

Bryan/College Station Tea Party  
Celebrating the Declaration of Independence  
The Nature of All Things

### Additional Reading

**NATURE**, n. [L. from nature, born, produced,]

1. In a general sense, whatever is made or produced; a word that comprehends all the works of God; the universe. Of a phoenix we say, there is no such thing in nature.

And look through nature up to nature's God.

2. By a metonymy of the effect for the cause, nature is used for the agent, creator, author, producer of things, or for the powers that produce them. By the expression, trees and fossils are produced by nature, we mean, they are formed or produced by certain inherent powers in matter, or we mean that they are produced by God, the Creator, the Author of whatever is made or produced. The opinion that things are produced by inherent powers of matter, independent of a supreme intelligent author, is atheism. But generally men mean by nature, thus used, the Author of created things, or the operation of his power.

3. The essence, essential qualities or attributes of a thing, which constitute it what it is; as the nature of the soul; the nature of blood; the nature of a fluid; the nature of plants, or of a metal; the nature of a circle or an angle. When we speak of the nature of man, we understand the peculiar constitution of his body or mind, or the qualities of the species which distinguish him from other animals. When we speak of the nature of a man, or an individual of the race, we mean his particular qualities or constitution; either the peculiar temperament of his body, or the affections of his mind, his natural appetites, passions, disposition or temper. So of irrational animals.

4. The established or regular course of things; as when we say, an event is not according to nature, or it is out of the order of nature.

5. A law or principle of action or motion in a natural body. A stone by nature falls, or inclines to fall.

6. Constitution aggregate powers of a body, especially a living one. We say, nature is strong or weak; nature is almost exhausted.

7. The constitution and appearances of things.

The works, whether of poets, painters, moralists or historians, which are built upon general nature, live forever.

8. Natural affection or reverence.

Have we not seen, the murdering son ascend his parents bed through violated nature force his way?

9. System of created things.

He binding nature fast in fate, Left conscience free and will.

10. Sort; species; kind; particular character.

A dispute of this nature caused mischief to a king and an archbishop.

11. Sentiments or images conformed to nature, or to truth and reality.

Only nature can please those tastes which are unprejudiced and refined.

12. Birth. No man is noble by nature.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary - online

**Is Nature inclusive of God, or a First Action? There is a movement to replace God or negate God with Reason. New national motto: *In Reason We Trust*. Is there a difference between Reason and Love? Which is superior to forming relationship and why? Which best exhibits absolute accountability with absolute justice? What is the greatest example of love?**

*"The Declaration of Independence makes its claim for American independence based on "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." In looking to nature, the Founders did not mean the outdoors - the trees, lakes, and animals that make up the natural environment. They meant nature as in the design or purpose of things, as birds by nature fly just as fish by nature swim. Different things have different natures. Man has a distinguishing nature as well; it has to do with distinctive capacities and characteristics. Other*

*species follow instinct and, as a result, are not responsible for their actions. Wolves, for instance, cannot be said to be responsible for killing sheep - that's what wolves do. But humans are different: They are capable of imagination, deliberation, judgment, and choice in their actions and so can be held morally accountable. It is this ability to contemplate right and wrong and to act accordingly that distinguishes men from other animals. In this sense, man is by nature unique among animals, and alone has the capacity for liberty."*

*... "It says in the Declaration of Independence that this equality is "self-evident." In what sense? To say that something is self-evident does not mean that it is obvious, but means that something is evident in itself once one understands the terms involved. Once we understand that "man" has a certain nature, for instance, it becomes self-evident that all men, by sharing the same nature, are equal. We can understand this to be "self-evident" regardless of whether we believe nature to have been created (as in "all men are created equal") or observed by reason, as in the language of the Virginia Declaration of Rights ("all men are by nature equally free and independent").*

*... "Because of this nature, each man is his own natural ruler, with the capacity to govern himself. Unlike an animal, man can make decisions about how to live his own life and conduct his affairs. Because man is rational and seeks relationships with others to fulfill that nature, men can live in communities based on agreed purposes and common understanding of justice. At the same time, man is a bundle of desires and emotions, and is prone to allow his passions to overrule his reason. . . ."*

Matthew Spalding, We Still Hold These Truths, Heritage Foundation, p. 41.

*"By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." . . . "The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man..."*

James Madison, Federalist 10: The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard against Domestic Faction and Insurrection.

**Does the Nature of Man indicate that good government must be: representational, limited, with balanced powers?**

"That government is best which governs least." Thomas Paine or Henry David Thoreau, Civil Disobedience.

*"The more it circulates through those channels and currents in which the passions of mankind naturally flow, the less will it require the aid of the violent and perilous expedients of compulsion."*

Alexander Hamilton, Federalist 27: The Idea of Restraining the Legislative Authority in Regard to the Common Defense Considered.

**If man has a set nature and appreciation of justice, what would be the purpose of factions that encourage the enforcement of rules counter to that set nature and justice.**

*What Declaration principle do factions refuse to accept?*

**The Nature of Man contains Commerce**

*"When **Edmund Burke** read Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments he was stirred by the genius it revealed. "A theory like yours founded on the nature of man, which is always the same, " he wrote, "will last, when those that are founded on his opinions, which*

**are always changing, will and must be forgotten.” . . . “By 1776 Adam Smith had filled in the details of the nature of man in those memorable, quotable lines that are sprinkled through The Wealth of Nations. There Smith attributed the principle which prompts people to save to the desire of “bettering our condition, a desire which, though generally calm and dispassionate, comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave.” “In the whole interval which separates those two moments, : he went on to explain, “there is scarce perhaps a single instant in which any man is so perfectly and completely satisfied with his situation, as to be without any wish of alteration or improvement of any kind.”**

**“In this and similar statements we find not only a new conception of human motivation but the assertion that this behavior is true for all times and places. IT WAS NOT A CONDITIONED RESPONSE TO CERTAIN SOCIAL FORCES, BUT RATHER A BASIC ENDOWMENT THAT EVERY HUMAN BEING BROUGHT INTO THE WORLD. Philosophers since Aristotle’s time at least had talked about uniform qualities in human nature - though the term human nature belongs to the eighteenth century. What was new in Smith’s writing and what made his contemporaries believe they had made discoveries previously undetected was the predictability of human behavior. Instead of the Greeks’ essences and humors or the Christian’s belief in the proneness to sin, 18th century men spoke about the unvarying principles of human action.”**

**“Obvious - even banal - as these conclusions may appear to us, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England they had radical implications, for they meant that however socially differentiated people might be, in their market dealing there was an overriding similarity. Rich and poor, old and young, wise and innocent, male and female, genteel and vulgar, as buyers and sellers people revealed a common human nature.”**

Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790’s pp 25-26. Bolding and Capitalization my own.

**“The prosperity of commerce is now perceived and acknowledged by all enlightened statesmen to be the most useful as well as the most productive source of national wealth, and has accordingly become a primary object of their political cares. By multiplying the means of gratification, by promoting the introduction and circulation of the precious metals, those darling objects of human avarice and enterprise, it serves to vivify and invigorate the channels of industry, and to make them flow with greater activity and copiousness. The assiduous merchant, the laborious husbandman, the active mechanic, and the industrious manufacturer,--all orders of men, look forward with eager expectation and growing alacrity to this pleasing reward of their toils.”**

Alexander Hamilton: Federalist 12

**“The most subversive aspect of this imaginative model of the economy was the implication that government supervision of the economy was not only unwarranted, but ineffective, much like a statute against floods and earthquakes”**

Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790’s p. 34.  
**Was our government established in order to secure and protect the individual’s right to participate in commerce? How does the Declaration support this idea?**