction between primitive and modern forms of speech, Rousseau distinguishes the “cry of nature,” “the most universal and energetic language,” from the kind of language later men require “to make persuasive speeches to assemblies of men.”⁴⁵ Here, as in so many other places in the theories under inspection, a line is being drawn between the natural and the social—or civil, political—worlds, the location of which is determining for the kind of social theory a philosopher pretends. Rousseau posits the political as non-natural. There are, however, views that refuse to draw such a line, that regard art (political as much as verbal) as natural to people and consider all human evolution natural.⁴⁶ Such views do not distinguish between expressive and suasive forms of speech with respect to their being natural or otherwise. Adam Smith, although he echoes the propositional bias of universal grammarians (“Every thing we say is either affirming or denying something”), holds such a view:

The desire of being believed, the desire of persuading, of leading and directing other people, seems to be one of the strongest of all our natural desires. It is, perhaps, the instinct upon which is founded the faculty of speech, the characteristic faculty of human nature. No other animal possesses this faculty, and we cannot discover in any other animal any desire to lead and direct the judgment and conduct of its fellows.⁴⁷

Here the solitary and social mental operations are seen acting and reacting upon one another, so that judgment is a social matter. The principal social operation of the mind envisaged here is persuading in order to direct conduct, or what one might identify as the rhetorical element of politics.

Some authors regard the suasive function of language as coevolutionary with its poetic function, that of being itself an object of judgment. Shaftesbury is the most significant British author of the period in this respect. In this account of early tribal society from *So-*

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liloquy, Or Advice to an Author (1710), he describes a situation in which a transfer of judgment from the content of speech to its form is found:

[W]hen, in process of time, the affairs of the society were settled on an easy and secure foundation, when debates and discourses on these subjects of common interest and public good were grown familiar, and the speeches of prime men and leaders were considered and compared together, there would naturally be observed not only a more agreeable measure of sound but a happier and more easy rangement of thoughts in one speaker than in another.

It may be easily perceived from hence that the goddess Persuasion must have been in a manner the mother of poetry, rhetoric, music and the other kindred arts. For it is apparent that, where chief men and leaders had the strongest interest to persuade, they used the highest endeavours to please. So that, in such a state or polity as has been described, not only the best order of thought and turn of fancy but the most soft and inviting numbers must have been employed to charm the public ear and to incline the heart by the agreeableness of expression.⁴⁸

Here the rangement of one speech in a more appealing fashion than another is not necessarily the product of design. But once its measure is noted and approved by the audience, by means of an innate sense of harmony and proportion (“harmony is harmony by nature.... So is symmetry and proportion founded still in nature”), the organization of speech itself as an object for judgment emerges as a desirable outcome from the political scene.⁴⁹

Some theories of language in the eighteenth century, then, imagine the origin of the verbal arts, in which the various functions of language melt away in the consideration of the language itself, as, paradoxically, an outcome of the most functional scene of language use: debate in the political forum. The isolation of the measure and proportion of language itself, as features to which humans are inherently attracted, begins in the political world, but in fulfilling the very internal logic by which preference is there exercised, the verbal arts begin to separate themselves out from civic and social life, to become objects produced by a separate category of people for a distinct set of ends. Many writers share the view that primitive states of society would combine the roles of poet, musician, historian, and legislator. The gradual progress of society sees these roles separate out, with the refinement of a poetic diction and prosody becoming too burdensome for the means of civic history or instruction.⁵⁰ Poetry becomes, over the course of time, too refined to be usefully integrated with the civic and political functions of language; it becomes a profession, practiced by people with a particular professional allegiance. Poets retain and refine a diction that falls out of common use and thereby isolate their language.⁵¹ Language itself, rather than language for some other purpose, becomes an object of taste and discrimination, a consumer item. As Hugh Blair notes, “Language has been carried so far, as to be made an instrument of the most refined luxury. Not resting in mere perspicuity, we require ornament also; not satisfied with having the conceptions of others made known to us, we make a further demand, to have them so decked and adorned as to entertain our

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fancy; and this demand, it is found very possible to gratify" (LRBL 54–55). Verbal arts that had originated as the celebratory, legislative, and memorializing speech of a society, making and recording its history, are gradually separated out from these functions.⁵²

The products of verbal art, then, are part of the long history imagined by social theorists of the Enlightenment, in which various social functions that were once performed by the same person are shared out among distinct groups of people. This division of labor improves efficiency and increases the wealth of the society, but at the same time it erodes the basis of its cohesion, as each social group acquires interests that do not always coincide with those of the society as a whole. This nostalgic picture of the once socially integrated, now socially isolated role of the producer of the verbal arts should probably be taken as at least as much a reflection on the literary professions in eighteenth-century Britain as a portrayal of the earliest stages of human social development. Here is Blair again, on the reasons for the genres of writing being confused in early states of literate society:

This was the case in that period of Society, when the character and occupations of the husbandman and the builder, the warrior and the statesman, were united in one person. When the progress of Society brought on a separation of the different Arts and Professions of Civil Life, it led also by degrees to a separation of the different literary provinces from each other.... Poetry, however, in its antient original condition, was perhaps more vigorous than it is in its modern state. It included then, the whole burst of the human mind; the whole exertion of its imaginative faculties. It spoke then the language of passion, and no other; for to passion, it owed its birth.... In after-ages, when Poetry became a regular art, studied for reputation and for gain, Authors began to affect what they did not feel. Composing coolly in their closets, they endeavoured to imitate passion, rather than to express it; they tried to force their imagination into raptures, or to supply the defect of native warmth, by those artificial ornaments which might give Composition a splendid appearance.

(LRBL 430–431)

Conclusions and Future Directions

Eighteenth-century theories of language confront a complex object and strive to realize its complexity. The cognitive burden of language is clearly recognized in discussions of the interrelationship of mind and language, particularly with respect to the analysis of phenomena into their elements, abstracting from particular experiences to create general terms, and reasoning with them. All utterances containing a verb affirm or negate something. The universal grammar with which many of the writers discussed are in touch does not, however, limit the operations of the mind, or movements of the soul, to which language relates to the bare affirmation or negation of states of affairs: language also relates to social acts of mind, such as questioning or persuading. Both the cognitive and so-

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cial domains of linguistic activity are approached from a historical perspective in many of the writers discussed here. As with much eighteenth-century historical thinking, there is a complex and affectively rich audit of loss and gain to be undertaken in charting the course of human institutions such as language.⁵³ If mind and language have progressed together, there have been other losses. Language is initially a centripetal force, binding a community together, but over the course of time, and according to laws that apply to all human institutions and activities, it becomes a centrifugal force, separating out the different classes of people. One of those classes is the group of people whose work it is to produce linguistic objects for the taste of a sufficiently leisured consumer society, a society that uses those objects and the evaluations that are communally formed concerning them to form and dissolve new types of literate, public communities.⁵⁴ Language theories of the eighteenth century consider the ways in which the medium of communication acts as one of the determining material circumstances for the form societies take and the manner in which they articulate their parts in relation to one another.

The cognitivism of eighteenth-century linguistic thought is one characteristic by which future work might be oriented. The modern cognitive sciences are making their mark on literary and other humanistic studies, just as structuralist and generative/transformational approaches to linguistics did in the 1960s and 1970s. That moment was one in which language science seemed of general relevance to all the humanistic disciplines, including those with a historical accent, and consequently various studies reassessed eighteenth-century theories of language with a strong sense of the analytic possibilities of contemporary linguistics.⁵⁵ Cognitive linguistics—with its emphasis on the embodied nature of human mind, its insistence on an evolutionary framework for the study of mental phenomena, and a determination to relate language capacities with other cognitive processing capacities—provides a vantage point that echoes some of the perspectives on language indigenous to the eighteenth century. The suggestions that human language reflects basic underlying mental operations that take different superficial forms, and that those operations are the result of a distinctive evolutionary history, are not far from the basic assumptions of cognitive linguistics.

Given the frequency of the use of animal behavior as a means of distinguishing human and therefore linguistic behaviour in eighteenth-century texts on language, it would be surprising if more work were not forthcoming on language as a mark of the human-animal distinction in the Enlightenment. There have been several studies that focus on the period to 1700, and at least one study taking in the difference between human and animal languages in France and Britain from 1660 to 1800, a study that focuses on the potential for social discord inherent in the potential of language to express perspectival views (i.e., for there to be disagreement about the subject under discussion).⁵⁶

In addition to the study of species distinctions, there is also an opportunity to explore language diversity as a phenomenon in eighteenth-century linguistic theory, and this tendency pulls in the opposite direction from the cognitive tendency just mentioned. The constant recourse to the plurality of languages, whether in Thomas Reid's homogenizing manner or in the manner of a student of language difference such as Monboddo, is clear-

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ly an argumentative move of structural significance. Claims about the universality of basic grammatical categories, of subject and attribute, for example, are open to empirical study. The kinds of assertions that authors make about the semantics of the world's languages, their means of generating vocabulary, their systems of accent and emphasis, and so forth may be evaluated both in terms of the knowledge of those languages available in the eighteenth century (through grammars, accounts of cross-linguistic encounters in missionary narratives, etc.), and through what is now known of those world languages, such as Chinese, Sanskrit, and some of the indigenous American languages. Improving our understanding of how sensitive eighteenth-century linguists were to language diversity will contribute to the historiography of the Enlightenment and the ongoing assessment of whether that intellectual movement (if indeed it has any coherence as such) should be understood to rest on the ultimate commensurability or incommensurability of human values.⁵⁷

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Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Michael Tomasello, *The Origins of Human Communication* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), 9–10, 222–225.

⁽²⁾ Pieter A. M. Seuren, *Language in Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52–53, 158–159.

⁽³⁾ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), III.x.2–4, 490–491, hereafter cited parenthetically as ECHU, followed by section and page number; on related questions see Geoff Bennington, "The Perfect Cheat: Locke and Empiricism's Rhetoric," in *The Figural and the Literal: Problems of Language in the History of Science and Philosophy, 1630–1800*, ed. Andrew E. Benjamin, Geoffrey N. Cantor, and John R. R. Christie (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1987), 103–123.

⁽⁴⁾ See Walter Ott, *Locke's Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2: "We should not assume that Locke is concerned to account for all uses of language. His focus is squarely on language as it figures in philosophy and science."

⁽⁵⁾ Ott, *Locke's Philosophy of Language*, 34, recognizes that it is not immediately clear from the opening pages of *Essay* III whether his description of language allows for anything other than lists of signs for ideas.

⁽⁶⁾ On the distinction between categorematic and syncategorematic terms, see Hannah Dawson, *Locke, Language and Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20, 187.

⁽⁷⁾ Dawson, *Locke, Language and Early-Modern Philosophy*, 224–225, 238.

⁽⁸⁾ See Dawson, *Locke, Language and Early-Modern Philosophy*, 301. Thomas Stanley's account of Plato's *Cratylus*, for example, urges the person inventing names to perform the act as if a dialectic were present—that is, to imagine what a philosopher might want from the names given. See *The History of Philosophy: Containing the Lives, Opinions, Actions and Discourses of the Philosophers of Every Sect*, 3rd ed. (London: W. Battersby et al. 1701), 183.

⁽⁹⁾ Such is the general outline of the argument proposed by Stephen K. Land, *From Signs to Propositions: The Concept of Form in Eighteenth-Century Semantic Theory* (London: Longman, 1974) and by Murray Cohen, *Sensible Words: Linguistic Practice in England*,

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1640–1785 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), who at page 25, for example, notes a shift from lexical to syntactical interest in language theory in the last third of the seventeenth century. Land works with philosophical, Cohen with grammatical, texts.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *Logic or the Art of Thinking*, ed. and trans. Jill Vance Buroker (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23; [Antoine Arnauld and Claude Lancelot], *A General and Rational Grammar*, [trans. Thomas Nugent] (London: J. Nourse, 1753), 22–23.

⁽¹¹⁾ *The Works of James Harris, With an Account of his Life and Character, by his Son the Earl of Malmesbury* (Bristol: Thoemmes, 2003; London: F. Wingrave, 1801), 1:216–218, 1:231, 1:263–264, hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as Hermes, followed by volume and page number.

⁽¹²⁾ Works in this tradition are not at all uncommon in eighteenth-century Britain. They include William Ward, *An Essay on Grammar* (London: Robert Horsfield, 1765; Menston, Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1967), a work that reports its indebtedness to Port-Royal and Harris. For Harris, see Jaap Maat, “General or Universal Grammar from Plato to Chomsky,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Linguistics*, ed. Keith Allen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 413.

⁽¹³⁾ Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, ed. Derek R. Brookes and Knud Haakonssen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 69, hereafter cited parenthetically as EIPM followed by page number. For an account of the poor service these acts of mind receive from eighteenth-century theories of language, and for their implications for social theory more generally, see C. A. J. Coady, “Reid and the Social Operations of the Mind,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Reid*, ed. Terence Cuneo and René van Woudenberg (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 185. See also Lia Formigari, *Signs, Science and Politics: Philosophies of Language in Europe 1700–1830*, trans. William Dodd (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1993), 19, 21.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For a rejection of the universality of language structure see Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication*, 309–313.

⁽¹⁵⁾ See also Stephen K. Land, *The Philosophy of Language in Britain: Major Theories from Hobbes to Thomas Reid* (New York: AMS Press, 1986), 225–226. For a view of language diversity as the result of different human cultural perspectives on the same events perceived by the same mental apparatus, see Jean le Rond d’Alembert, and Denis Diderot, eds., *Encyclopédie*, vol. 9 (Neuchâtel: Chez Samuel Faulche, 1765), 243, 256–257.

⁽¹⁶⁾ For a related discussion focused on mental abstraction, see David B. Paxman, “Language and Difference: The Problem of Abstraction in Eighteenth-Century Language Study,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54, no. 1 (1993): 19–36.

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(¹⁷) Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Hans Aarsleff (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 69. Ulrich Rick-en, *Linguistics, Anthropology and Philosophy in the French Enlightenment: Language Theory and Ideology*, trans. Robert E. Norton (London: Routledge, 1994), makes an opposition between rationalism (the derivation of ideas from pure intellect) and sensualism (the derivation of ideas from sense perception), the structuring opposition for eighteenth-century French linguistic thought.

(¹⁸) Denis Diderot, "Lettre sur les sourds et les muets, à l'usage de ceux qui entendent et qui parlent [1751]," in *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, ed. Michel Delon and Barbara de Negroni (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 222.

(¹⁹) See Ronald Grimsley, *Sur l'origine du langage: Suivie de trois textes [de] Maupertuis, Turgot et Maine de Biran* (Geneva: Droz, 1971). For Maupertuis's work on language more broadly see Avi Lifschitz, *Language and Enlightenment: The Berlin Debates of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 74–78. For a summary of the debate between these figures see Formigari, *Signs, Science and Politics*, 38–48.

(²⁰) "Considerations Concerning the First Formation of Languages, and the Different Genius of Original and Compounded Languages," in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. J. C. Bryce (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1983), 220–224. Smith's text makes it clear he is primarily focused on the relationship between Latin and contemporary vernacular romance languages.

(²¹) Smith, "Considerations," 218.

(²²) Smith "Considerations," 207. See Rüdiger Schreyer, "'Pray what Language did your wild Couple speak, when first they met?'"—Language and the Science of Man in the Scottish Enlightenment," in *The "Science of Man" in the Scottish Enlightenment: Hume, Reid and their Contemporaries*, ed. Peter Jones (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 163. Land, *Philosophy of Language*, 159, suggests Smith argues for the codependency of the progress of the mind and language. Laurent Jaffro, "Language and Thought," in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. James A. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 140–142, is closer to the view I present.

(²³) This point is made in a more developed form in Tom Jones, "Language Origins and Poetic Encounters in Rousseau, Shaftesbury, Smith and Ferguson," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 42, no. 4 (2006): 395–411. For a discussion of sociability and the origins of language, see Cohen, *Sensible Words*, 122–127.

(²⁴) Ricken, *Linguistics, Anthropology and Philosophy*, 135, offers a classification of theories: "1 supernatural inspiration of language in the first humans; 2 language as creation of human beings equipped with fully developed cognitive capacities; 3 common origin and development of language and thought in the course of the history of humanity."

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(²⁵) James Beattie, "The Theory of Language," in *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, ed. Roger J. Robinson (London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1996; London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell; Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1783), 239, hereafter cited parenthetically as TL followed by page number.

(²⁶) Condillac, *Essay*, 113, asserts the divine origin of language despite being one of the more historically oriented theorists discussed.

(²⁷) For a discussion of the naturalistic account of language origins in the eighteenth century see Avi S. Lifschitz, "The Enlightenment Revival of the Epicurean History of Language and Civilisation," in *Epicurus in the Enlightenment*, ed. Neven Leddy and Avi S. Lifschitz (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2009), 207–226.

(²⁸) Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. Linda Ferreira-Buckley and S. Michael Halloran (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 55, hereafter cited parenthetically as LRBL followed by page number. Blair may well be following Condillac.

(²⁹) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, ed. and trans. Maurice Cranston (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1984), 93.

(³⁰) Condillac, *Essay*, 114–115, 120, 150–151; Hans Aarsleff, "Philosophy of Language," in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1:453: "In Condillac's conception of the possibility and growth of knowledge, the development of language is a long-term process of repetition, formation of habits, and social interaction. No one before Condillac had so fully and cogently argued that a fundamental human institution is the product of evolving adaptation and functional success over time." For Condillac's blending of referential and expressive functions of language see Catherine L. Hobbs, *Rhetoric on the Margins of Modernity: Vico, Condillac, Monboddo* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 104–105.

(³¹) *Discourse on Inequality*, 92.

(³²) James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid, W. Creech; London: T. Cadell, 1773–1792; Menston, Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1967), 1:141, 1:198.

(³³) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages which treats of Melody and Musical Imitation," in Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Gottfried Herder, *On the Origin of Language: Two Essays*, trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1966; repr. 1986), 1, hereafter cited parenthetically as Essay followed by page number.

(³⁴) Condillac, *Essay*, 156.

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(³⁵) Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. Duncan Forbes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 172.

(³⁶) Condillac, *Essay*, 151. This point is made at greater length in Tom Jones and Rowan Boyson, eds., *The Poetic Enlightenment: Poetry and Human Science, 1650–1820* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), *passim*, but particularly in Jones and Boyson, “General Introduction,” 1–3.

(³⁷) See Gregory Sharpe, *Two Dissertations* (London, 1751), 6, 56–57, and James Parsons, *Remains of Japhet* (London: printed for the author, 1767; Menston, Yorkshire: Scholar Press, 1967), 247–257, respectively.

(³⁸) See Joep Leerssen, “The Rise of Philology: The Comparative Method, the Historicist Turn and the Surreptitious Influence of Giambattista Vico,” in *The Making of the Humanities, Volume II: From Early Modern to Modern Disciplines*, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 23–35.

(³⁹) *The New Science of Giambattista Vico: Unabridged Translation of the Third Edition (1744) with the Addition of “Practic of the New Science”*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 116.

(⁴⁰) *New Science*, 6, 141.

(⁴¹) Leerssen, “Rise of Philology,” 24.

(⁴²) Sir William Jones, “The Third Anniversary Discourse, on the Hindus, Delivered to the Asiatic Society, 2 February 1786,” in *Selected Poetical and Prose Works*, ed. Michael J. Franklin (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), 361.

(⁴³) Sir William Jones, *A Grammar of the Persian Tongue*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Richardson, 1775), viii–ix.

(⁴⁴) Haruko Momma, “A Man on the Cusp: Sir William Jones’s ‘Philology’ and ‘Oriental Studies,’” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 41, no. 2 (1999): 160–179, 167–168.

(⁴⁵) Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 93.

(⁴⁶) Ferguson, *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 5–6, 8, explicitly opposing the views of Rousseau on human prehistory. See on this point Christopher J. Berry, “‘But Art Itself is Natural to Man’: Ferguson and the Principle of Simultaneity,” in *Adam Ferguson: Philosophy, Politics and Society*, ed. Eugene Heath and Vincenzo Merolle (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009), 144–145.

(⁴⁷) Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1982), 12, 336.

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(⁴⁸) Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 106–107.

(⁴⁹) Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 157.

(⁵⁰) See, for example, Condillac, *Essay*, 152; John Brown, *A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music* (London: L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1763), 37–41.

(⁵¹) James Beattie, *Essays: On Poetry and Music*, intro. Roger J. Robinson (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1779; London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1996), 213.

(⁵²) See Ferguson, *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 174, for the coherence of poetic and other functional languages in early societies.

(⁵³) See David Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 254, 284, 295–296, 354–359; and Larry Wolf, “Discovering Cultural Perspective: The Intellectual History of Anthropological Thought in the Age of Enlightenment,” in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, ed. Larry Wolf and Marco Cipolloni (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 16.

(⁵⁴) I am alluding here to the historical processes postulated in Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1989).

(⁵⁵) Noam Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics: A Chapter in the History of Rationalist Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); Land, *From Signs to Propositions* and *The Philosophy of Language in Britain*.

(⁵⁶) Matthew Lauzon, *Signs of Light: French and British Theories of Linguistic Communication, 1648–1789* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University press, 2010), 13–66.

(⁵⁷) For an argument in favour of incommensurability of values, see Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), especially 69.

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